

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading from the Gospel according to St Luke** (*Luke 6:35-36*)

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection – Be merciful to others so that our heart is open to receive God's mercy**

**To receive God's mercy, we must show mercy to others.** Without exception, all of us are sinners in great need of God's mercy. God has limitless mercy to forgive all our sins every time we turn to Him in true repentance. However, true mercy comes with justice. *Jesus tells us: But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins (Matthew 6:15).* Though we do not deserve it, God forgives us our sins if we ask in true repentance. There is great rejoicing in heaven when even one sinner repents (cf. Luke 15:7). True repentance paves the way to salvation. Even the grace of repentance is a free gift from God. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5). Unfailingly, God shows us mercy. Unfailingly, we must show mercy to others so that we remain open to receive God's mercy.

**To be merciful is to imitate the Heavenly Father.** God the Father gives the world the sacrifice of His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ in atonement for the sins of all sinners. It is a great gift that costs Him dearly. The immense sufferings of Jesus during His life on earth especially during His Passion on the Cross are also felt greatly by the Heavenly Father as the Father and Son are so united that they are one (cf. John 10:30). Despite the immensity of the gift of salvation through the shedding of the Precious Blood of His Son, the Heavenly Father does not ask for much in return: only true repentance for our own sins, and love and acceptance of His Son as our Saviour. Thus, to be merciful like the Father is to love others unconditionally, asking nothing in return and doing it only for the glory of God. To love the Heavenly Father is to imitate Him.

**Mercy comes in concrete loving actions.** *I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me (Matthew 25:36).* The seven corporal works of mercy include: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead. Spiritual works of mercy involve helping others in their spiritual and emotional needs: counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offenses, bear wrongs patiently and pray for the living and the dead. God wants us to love others with the same love that He loves us. *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters (1 John 3:16).*

**Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me (Matthew 25:40).** This is a very wonderful promise of Christ and a great teaching. It should motivate us to remember the presence of God in others and to love others to our best ability. This unique teaching is borne out of great love God has for every one of His children. Can a mother be indifferent when her child is suffering? God's love and care surpass that of the best mother. *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18).* God's presence is very real in those who are unwanted, down-trodden, marginalized, violated, manipulated and suffering, all those on the receiving end of the selfish actions of mankind. Far from being absent in the midst of all the sadness, injustice, violence, cruelty, and destruction in this world, God is present in and very close to all who suffer from the lack of love of others around them.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, when You died on the Cross the source of life gushed forth for souls and an ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. Again and again You forgive us our sins whenever we approach You in true repentance. You show goodness and mercy to all including those who reject You and do not acknowledge Your love or promises. You are like the father of the prodigal son patiently awaiting his return home. Fill me and all people with Your love and compassion so that we can show merciful love to those who are in corporal or spiritual need whether or not they deserve it. Help us to be merciful so that our hearts are always open to receive Your mercy, for which we are in great need. You promise our reward will be great if we are merciful (cf. Luke 6:35). Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)