



14. March 2022

## Give, and there will be gifts for you

**Lk 6:36-38**

*'Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap; because the standard you use will be the standard used for you.'*

Once again we are exhorted to imitate the perfection of the Heavenly Father!

Mercy is so important for us in our encounter with the Lord, for it is mercy that takes pity on all our moral misery and our limitations as creatures, wanting to restore to us our dignity as persons. If God were not merciful, we would be lost. How could we present ourselves at the hour of judgment if we did not know that our Father is a kind and compassionate Judge, and that His Son Himself took our sins upon Himself?

*"Mercy triumphs over judgment,"* says the Letter of *St. James (2:13)*. It can save people when, through it, they can look into the Heart of God.

But it is fundamental that we understand mercy correctly, and that we do not deform it according to our human conceptions. Mercy does not mean relativizing guilt and minimizing the responsibility of the person. One cannot appeal to mercy and continue to live in a morally disordered state, without striving for a sincere conversion. This would be a tremendous misunderstanding of God's mercy! She invites us to conversion and is always ready to lift us up, when out of weakness we fail to fulfill what the Lord entrusts to us; but she can never legitimize and authorize what is wrong.

Now, in order to correspond to this divine mercy, we too are asked to be merciful. This means having an open heart towards the person and always being ready to forgive him or her, even if it were *"seventy times seven"* (cf. *Mt 18:22*). It means not condemning the other person and becoming his judge.

However, this attitude of mercy does not exempt us from discerning things in the light of God, to examine whether they are right or wrong; whether they correspond

to God's Will or are clearly contrary to it. But we can never measure the other person's guilt, for this is God's alone! Our task is to remain in a merciful attitude and to let the other person understand that we are ready to reconcile. Moreover, we must treat with dignity the one who has trespassed against us. Mercy is not compatible with a contemptuous attitude, which ends up humiliating the person with whom mercy is supposedly practiced. This is not the attitude of the Lord! Only His way of acting is our measure!

But what is God's measure?

The text itself gives us an answer: out of the fullness of His heart, God gives with a measure *"pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing"*. It is His greatest joy and deepest desire to fill us with this abundance. If we learn to act in God's way and, with His help, remove all that hinders us from having this attitude, then divine grace can be poured in all its fullness into our hearts. God's generosity has no limits! Its only limitation is our condition as creatures, which is not capable of embracing the fullness of God's love in this earthly life. But already in this life much awaits us, if only we follow the Lord's precepts and try to put them into practice.

Let us apply God's measure in our lives! *"Give, and there will be gifts for you."*

Today's Gospel again exhorts us clearly: let us not calculate people's sins! This does not mean that we should no longer call sin by its name, for that would be deceitful. But let us try to live in God's generosity, and not think or act stingily, neither in the spiritual nor in the material life.

Let us keep in mind that we have only one life to do good, but we can practice it every day that God gives us.