

The Faith of Our Fathers

How is God our heavenly Father merciful? He sees that we are captives of death, but He mercifully gives us life. He sees that we are the children of hell, but He mercifully gives us heaven. He sees that we are poor, naked and exposed, hungry and thirsty but He mercifully clothes, feeds, gives us drink and satisfies us with all good things. So whatever we have for the body or spirit Our Lord gives us out of mercy. He continually pours His blessing over us and into us. And today Christ says, “Imitate your Father and be merciful to others just as He is merciful to you.” (Bl. Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

“In today’s Gospel lesson, our dear Lord Christ teaches His disciples and all of us how we are to live as Christians in our relationships with other people. For, if we have received faith and are considered to be Christians who have been saved from sin, death and every kind of evil through Our Lord Christ, then a new life must immediately follow, one in which we do what He desires. Our Lord summarizes this new life in the simple statement, ‘Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.’” (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

How great is the mercy we receive by God’s benevolence! Walk in the way of mercy since you receive this divine blessing. The kindness of God spreads far and wide. It rains upon the unthankful; and the fruitful earth does not deny its yield even to the wicked. The same light of the world shines on impious and God-fearing alike. The Lord also “watered” the people of Israel with prophetic rains, and shone upon them in the rays of His Eternal Son—even on those who were not deserving. But the faithful obtain the fullness of God’s mercy since they receive it by faith. (St. Ambrose) ❧❧❧

My conscience must believe that God is a gracious, merciful father. In harmony with this, I then go out to my neighbor and am merciful to him. I must bring faith into my heart and up to God; and works out of my heart down to my neighbor. Now this has been said of faith and works as an introduction to our Gospel lesson. For the motion of faith is inward and upward, and the motion of works is

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We say “Give us this day our daily bread” not because our asking gets us anything, but because we need to remember that all we have and all we are come from our Father in heaven. And we need never to forget that Our Lord gives more abundantly than we ask, and even before we pray, and even to those who don’t pray. So why ask? Why pray? Not to remind God, but to remind ourselves. To remember the Lord’s mercy—and that His mercy encompasses everything: every kindness, every gift, every blessing; every bite, every breath, our every movement; and even every heartache and infirmity. ❧❧❧

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