

Fr. Martin's Reflection – July 24, 2022

Then Abraham said: "Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty? Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it?"

**"Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." He said to them,
"When you pray, say:
Father, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins
for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,
and do not subject us to the final test."**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sometimes we need to be reminded of the intimate relationship God wishes to have with his people. I feel this can be clearly seen in our first reading and our gospel reading. We have all heard of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and how it was a very inhospitable place for people of faith and for the stranger. Abraham had obviously come to realize that it was destined to be destroyed. We see this intimate relationship between Abraham and God, with Abraham bartering with God to save the town if there are some 'good' people left in the place. What is also wonderful about this is how God hopes there are some good people in the town because God doesn't want to destroy his people – "I will spare it if I find 50 good people, I will spare it if I find 40 good people, I will spare it if I find 20, I will spare it if I find ..., and the debate goes on.

Let us replace Sodom and Gomorrah with ourselves; will God find anything good within us? Will God find compassion, forgiveness, love, or faith? Is there anything good within us that God could use to give us salvation and everlasting life? So many people use Sodom and Gomorrah as a stick to punish others and to justify their right to condemn them. In the prayer Jesus teaches his disciples, he removes the stick of punishment and the right to condemn and replaces it with the prayer of forgiveness and compassion: "... and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test."

Let us seek forgiveness of those we have hurt and the strength to forgive those who have hurt us. God's grace, love, and blessings for the week ahead,

Fr. Martin