

Remembering 9/11 and The Merciful Father

Today is the 15th anniversary of the September 11th attacks where almost 3000 people perished on the day.

Do you remember where you were at 8:46 am that day?

I remember.

Fifteen years ago, people throughout the nation flocked to churches on September 11 and after to pray and to put into God's hands the senseless acts of the day. Each year since, we observe that day with prayer.

Today's Scripture passages are particularly important for this anniversary as they resonate with the Year of Mercy - focusing on the themes of mercy and forgiveness.

In the 1st reading, we heard how the people of God forgot who God is and forgot how He had blessed them. It appears this is happening now as well.

"Go down at once to your people,...they have become depraved." Notice He says Your People.

But at the pleading of Moses, God relented and did not bring on **His people** the disaster He had threatened.

Today's readings invite us to believe in a loving, patient, merciful, and forgiving God Who is always in search of His lost and straying children. The Gospel contains the three "Mercy Parables": the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the Prodigal Son. Or as I call it - The Merciful Father.

Mercy is a force that overcomes everything, filling the heart with love and bringing consolation through pardon.

Mercy is Compassionate Love in Action.

September 11th offers us an opportunity to pause and reflect deeply on how we as a Christian community respond to evil in the world, how we forgive and how we show mercy.

Yet with God's grace, we also experienced the height of human sacrifice and the ability of our brothers and sisters to manifest heroic love. 3 Examples:

The passengers and crew of Flight 93 learned the fate of 3 other hijacked flights and realized their plane was involved in a larger terrorist plot.

After a brief discussion, a Vote was taken and they decided to fight back against their hijackers. Also look at the Boatlift on Facebook/Web Half Million People Rescued.

In 2015, after the attacks in the Paris nightclub, one man Antoine Leiris who lost his wife in the attack wrote the following open letter to terrorists:.

"On Friday evening you stole the life of an exceptional person, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but you will not have my hatred.

"I don't know who you are and I don't want to know, you are dead souls. If this God for whom you kill blindly made us in His image, every bullet in the body of my wife is a wound in His heart.

"So no, I will not give you the satisfaction of hating you. You want it, but to respond to hatred with anger would be to give in to the same ignorance that made you what you are."

The letter continued: "I saw her this morning. At last, after nights and days of waiting. She was as beautiful as when she left on Friday evening, as beautiful as when I fell head over heels in love with her more than 12 years ago.

"Of course I am devastated with grief, I grant you this small victory, but it will be short-lived. I know she will be with us every day and we will find each other in heaven with free souls which you will never have.

"Us two, my son and I, we will be stronger than every army in the world. I cannot waste any more time on you as I must go back to [my son] who has just woken from his sleep.

He is only just 17 months old, he is going to eat his snack just like every other day, then we are going to play like every other day and all his life this little boy will be happy and free. Because you will never have his hatred either."

An example of God's Mercy and People like this man are a wonderful example of what God wants us to be. He calls us to be bigger than hatred, to refuse to hate and return violence for violence. We must always work hard for justice and to stop evil, but we won't behave as the terrorists do or we will be just like them.

If we remain with God, focused on God, with God at the center, then we too will be able to rise above the temptation to return hatred for hatred. That is how you change the world.

What the world most needs today is prayer. It is prayer that will give birth to all the renewals, healings, deep and fruitful transformations we all want for society today.

This world of ours needs a contact with heaven to be able to heal it.

To pray is to spend time freely with God just for the joy of being together.

It is to love, because giving our time means giving our lives. Love does not mean primarily to do something for the other person, it means being there with them.

Prayer trains us to be there with God, in a simple act of loving attention.

So my Dear Friends, I close with an invitation to come tonight at 7 pm for our Holy Hour before our God for Peace and Justice in our World and to remember what happened 15 years ago today.

And to also give thanks for our Church which was dedicated 118 Years ago on September 11, 1898.

Let our Church be completely full - Be there with God.

Praise Be Jesus Christ, Now and Forever, Amen!