

**To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God to walk in his laws which he set before us. Amen!**

Good morning St Andrew's! Today is the Fourth Sunday of Lent and today this is a blessing to be here with you. It is a blessing to meditate on the unlimited love God has for us and humanity.

The Old Testament tells us, even though God was disappointed by the attitude of His people after He had shown them His power by liberating them from slavery in Egypt, He still wanted to save them. After they repented and asked for forgiveness, God said to their leader Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and whoever is bitten by a serpent shall look at it on the pole and live." Once again, regardless of their doubt God wanted to save the people of Israel because He loved them. By saving them even though they were unwilling to believe, God was showing the limitlessness of His compassion, His love for His people Israel.

In psalm 107, the psalmist encourages us to give thanks to God because, whenever we sin, if we repent sincerely, He will forgive our sins and save us. Oh Yes! God is a God of compassion. As the psalmist said in verses 17 -19, "Some were fools and took to rebellious ways; they were afflicted because of their sins. They abhorred all manner of food and drew near to death's door. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress." Yes! God is a God of Love. If we confess our sins sincerely He will show the limitlessness of His compassion and love.

Today also, in the Epistle of Ephesians, the writer emphasizes the boundless love of God. How do we know God's love doesn't have any boundary? Even though we sinned many times, even though we did not do good every day of our lives, God still has compassion for us

and wants to save us. Although we come to church today and give him glory, He knows we are still not going to do good every day of our lives. However, He sees our faith. We are here today because we have faith in Him. Therefore we are saved. That is good news for all of us. We can be saved because we are children of God. In His endless compassion and mercy, He wants us to be with Him.

We are saved by grace and not by our own doing. I grew up in a neighborhood in Port au Prince, Haiti where some young people and adults used to sell drugs. One day, we were sitting on a porch, chatting and drinking juice. One of the drug dealers came and started to give us money. When we asked him why he was giving us money he replied, "I want to do a little good with the money because I did too much bad with it and I want God to remember not only the bad but also the good I did with this money. Therefore, I can be saved." You see, he thought destroying the life of a group of people and giving away a few thousand dollars to others would make him look better in God's eyes and he would be saved. But it doesn't work that way with God. We do good actions because we have faith in God and we are children of God. We do good actions because we are light. Therefore, in His compassion God wants to save us not because we are doing good actions but because we are His children.

In the gospel of John, the writer also emphasizes God's compassion, God's unlimited love for us. The writer starts by saying "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life." The bronze serpent did not save the people of Israel. Because they had faith in what God told them to do, they were healed. Therefore, our relation with God is based not on our capacity to do great, marvelous things but on faith and love. We come every Sunday to pray and give glory to God. It is an act of faith. All of us rely on God, not on our own capacity to do good actions. He knows

we are broken, He knows we will fail sometimes, but He also knows the more we fail, the more we will try to stand up and walk on His path. Therefore, who are we? We are children of light.

As children of light, God in His compassion will save us.

Please let's pray

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by Him and through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN