



Précis of my homily for Chrism Mass

Our Indulgent God

This evening, as you arrived at the cathedral, we invited you to enter through the Door of Mercy... I often hear questions about the plenary indulgence associated with this practice... I've tried to understand such a complicated topic following a few indications from Pope Francis. Here are three lessons from my musings.

First, indulgence is not a thing, a kind of pass that we earn by accomplishing some quasi-magical acts. Indulgence is not a thing; it is a quality, a quality that we sometimes find in humans, a quality we recognize eminently in God. God gives us life, raises us up when we fall, heals our wounds, sends his Son to walk with us, gives us his Spirit to be our life. Indulgence is the love of God for us, faithful, unconditional, eternal.

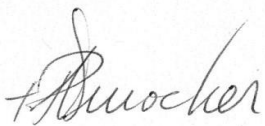
Second, God is not satisfied to forgive our sins. God also wants to help us heal the wrong we have done. In his great mercy God forgives us AND helps us to repair the world. In contemporary Judaism, an expression has spread in recent decades: Tikkun Olan - which in Hebrew means 'repair the world'. I suggest that we Catholics should also learn this beautiful expression - Tikkun Olan - because we, as heirs of the Covenant, we share in the responsibility of repairing the world.

According to this evening's Gospel, Christ was anointed and sent by the Father 'to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim to the captives release, and they find the blind sight, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year granted by the Lord.' My friends, we meet this evening in the heart of such a good year, a jubilee year. And there are among us the poor, the captives, the

blind and the oppressed. There is still a world to repair. Christ's mission is ours! God, ever indulgent, gives us his grace to help us respond to this mission. His Spirit heals us. His Spirit empowers us to repair the world.

Third, indulgence is not a private reality, but a communal reality. As soon as Jesus was consecrated to his mission, he sought collaborators in this great task. Thus was born the Church. God unites us to Christ and to each other, building up a network of grace, of goodness and of holiness, a network called the communion of saints. The Father's indulgence sets us in this network so that together we might help each other heal our wounds, discern wisely, to act with courage in repairing the world.

Strengthened by God's indulgence, we go forth to practice the seven spiritual and seven corporal works of mercy and so repair the world. However, in our diocese, we have identified as our pastoral priority a fifteenth work of mercy: affirmation. Affirming another helps that person discover that he is part of this network of men and women dedicated to repairing the world. Affirming another is saying she makes a difference in our world and that her presence is important. Affirming another is to practice indulgence... a bit like God.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "P. Durocher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+ Paul-André Durocher
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