

FEBRUARY 15, 2025 FATHER HENK VAN MEIJEL

In today's readings, and usually, we have the psalm right in the middle, and the psalm, it reminds us of the shortness of our life. Our life here on earth, in the scheme of things, is just a breath, and it is over before we know it. And it says, um, we are like grass which springs up in the morning, and flowers-- and fades by evening. How short our life is. But in every age, although we have short lives, as the response said, God is with us. God is with us. And it's something to pray with, and especially in the context of today's readings.

We start with the Book of Genesis, and the-- the myth, yesterday we heard about how Eve gave the fruit to Adam and so on, how the snake spoke about that. But today, we have them being caught just like little children being caught. And-- and it is a mythical story to teach us something. And how human the-- the man says, "No, no, no! "I didn't do it. She gave it to me!" And the woman, of course, says, "No, no, no! But the snake did it." Always pointing the fingers. Reminds me a little bit of-- I don't watch TV anymore, but I used to watch the cartoon, Bart Simpson, and if something would happen, the first thing Bart would say, "I didn't do it. "I didn't do it." Not taking responsibility.

But there is this, also at the core of our-- how we are humans, and, uh, we are a broken people. We are trying to-- uh, to try to be someone, or to try to protect our integrity no matter what happens. We don't have to look far around, we just have to read the news, how, um, people we look up to, how they get away with the greatest lies and so on. How sports celebrities are being venerated, and celebrities in entertainment, how often some misfortune happens to them and they were not as great as this, and lived a short life.

But in all that mess, God is at work. God is at work, and God, of course, we see in the gospel reading of today, how God, of course, Jesus Christ, at that time, in that generation, the feeding of the 4,000. There is not enough food, and Jesus feeds. And spiritually feeds us. And it is about that spiritual food God gives us. And we so often forget that in the business of our lives, as we are trying to build the house, pay the mortgage, have a big house, have a big car. And then finding out at the end of our life, as we come to the end, it's all meaningless. I did not have to come to the end of my life, luckily, to figure it out.

In midlife, I saw that everything was just foolishness, and that everything belongs to God. And how God comes always, intercedes in history, and, of course, today, we celebrate Our Lady Saturday, how Mary so often intercedes in history. In every generation, we can go back and Mary was there, showing us a sign. Also, today, actually on the Universal calendar, we celebrate Michael Sopocko. A lot of people would not know, uh, blessed Michael Sopocko. He was the spiritual director of, uh, uh, of Sister Faustina. Sister Faustina, who had the-- the mystical, uh, vision of the Divine Mercy painting. And we have, in so many churches, the Divine Mercy painting.

And so many people pray with it. Again, how God intercedes in history. And he brought Michael Sopocko, who was a professor of pastoral theology, into Sister Faustina's life, when her own sisters were saying, "Sister Faustina, "there is something wrong with your head. "There is something wrong." And Michael Sopocko, the first thing he did as a spiritual director, send her for psychological testing and there was nothing wrong with her brain. She was just fine.

Michael Sopocko became one of the great advocates of Sister Faustina's work. And it's thanks to him that we venerate that great image in so

many churches, where so many people get strength from praying with Divine Mercy, to a merciful God who intercedes in our messy lives. We can mess up as much as we want, but God is always there with His mercy, and showing us the way forward. Amen.