

2. August

Novena to God the Father

Day 5: 'The generosity of our Father'

Generosity is one of the characteristics of God. With great joy He shares with us His immeasurable riches. He wants to give us not only life, but "life in abundance" (cf. Jn 10:10).

Endless joy and happiness await us in eternity: death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more" (Rev 21:4). God Himself will be our reward!

During our earthly life, He sends us His Spirit, who *"helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words"* (Rom 8:26), calling within us *"Abba, Father"* (cf. Gal 4:6). And the Father gives us this Spirit in abundance!

In a special way we recognise God's generosity in His willingness to forgive sins. Let us remember how Jesus forgave the repentant thief on the cross and said to him: *"I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise"* (Lk 23:43). If we call on God's name just once with all our heart, He will save us. This is our Father!

He takes every opportunity to fill us with Himself, and He also gives us the opportunity to put this generosity into practice: *"Truly I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brethren, you did for me"* (Mt 25:40). God will never forget a good deed we have done, while He is happy to forget and forgive our sins if we only repent and ask for His forgiveness.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel that *"to every one who has will more be given"* (Mt 25:29). We can interpret this statement correctly if we apply it to love. He who loves will receive more and more love, because the reason for the Father's generosity is love. God wants to give and to give Himself, because this is the essence of true love.

St Francis of Assisi exclaimed: "It is by giving that one receives"; and Our Lord assured us that *"he who loses his life for my sake will find it."* (Mt 10:39). These phrases must also be understood from the perspective of love: whoever gives of himself, responding generously to God's invitation, will find his heart opened and enlarged to receive more and more of God's love. Whoever gives his life to God and to others can already taste the glory of eternity here on earth and will grow more and more in love.

In the spiritual life, too, immeasurable graces await us if only we respond generously to God's invitation to follow Him.

God introduces us to the mysteries of His being and entrusts them to us: *"No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you"* (Jn 15:15). If we take the steps that the Lord invites us to take in following Him, we will already receive great joys in this life (cf. Mt 19:29).

Our Father invites us to reciprocate His generosity with our generosity, to give ourselves completely to Him, to follow the promptings of the Spirit and to seek to discover and fulfil the desires of His heart. We can place the reins of our lives completely in His hands and entrust ourselves to Him without reserve. Then we will be infected by His generosity and it will become part of our being, making us generous to God and to others.