

Good Morning.

Thank you to your Rector, Fr. Robert, for giving me this opportunity to address you. It will always be a great privilege. Also, thanks to Mr. Ron Graham and his wife Betty for their friendship and especially for their support to our Diocese to put all the lighting system in the Social Hall of the Anglican Center in the City of Tuxtepec, State of Oaxaca. Ron thank you for facilitating this opportunity to be with all of you.

Allow me to describe in a few words the Diocese of the Southeast. It is a young Diocese with a large geographical area; it includes 7 (seven) States: Veracruz, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan and Quintana Roo. We only have an Anglican presence in four States. There are 19 congregations and 8 clergy. Most of our congregations are in rural areas and are Indigenous. I hope someday you may visit us, we will be waiting for you.

Well, now I will make reference to the readings we have heard today of the Word of God. What does it say to us, here and now?

I quote from the Gospel of Luke 6: 27 and 28

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

Many of us will say how difficult it is to fulfill these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, only He can do it because He is God and human at the same time. It is impossible for us. But Christ Jesus in these words written in this Gospel of Luke challenges us, we can love not only our family or our most beloved friends; He invites us to love our enemies, to forgive those who hate us or who have wronged us, to pray for those who harm us to bless everyone who curses us.

Today the Lord of Life awaits an answer from us. What will we answer? Is it possible for us or not to do it? Listen to the following story that will help us understand that it is possible to do what our Lord Jesus Christ is asking of us.

In the book of Genesis we read: "for God sent me before you to preserve life."
Gen. 45: 5b

These are wording that Joseph say to his brothers in a very difficult time.

Both quotes have profound teachings. If we remember the story of Joseph, we will find negative feelings of his brothers, which leads them to plan his death. Joseph's brothers are very jealous because their parents love more Joseph; he is at home, and they don't let him go out with the other brothers to take care of the sheep in the fields because there are dangerous wild animals and people who steal the sheep.

Joseph's parents (Jacob and Rebecca) from time to time would send Joseph to his brothers to bring them some food and water. But Joseph had to return home immediately. This bothered a lot Joseph's brothers, who planned to disappear him, and that is how the brothers decided to sell Joseph to one of the many caravans of merchants that passed through the region where they grazed their sheep. Imagine how much envy, or rather, how much hate toward the younger brother.

The brothers told their parents, Jacob and Rebecca, that Joseph had been attacked by a lion and swallowed. They were only able to collect part of the bloody clothes, which they showed to their parents. They mourned Joseph for several days.

How did Joseph feel? As he was crying and with much fear his buyers took him away. Joseph may have been very upset with his brothers.

But the ways of God are unknown to us. Joseph arrived in Egypt and thanks to the gifts that God had given him, he soon becomes a very important person in Egypt. We know what happened: there was abundance in food production for seven years and scarcity that reached the entire region for another seven years. It is this shortage that causes Joseph's brothers arrival at Egypt to buy seeds to feed themselves in company of their parents. A great meeting between brothers. Some fearful because they have found the younger brother alive and had a lot of power. They feared for their lives. Joseph had the opportunity to take revenge of his brothers but he did not.

Joseph told them: "Do not fear, because God has sent me before you to save your life." Joseph speaks to his brothers with conviction, with much humility, and he invites them to return together with their parents and take a safe place to spend the years of scarcity. Humility and conviction: God sent me here first to save your life.

Joseph does not seek retribution, he does not seek revenge, he does not feel hatred for what his brothers did to him, Joseph continues to believe in the God that his parents taught him; God-fearing and trusting in Him, He invites them all to move to a safe place and close to where He is.

It seems that Jesus came and said: "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." Was it not this Joseph's attitude towards his brothers? Is it not what Jesus asks us to do also? How can we respond in the here and now to these words of Jesus?

The answer is given by Joseph: "for God sent me before you to preserve life."

Not only does Joseph forgive them and loves them, but also blesses his brothers and prayed for them, he convinced them not to fear, because it is God who sent me before you to save your life.

My sisters and brothers, do not fear it is possible to fulfill these words of Jesus, let us get closer to one another and forgive ourselves, recognize our faults, our mistakes and that at the time of the peace, it be true, so that we may start walking in love, as Christ has loved us.

God bless you. Amen, Amen