



Homily for  
THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
11/12 June, 2016

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**Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....**

I. I have always found it interesting to notice the way in which people respond to gifts - or even if they respond to a gift.

For example, if I give a wedding gift or a graduation gift – will I get a thank you?

Sometimes a thank you comes back almost immediately. Sometimes I never hear anything – and so I am left wondering: did they get the gift? was it appreciated?

I know there are parents who insist their child sit down and write thank yous immediately after they receive a gift or multiple gifts – for example, after a graduation party or a wedding. Apparently others are never taught to send a thank you card – or maybe they just don't follow through.

Maybe part of the reason for not acknowledging a gift is training. But perhaps another reason is that the gift is simply not recognized as a gift...it is taken for granted...it is expected.

We would really have no reason to thank someone for a gift unless we first

recognize that it is a gift: something we don't deserve and something freely given.

- II. This would be equally true of gifts we receive from God. The first gift we should recognize is the MERCY of God. Having recognized that gift, our eyes will be opened and we will be enabled to see the manifold gifts which surround us everyday. God's mercy will overflow into our hearts.

Luke's account of the dinner in the Pharisee's home illustrates a contrast between how Simon, the Pharisee, responded to Jesus and how the woman responded to Jesus.

Simon did not offer Jesus the customary rituals of hospitality. He did not offer to have Jesus' feet washed, or greet him with a kiss or anoint his head with oil.

All this indicates he was taking Jesus for granted: he did not seem to be particularly interested in Jesus for who he was: he was taking Jesus for granted. As an observant Jew and a Pharisee, Simon probably saw himself as already justified before God.

Whereas the woman has come to know God's compassion and forgiveness. In response, this unnamed, sinful woman offers Jesus lavish hospitality.

Simon may have invited Jesus into his home, but the woman invited Jesus into her heart.

- III. How do these two responses to Jesus' presence illustrate our response to Jesus?

Coming to know and love Jesus begins with our recognition – our admission – that we need Jesus. We need Jesus' forgiveness. This is the first step in being a disciple

of Jesus.

David – in the first reading – had sinned grievously against God. Not only had he committed adultery with Uriah's wife, but also had Uriah killed and he cut off Uriah's blood line. Grievous sin piled upon grievous sin. Yet David had the grace to admit his sin, "I have sinned against the Lord," he said.

And the woman had admitted her sin: she knew she was a sinner – but she had also found Jesus' forgiveness.

III. Our path of discipleship begins with admitting our sin. Are we like Simon – perhaps thinking we don't sin...or sin is not important....or we have no need for forgiveness? If so, we cut ourselves off from God's mercy flowing into our heart. We close the door to recognizing more and more God's gifts which fill our lives.

Or are we like the humble woman, who expressed her repentance by welcoming Jesus? If we first admit our sin – our need for the forgiveness of Jesus – then the gate is open and Jesus wraps his arms around us – loving us, sustaining us, embracing us...never letting go.

IV. Today's gospel begins seven weeks of learning about the contours of discipleship.

It begins with discovering God's mercy. Then the other dimensions of discipleship take shape around that.

When we feel that forgiveness, that MERCY of God, our hearts will swell with

gratitude and then our response of thanks will readily flow into service: as the

repentant woman served Jesus...as the women who followed Jesus served him.

What is the welcome we extend to Jesus? Does Jesus say to us: "Your sins are forgiven; your faith has saved you...go in peace"?

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**Fr. Kyle's homily follows....**

Today's first reading describes a confrontation between the prophet Nathan and king David. Nathan basically says to David, you have been made the king and leader of Israel, why have you gone and messed it up. As we look to elect a leader of this country, perhaps we fear that whoever gets elected will mess it up. Politics seem to be everywhere these days; on the news, conversations in the coffee shop, pretty much everywhere we turn we hear about the presidential race. We may have the tendency to freak out and fear what might happen. But as Christians we do not put our hope in a president or political government; we put our faith in Christ.

The Catholic Church teaches that the small communities and families are the basic cell of our society. We do not place our hope in a political party or government leader but in Christ. Christ who is found in a mother who cares for a sick child, a father who teaches his kids how to share, or a volunteer who helps those most in need. It is not Clinton or Trump who truly have the power to make the world a better place but you and me through our love for others.

I have been impressed how Holy Spirit Parish has done this during the Year of Mercy. We have provided gallons of baby formula for needy mothers and their babies; we sent hundreds of letters to people who are homebound or imprisoned here in the Dubuque County Jail and in the State Penitentiary; we have collected and keep collecting tones of food to give to the poor through the food bank. There was not no government mandate or political law that made us

do this. It was the love of Christ in you and me that has made our community and the world a better place.

Today we have a family that brings their child for the sacrament of baptism. It is this family, and our family, that has the true power to change the world, not through foreign policy or creating more jobs but through the love they share. Mom and dad will have to make sacrifices out of love for this child, and through that love and the grace of baptism this child will go out into the world to share that same love and sacrifice and help others in need. Say what you will about possible political candidates but I am placing my hope in this family, in you and me and the love that we show to make the world a better place.

If we are placing all our hopes and fears in a political candidate then we may well be doomed come election time. But we can have peace knowing that our hope is not in president Obama or the next president. Christ is our savior, and it is in him that we place our hope for the world to be a better place. In the coming months we may elect a new leader of our country. It can be easy to become frustrated and fearful of what may happen. But as I look out at all of us gathered here today to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, I am filled with hope because I know it is not an economic program or foreign policy that will change the world; it is the love of this family, the love of you and me that will make the world a better place.