



7-9-2023

Last Sunday we learned of God's great love for us in all the readings, and that He brings us salvation through an open heart to receive the gifts of baptism and repentance. As such, we see that God will love us, even though we do not always love Him. But remember, if you give him only half your heart, He can make you only 50% happy!

The reason most of us are what we are -- mediocre Christians "up" one day, "down" the next -- is simply because we refuse to let God work on us. Because no one discovers anything big unless he humbles himself and sees his smallness before God, only then can he begin to perceive the image and likeness that was created in us. Only then may we begin to seek perfection in God.

We always seem to make the fatal mistake of thinking that it is what we do that matters; when really what matters is what we let God do to us. "Contemplation must not be lived as a form of self-absorption; it must enlarge your heart to embrace all humanity, especially those who suffer."

We have freedom only to give (our heart) away. To whom do you give yours? You give it either to your moods, to the hour, to your egotism, to creatures, or to God. The real test of a Christian is not how much he loves his friends, but how much he loves his enemies.

The essence of prayer is not the effort to make God give us something. Prayer, then, is not just informing God of our needs, for God already knows them. Rather, the purpose of prayer is to give God the opportunity to bestow the gifts He will give us when we are ready to accept them.

The person who thinks only of himself says only prayers of petition; the one who thinks of his neighbor says prayers of intercession; whoever thinks only of loving and serving God says prayers of abandonment to God's will, and this is the prayer of the saints.

The Lord hears us more readily than we suspect. It is our listening to God that needs to be improved. And this Sunday, we will explore this skill in more detail as we contemplate God's Word.

Yours in Christ,
Deacon Hicks