I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.... For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?

Matthew 5

The Eleventh Week of Ordinary Time

Sunday, June 12 is Pentecost Sunday, as the readings and the whole Church celebrate the coming and ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit among us. Jesus breathes on his jittery followers and tells them, “Peace be with you” and fills them with courage.

Monday is the Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua, priest and doctor of the Church.

In the Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul is defending himself. He tells the people of Corinth and us not to receive the grace of God in vain. Paul reminds them about generosity and cheerful giving. He begs the community not to dismiss him because of his poor speaking abilities saying, “Even if I am untrained in speaking, I am not so in knowledge.” He boasts about his weakness, which he had at first begged to be freed from by the Lord, who said to him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.”

We have ended our readings from Mark for this Liturgical Year and take up the Gospel of Matthew, which will be part of our readings for the rest of the year. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus calls us beyond simply being moral. His message is not an “eye for an eye,” but turning the other cheek, loving our enemies and praying for them. Jesus warns us about performing good deeds for others to see. He teaches us to pray simply, because our

Daily Prayer This Week

There is nothing like the Sermon on the Mount to help us hear the message of Jesus, and to let ourselves be addressed by those words. All of us can ask for these graces with real specificity, that is, with real people and real daily circumstances in mind. We know with whom we need to “turn the other cheek” and to love more. We know the circumstances in which we are tempted to “be religious” in the right circumstances only.

Upon reflection, each of us can take the time to “locate” our hearts, by discovering what we tend to treasure. We can check ourselves out by making a list of the “five most important things” to me. Then we can make a list of the five things I spend most of my time on. Comparing the lists will help us get concrete about asking the Lord for the grace we need to put our lives back in balance, if we aren’t. All of us can name what we worry about. And so we can all ask for the graces to “seek first” the Kingdom of God.

All of this reflection can happen throughout the week in the background of our daily life, if we get into the habit of focusing for a few moments each morning. If we take just 30 seconds, at the edge of our bed each morning, it will begin to establish a habit of living more reflectively.

Thank you for this day, Lord. Help me to be focused today on not getting so hooked by Ann's ways or Bob's harsh words. I need your grace to place my trust in you. Help me especially before I have to talk with Ann on the phone and let me stay focused before Bill comes.
Father knows what we need. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal… For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” Focus on God, not the world: “No one can serve two masters… You cannot serve God and mammon.”

The week closes with **Trinity Sunday**, which always follows Pentecost. It celebrates the un-knowable relationship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit - and their loving support for us in our lives.

Our version of a brief moment with the Lord - friend to friend - can be repeated and made more specific, while we are going about our day. Some days, we might have 20 such moments of prayerful conversation with our Lord - guided by the Word, the desires that are surfacing, and the events of our daily lives. And, each night, we can give thanks for this deeper relationship with the Lord that is developing in my heart.