

God's Mercy Manifested in the Old Testament



It's been a few weeks now in my pastor's letter that I am offering a commentary on St. John Paul's II encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (*Rich in Mercy*). This week I will reflect not on part of the text but on one of the footnotes because of its beauty and density (DM 4, footnote #52). This footnote studies the meaning of key words used in the Old Testament to deeply understand God's mercy.

The first word is *hesed* that indicates a profound attitude of fidelity and ability to forgive. As we normally understand a contract (or covenant), two parties commit to be faithful to a mutually understood promise. However, if one breaks the covenant, the other party's obligation stops. However, we know that in the story of the Covenant between God and Israel, the people were unfaithful, and therefore God could have abandoned them. However, even if Israel broke the covenant, God –out of love– remained faithful. Here *hesed* reveals its deeper meaning: “love that gives, love more powerful than betrayal, grace stronger than sin.”

This feature of fidelity was critical for the people of Israel to understand the sacredness of marriage. Today, it is most helpful for us in a culture where promises are superficial and vows have lost their “density” to become “liquid” (not airy). The fidelity between husband and wife continually brings forth goodness in the form of forgiveness and mercy. Priests and those called to religious life also make an interior commitment and their fidelity is called to inspire others to remain faithful to their promises. Military corps ask young people to commit their life by promising to serve their country, and that promise becomes a sacred duty for the soldier. Are we as serious with our Baptismal vows and other religious commitments?

There is a second word in the Old Testament, *rahamim* which “in its very root, denotes the love of a mother (reheem = mother's womb).” God's mercy is tender, warm and affectionate like a mother: “Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you” (Is 49:15). That same love of God, faithful and invincible, offers the people of Israel salvation from danger, forgiveness of sin, and readiness to fulfill the promise that He had made. “I will heal their faithlessness, I will love them freely.” (Hos. 14:5)

With these two concepts, God's mercy is presented as the spouse's fidelity to their beloved, and the tenderness of the mother, ... What if we incarnate these attitudes in our family relationships?

Nourishing Our Souls with Holy Scripture

Readings for Next Week:

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Jos 5:9a, 10–12 2 Cor 5:17–21 Lk 15:1–3, 11–32 (33)



Third Sunday of Lent Masses this Week

Monday, February 29: Lenten Weekday

6:30 am (L) Rick Sacra
9:00 am +Joseph E. Thach Sr.

Tuesday, March 1: Lenten Weekday

6:30 am +Helen and Frank Zappacosta
9:00 am +Lucia Venero

Wednesday, March 2: Lenten Weekday

6:30 am +Raul Monillas
9:00 am +Barbara Mazur

Thursday, March 3: Lenten Weekday

6:30 am (L) Marvin and Clarissa De Guzman
9:00 am +Shoukry Said

Friday, March 4: Lenten Weekday

6:30 am +Robert Criste
9:00 am +William Swartworth

Saturday, March 5: Lenten Weekday

8:00 am +George Davis
5:00 pm +Lila Charnley
7:00 pm +Rosalia Loli

Sunday, March 6: Fourth Sunday of Lent

7:30 am +Adam Malinowski
9:00 am +Dolores Perez
10:30 am Living and Deceased Parishioners
12:00 noon +Lucia and Jose Antonio Venero

Requesting a Mass to be Offered

The Church considers the Mass the greatest possible prayer of intercession because it is the perfect offering of Christ to the Father by making present the Paschal Mystery of His death and resurrection. It is a longstanding tradition in the Church that a Priest may be requested to offer a Mass for a specific intention, even when one cannot be physically present at the Mass. The faithful make a free will offering, called a stipend, to a priest or Religious Community in order to apply the Mass to a specific intention. By making this offering, the faithful, by making their own offering, associate themselves more intimately with Christ who offers Himself in the Sacred Host, and obtain thereby more abundant fruits. Mass offerings can be requested at the QofA parish office during business hours: 9am to 12 Noon and from 12:30 to 5 pm, Mon. through Fri.

“I AM has sent me to you!” Could the Lord be calling you to proclaim His name as a priest, deacon, or in the consecrated life? Contact Fr. Juan, general@queenofapostles.org, or Fr. J. D. Jaffe, (703) 841-2514, or j.jaffe@arlingtondiocese.org.

Third Sunday of Lent—February 28, 2016 That like Moses, our young people will enter more deeply into conversation with the Lord in prayer as they seek to discover their vocations in Christ, we pray to the Lord.

Please pray for the members of our parish who are ill

Kathleen Donohoe, Clarissa Trono De Guzman, Lyda Tanco, Mark Bush, Joseph Covas, Luta “Cornie” McGrath, Margaret Peiffer, David Stemcosky, Irma Mori, Rita Sulit, Jason Banis, Emma Collins, Teresa Sabina Piecyk, Bridgetta Jenkins, Juana Mejia, Lisa Nyce, Monique Brooks, Debby Sprah, Consuelo Jocson, Cheryl McGlynn, Teresa Subalusky, Theresa Corcoran, Cordelia Carcamo, Donna Smith, Andres Encinas Fernandez.

This Week in Our Parish

Sunday, February 28:

School 9:00–10:15 am Religious Education
Hannan Hall 2:00–5:30 pm Ghana Group
Adoration Chapel 6:00–8:00 pm Prayer Group

Monday, February 29:

Parish Office 7:00–8:00 pm RCIA

Tuesday, March 1:

Hannan Hall 10:00–11:30 am Bible Study
Hannan Hall 7:30–9:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, March 2:

Hannan Hall 5:30–6:30 pm Lenten Soup Supper and Talk
Hannan Hall 7:00–9:00 pm Ghana Prayer Group
Parish Office 7:30–8:30 pm Baptism Class in English

Thursday, March 3:

Hannan Hall 6:30–8:00 pm High School Bible Study
Parish Office 6:30–8:00 pm Legion of Mary Meeting
Church 7:30–8:30 pm Holy Hour

Friday, March 4:

Adoration Chapel 11:00 am–12:00 noon Children's Adoration Hour
Church 2:20–3:00 pm Stations of the Cross
Adoration Chapel 3:00–4:00 pm Divine Mercy Chaplet
Hannan Hall 6:00–9:00 pm KofC Fish Fry
School Gym 6:00–8:00 pm Open Gym Night
Church 7:00–8:00 pm Stations of the Cross
Cupertino Room 7:00–9:00 pm Hispanic Legion of Mary

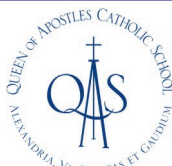
Saturday, March 5:

Parish Office 9:00–11:00 am Financial Peace University
Parish Office 1:00–3:30 pm Stephen Ministry
School 4:00–6:30 pm Spanish Prayer Group
Hannan Hall 7:00–9:00 pm Ghana Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, March 6:

Hannan Hall 8:30 am–2:00 pm Rome Pilgrimage Pancake Brkfst
School 9:00–10:15 am Religious Education
Hannan Hall 2:00–5:30 pm Ghana Group
Adoration Chapel 6:00–8:00 pm Prayer Group

Queen of Apostles School is accepting applications for the 2016-17 school year. Tuition assistance is available for new students to Catholic education in all grades. For information, visit www.queenofapostlesschool.org, call (703) 354-0714, or come to our open house on **Mar. 4** from 10:30 am–1:30 pm.



Fundraising Thanks Thank you to everyone who supports QofA School through Harris Teeter's Together in Education program. Because of your active participation, the school recently received a special contribution of \$5,000 from the store.

First & Second Scrutiny This weekend, we celebrate the First Scrutiny and Presentation of the Creed with our Elect. Next weekend, we celebrate the Second Scrutiny. The Elect and their godparents are invited to participate: RCIA-Spanish is **Feb. 27** at 7:00 pm; RE students and RCIA-English are **Feb. 28** at 10:30 am. Please keep the Elect and Candidates in your prayers.

Nazareth, a QofA youth ministry open to boys and girls in grades four through eight, will meet **Mar. 4**, 3:45–5:30 pm in Hannan Hall. **Open Gym Night** QofA Youth Group will have an open gym **Mar. 4**, 6–8 pm, at the school. Join in sports activities followed by pizza. **Rome Pilgrimage Events** All are invited to a pancake breakfast on Sunday, **Mar. 6**, in Hannan Hall after all Masses. Proceeds benefit the Rome Pilgrimage. Thank you to the Knights of Columbus and parishioners who supported the Feb. 19 fish fry, which also benefited the pilgrimage.

Wednesday, Mar. 2 Soup Supper and Talk: *Mercy in Relationship*

This Wednesday's Lenten Soup Supper, beginning at 5:30 pm in Hannan Hall, will feature Dr. Michael Horne of Catholic Charities, who will be speaking on the topic *Mercy in Relationship*. Dr. Horne will discuss the importance of mercy within interpersonal relationships, mainly focusing on the relationships between husband and wife, as well as between parent and child.

Dr. Horne is Director of Clinical Services for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington. He received his doctorate in clinical psychology from the Institute for the Psychological Sciences in 2009, where he specialized in child therapy.

Save the Date for two upcoming events: our second Knights of Columbus Fish Fry on Friday, **Mar. 4** at 6 PM; \$5 per person and \$20 per family. Proceeds are shared with the Youth Rome Pilgrimage. Then, on Friday, **Mar. 11** at 6 PM there will be a talk on Parenting again sponsored by Catholic Charities.

Pauline Books and Media Catholic Book Fair The Daughters of St. Paul, from Pauline Books & Media in Old Town, are hosting a book fair in the vestibule at QofA after all Masses this weekend. The sisters have a variety of biographies of saints, books for children and teens, Catholic fiction, Bibles, DVDs, music, and more.

QofA Women's Group will visit San Damiano Retreat Center in White Post, VA, on **Mar. 9**. All are welcome; the day includes Mass and lunch. The bus will leave the church at 9:00 am; cost is \$25. Contact Karen Barnoski for information (703) 256-4088.

All Saints Car Raffle Thanks to all who have returned their car raffle tickets. Special thanks to those who have picked up extras to sell to relatives, friends, co-workers, and others. So far, your efforts have helped to contribute more than \$3,000 to our youth ministries and school! Stop by the parish office during the week to replenish your supply of tickets!

Saint Faustina—Messenger of Mercy, a one-woman drama, comes to Holy Spirit Catholic Church on **Mar. 3**, 7:00–8:30 pm. This internationally acclaimed presentation is based on Faustina's published diary. All ages welcome. No tickets needed; a free-will offering will be collected. Performance is in the church; ample parking, wheelchair accessible. 5121 Woodland Way, Annandale.

Healing Retreat on Saturday, **Mar. 12**. This retreat is a safe place to renew and rebuild hearts broken from abortion in a confidential environment where you can begin the process of healing. For information or to register, e-mail info@helpafterabortion.org; visit www.helpafterabortion.org; or call 888-456-HOPE (4673). Registration deadline is **Mar. 7**.

Thank you for your generous contribution to the Poor Box. This weekend the collection will go toward **Poor Sisters of St. Joseph**. Next weekend the collection will go toward **Parish Needs**.