

The Essence of Giving

What is the essence of giving to the Lord? Pope Francis shares that “God does not ask of us anything that he himself has not first given us.” And, “Only those who have first allowed Jesus to wash their own feet can then offer this service to others.” We must realize what the Lord has done for us to be able to authentically share with others the good news and be the good news to others. To the degree that we see that it is good news and to the degree that it touches us – to that degree with we be inspired and able to give to others.

Let us say we have been forgiven. Let us say we realize how much we have messed up. Let us say we realize that we have offended the Lord deeply who only loves us and wants the best for us. Let us say that we are hurt by our offenses to the Lord. Let us say that even though we don’t deserve any second chances the Lord says to us, “I really do love you and want you as close to me as possible and I completely forgive you and will completely forget that this ever happened since you sincerely confessed it to me.” I have offended the most important person of all time. And He forgave me! And He loves me! Wow!! Good news. When we realize how much we have done in offense and how much we really have been forgiven, then the beatitude of “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted” becomes real for us. We must realize how much we have been given, how much we have been forgiven, how great the gift of life is and the grace we have been given to live it. That the God of the universe is at our feet washing them to cleanse us for our journey. That God loved us first when we were sinners. That God seeks us out as lost sheep and rejoices over us when we respond to Him.

The essence of giving is imitation of Christ who did not come to be served but to serve. What is life? Why are we on this planet? Jesus says we are here to give, not to receive. But in giving and emptying ourselves out then we start receiving. As we sow, we reap. Ask, you will receive. Seek, you will find. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all things will be given to you. Give and you will receive. Carry your cross and die for others and you will rise. God gives us life. We give it to others. And others receive life. Feed others with the fruit of your life and your heart will grow the more you give.

Give a little extra when you can, where you can, especially when no one is looking. God will give back to you. God *is* giving to all of us. When we give to others it opens our heart to receive what God is already giving to us. The sun is shining and the rain is falling. We need to open the petals of our life and show the beauty that God has created in us to others. Then opened up we will be nourished by the sun and rain and grow into who God created us to be. We grow through giving. We learn through giving. We become our best selves by giving our best to others and to God through others.

The essence of giving is realizing how much we have been given and giving back. “Lord you have amazingly, humbly washed my feet. Lord you have forgiven me for the unbelievably hurtful things I have done to you. If the Lord of the universe can bend down and wash my dirty, smelly feet, what can I not do for others?”

I forgive you. I honor you. You are one who the Lord has forgiven too. The Lord loves you and died for you. Let me help you. Let me seek ways to make your life better. It is the least I can do. (Remember I hurt the Lord and He forgave me!) You deserve a better life and I will do something to help you. I love you and will give, because I have been loved.

What more can we do when we see love pouring forth from the cross...?