

**Homily – Memorial of Saint Monica
60th Anniversary of St. Monica Parish – Friday, August 27, 2021**

We know well that God's mercy has no limits. To receive it, all we need is to desire it. In other words, when we realize that we have not done God's will, all we need to do to be forgiven is to turn back to his will. We need to wish we had not acted against God's will, and resolve to fulfill it thereafter. According to the Father's mercy revealed in Jesus, He asks from us that we live a holy life, dedicated to the service of neighbor for the love of God. It is precisely through God's mercy that we receive the light to know God's will and the strength to carry it out.

By assuming in himself the whole human experience – except sin – the Son of God made all human things divine. Every honest human activity – done for the service of others – can be turned into an act of worship if we offer it to the Father through Jesus Christ. Our humanity is so sacred that Jesus himself died to redeem it.

The first reading reminds us that a condition to remain in God's love is to refrain from immorality because God's mercy is just as incompatible with hypocrisy as it is with shamelessness. Both extremes are expressions of corruption, which the Pope defines as obstinacy with sin. They are the rejection and desecration of love.

We know from our own experience that we always fall short of God's expectations. We are all wise or foolish depending on the occasion. Who can love as Jesus has loved us? Who can be perfect like our Heavenly Father? It is impossible for us, but nothing is impossible for God. We need to implore his help wholeheartedly. The Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

Remaining alert and prepared for the coming of the Lord, presupposes that we passionately desire his coming. We must long for it as the most important thing, in such a way that there is nothing to distract us from this attitude. Christians have to be vigilant not only for the second coming of Jesus. He comes continually to us in our earthly existence, whether we are aware or not: in the Eucharistic Celebration, in Confession and every other sacrament, in his Word, in prayer, in the face of others as we care for them or in those who care for us, and in many other ways. He has always been here, for over 60 years, at St. Monica's Parish!

This church is like those ten virgins, waiting to meet the bridegroom. Your deeds reveal your true desire. Do you really want to meet him face to face? Do you cultivate your relationship with the Lord? As imperfect as we may be, any good that we do already proves that God is with us. He fills us with joy by letting us know how much he loves us, because when we love, he reveals to us that he loved us first and always more.

This is not only valid for ourselves, but for those around us. Your patron saint's witness proves that we can indeed share some of our "oil" before "the bridegroom" arrives. Pope Francis says that "ceaselessly seeking the good of the other, of the beloved, without ever stopping and with the intensity that leads even to tears," St. Monica "managed to attain the grace of her son's conversion." Thanks to her, St. Augustine's lamp still shines for us. "Light dawns for the just; and gladness, for the upright of heart." (Ps).

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, maintain our expectation alive and make us wise enough to be able to keep our lamps trimmed.