

Cycle B Second Sunday of Lent
Sunday February 25th, 2018

This past Sunday the Rite of Election took place at the Cathedral with Archbishop Schnurr presiding. The Rite of Election is for those who are making final preparations to enter the Catholic Church on Holy Saturday, through the Easter Sacraments. Our parish of St. Antoninus presented a wonderful group of men, women and children who are responding to the call of Jesus Christ. They are seeking a deeper relationship with Christ and His Church. All who gathered last Sunday were called to experience continuous conversion, purification and enlightenment. This call to continuous conversion, purification and enlightenment applies not only to those coming into the Church; rather this call applies to all of us. None of us has arrived yet. Our finite minds cannot grasp the fullness of the beauty of God. It will take all of eternity to absorb the mysteries of God. We are all on a journey of faith. This is a long journey with many hills and valleys.

Pope Francis in his nearly five years as Pope; has emphasized the reality and the importance of the mercy of God. Our Holy Father said this about **mercy** “**Let us never forget that mercy is the keystone of the life of faith, and concrete way with which we give visibility to the Resurrection of Jesus,**” All of us are in need of the mercy of the Lord, for we all fall short of the glory of God.

Mercy is at the heart of the Scripture readings today. Abraham was preparing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to show his faithfulness to the Lord, when the messenger of the Lord stopped him. The Lord spoke to Abraham, **“I swear by myself.....that because you acted as you did..... I will bless you abundantly.”** To be blessed abundantly by God is an act of mercy since we are unworthy of the abundant blessings that we do receive from the Lord.

St. Paul says to us, **“Christ Jesus it is who died – or, rather was raised – who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.”** Jesus dying, rising and being at the right hand of God is the supreme act of mercy for us. Jesus continues His mercy as He intercedes for us.

The account of the Transfiguration of Jesus that we heard today also reveals the mercy of God. Jesus wanted to show Peter, James, John, and us the glory that we can look forward to. Jesus wants us to know of the good things to come. Peter wanted to stay in that moment permanently when he wanted to make the three tents, for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. However, this did not happen. After the event, they came down from the mountain. There was still work to do, that work is sharing the mercy of God with others. Pope Francis has this to say about God. **“The name of God is mercy.”**

We are hearing so much about mercy today in anticipation of Tuesday evening throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati; **“The Light is on for You.”** **“Encountering the peace of Christ”** is taking place. This is the annual opportunity for Catholics to experience the mercy of Jesus in confession that is, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Throughout the archdiocese all parish churches will be open from 7 pm to 9 pm for people to have the opportunity to experience the mercy of Jesus, especially if it has been a while or long time for those who have been away from confession. Here at St. Antonius we are adding an extra hour so the opportunity will be from 6 pm to 9 pm. I would also like to invite people to come to church that evening and spend time praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Specifically praying for all of us who are in need of the Lord’s Mercy.

Like those who are preparing for entry into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil, all of us are on the journey of continuous conversion, purification and enlightenment. All of us need the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, and remember, **“The name of God is mercy.”**