

Today's homily / Szentbeszed a mai napra - sajnos nincs magyar fordítás!

(Mt18:21-19:1) Some of us have more to suffer than others. Life doesn't seem fair. In the end, death deals us all a final blow. If we fixate on life's sorrows, we might be tempted to think that God doesn't care about us. This take on life may be human reason's default setting. In today's first reading, the prophet Ezekiel, foretells a disaster that is about to befall God's people of old: they are going into exile where they will become unfortunate slaves of Babylon's king. Until then, they seem beyond correction: "They have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear." Why then does the Lord God trouble them further?

Indeed, the prophecy against them is even choreographed since Ezekiel's oracle involves digging a hole in the city wall! It's easy to suppose that God is simply rubbing it in, yet nothing could be further from the truth. The Lord foretells their downfall in advance lest, smarting in their land of exile, the Jews should suppose that God does not care about their welfare.

Today's gospel teaches us so much more about the workings of divine providence than the philosophers could ever discover on their own. In the parable, the shoes that fit us best belong to the unforgiving servant. Like him, we too are creditors who were once debtors. Like him, we too were completely surprised by mercy. The best we had dared to hope for was strict justice: ever more time to pay our impossible debt. Then, out of the blue, it was unilaterally forgiven and we were set free! Like the unforgiving servant, we too can forget about all this when the time comes for us to deal with our own debtors who, in comparison, owe us a trifle! Reason doesn't see that we are all debtors due to original sin.

Faith does! Reason counts on justice. Faith counts on mercy. Reason doesn't see how apparent enemies like justice and mercy can kiss. Faith knows that they were indeed perfectly reconciled in the cross of Christ whereby Our Lord paid the impossible debt that we owed.

Today, we celebrate the feast day of St. Clare, who, together with St.

Francis, co-founded the Poor Clares. Although the friars didn't own anything in common, influential churchmen thought this kind of austerity impractical for cloistered religious women. But St. Clare persisted resolutely and finally obtained permission for her Sisters to live this strict observance of poverty when Pope Gregory IX granted her the celebrated Privilegium Paupertatis. Religious poverty truly is a privilege – and not just for Franciscans. Rather than fixating on life's sorrows, the vow of poverty allows all religious to fixate on life's blessings! The desire to enrich ourselves stems from our misguided attempt at securing our own happiness. This in turn arises from our default presupposition; namely, that God isn't really concerned about our wellbeing so we'd

better fend for ourselves! If today's gospel teaches us anything, it is that God – represented in today's parable by the king – answers our prayers beyond our wildest expectations. If God has provided so superabundantly for our eternal bliss, shouldn't we allow Him to be the principle architect of our earthly happiness as well? Through the vow of poverty, we give Him a free hand! So be it! Amen!