

***Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time***  
***February 23, 2025***  
***Year of the Holy Spirit***

*“With what assurance does that person pray who harbors animosity toward someone who has offended him?” (Anonymous, Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 14)*

They say when you grow older, time seems to move faster. With the amount of Mardi Gras decorations, balls, pictures and parades, one must realize the Season of Lent is quickly approaching. A familiar question will arise in our minds finding its way into our discussions: “What are you giving up this year?” What if I attempt an answer to this question for all of us? How about we all decide to “Give Up Jesus” this Lent? I believe if we were to make this our Lenten battle cry, then we would understand the line from Saint Matthew’s Gospel we heard proclaimed today: *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”* (Matthew 6:36).

As Catholics, we are privileged to be the recipients of numerous promises from God. *“And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28:20). *“And I say to thee . . . I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* (Matthew 16:18). *“So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name.”* (John 16:22-23).

We often pray asking God to be merciful to us. I dare say; we expect God to be faithful to His promises and offer us His mercy. We never consider the condition of His mercy saying to Him: “Forgive me, be merciful to me, (unaware of the following line) AS I offer forgiveness and mercy to others.”

The mercy of God comes at a price. It involves more than just you or I forgiving others. To receive the mercy of God, I must demand He sacrifice His Son. I have to yell out, “Give up your Son, Give Up Jesus.” I must steel myself to see His Mother holding the tortured lifeless body of her Son as in The Pieta. We want the benefits of His mercy; therefore, we must accept the price of His mercy. And, we must be willing to accept the condition His mercy requires. We are to show mercy to others, not solely to friends, but all we encounter. My family, one day, when our time is done, we will stand before God hoping and praying the life we lived, coupled with His mercy, was enough to allow us entry into Heaven. While time is still available to us, I think it best to ask ourselves IF we have shown the same mercy toward others that the broken, bloodied Body of His Son requires us to do.