

Novena of Grace Day 9 Homily

11 March 2018

1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

Ephesians 5:8-14

As we celebrate day nine of our novena, we draw to a close these nine days in which we have gathered together as community, as church, as the body of Christ to celebrate this wonderful moment, this graced experience in which we have bound ourselves to one another in uniting our individual prayers together, weaving together our wants, needs, and desires, all those important matters of friends and family, health and security, healing and forgiveness, compassion, mercy, love and all that is precious to each one of us. We have brought these matters and shared them in an opportunity to pray for one another and with one another, asking that Francis Xavier pray with us as well, intervening on our behalf. Yes, we have prayed together in this sacred space, been nourished as a community in word and sacrament, and together we have also looked for the ways in which God continues to touch our lives so that we might know in new ways or old ways made new God's love and peace made possible even in a broken world, even through our own brokenness.

Today is the close of our novena of grace, but our spiritual journey continues. Though for the past nine days we have come together with a greater intent and purpose to pray with one another and for one another, we can continue to do so, to pray with and for one another, by choosing to gather in this sacred space as a community and share with one another the graces of this novena that we have experienced, and the graces that have yet to unfold.

When our novena began, we heard the parable of the lost son who, when returning to his father, was sorrowful and penitent. What an unexpected joy it must have been when his expectations encountering a disappointed or angry father were shattered by a father who ran to greet his son. He had no choice but to run after him, to embrace him, to celebrate his return, and welcome him home. He had no choice because this is what love does. Love does such things. In our Gospel today, Jesus' love and compassion brought sight to a man born blind. Able to see, the man's world is a world of new opportunities. But others, especially those in

positions of authority, cannot accept that this has been done. Believing that the man's blindness was the result of his or his parents sin, they cannot seem to see for themselves how God's love does such things, removing sin and turning our gaze back towards God. Refusing to accept this, they throw the man out. But just like the father who ran towards his son when he saw still a long distance away, Jesus hears that the man who was born blind was thrown out and he goes to him. My friends, our journey is not over. Our search for God in all things is not over with the close of our novena. In fact, maybe what the novena did for us was to shine a light on our path so that we might see more clearly, and understand more deeply the kindness and goodness that God is working in our lives. No, our search is not over, and God will never stop searching for us, coming to us, embracing us, loving us. God will not stop because God is love, and love does such things.