

Eve of the Fast of the Assumption – God’s Mercy and Compassion

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX
August 7, 2016
Gospel Reading: Mark 2:1-11*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today’s Gospel reading is a familiar and moving one, which many of us have heard before and teaches us of God’s mercy and compassion. It is the story of a paralytic who is lowered through the roof by his friends. It begins with Christ preaching in a home and the multitude is so great, that there is no room to enter through the doorway. The paralytic’s friends, noticing this, decide to climb on the roof, tear it apart and then lower their paralytic friend down before Christ on his mat. Christ, seeing the great faith that these men have, heals the paralytic and taking his mat, leaves. All those present are amazed and exclaim that such things have never taken place before.

There is another story of a pious man who goes into the forest and sees a fox that has no legs. Curious as to how this fox has remained alive this long, he decides to stay and watch. A few moments later a tiger comes with food in its mouth. It rips the prey in half and gives half of it to the fox, while the tiger eats his portion. Amazed at what has happened, the man decides to come back the next day and he witnesses the same thing.

Returning from the forest the man thinks about God’s mercy and all of a sudden says to himself, “I will also lie in a corner and put my hope in God’s compassion”. The man lied down for an entire month and, nearly dead, suddenly hears a voice with says, “Oh you who walks the wrong path. Open your eyes and understand the truth. Follow the example not of the fox, but the tiger”.

Today’s Gospel reading and this story show us two very important things: first, that God’s mercy and compassion are real and second, God’s mercy and compassion must be now.

We see that God’s mercy and compassion are real in this world, but only through our hands and deeds. We cannot expect mercy and compassion to come down to us on a silver platter from heaven. If we want to see mercy and compassion in this merciless and uncompassionate

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
August 7, 2016*

world, then we have to do it. This is what the four friends realized with their paralytic friend and so also the tiger in feeding the fox.

The second thing we realize is that God's mercy and compassion must be shown now to others. We cannot wait to help others, but must act immediately for the betterment of another. Again, the four friends who helped the paralytic realized this. Of course, they could have waited for Christ to finish preaching and then come out and pass by them, but they knew that their friend needed mercy and compassion at that very moment, thus, they climbed and opened the roof and lowered their friend right there. The tiger also realized that he needed to first help the fox and then eat. He came over with food and immediately shared what he had.

So often people look up to God for help, but never look around at the help God is sending. We must look up to God and ask for help and then look to see whom He has sent. After that, we should look up again and thank God for the mercy and compassion He has sent through the hands and works of others.

In this world that is full of violence, tragedy, hunger, persecution and uncertainty, we are called to show God's mercy and compassion to others. Let us make mercy and compassion a reality in this world and let us do it now, not next year or next month or next week or next paycheck, but now.

Amen.