

Day 3 Tuesday 6th March Homily

The focus of the first reading: the Jewish religion has come apart and the Jewish people cry to God: "do not disappoint us"

"treat us gently as you yourself are gentle and very merciful": this is a central theme of the Old Testament

Like in Jeremiah I have loved you with an everlasting love

And in Isaiah: You are mine, you are precious in my eyes.

New Testament: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

The theme of mercy: the theme of the ministry of Pope Francis.

Forgiveness is not always an easy thing ... it sounds easy. People say: "Move on in your life; get on with it.

But in the circumstances of our lives it's not so easy, is it. There's no simple formula. I have to live the process myself.

The best I can do sometimes is just to pray for that person.

St Francis Xavier Story: the Christians in Nagasaki

The Cause of Tagashi Nagai: died in 1951 of Leukemia: a physician and a pioneer in radiology which gave eventually him leukemia.

He was not satisfied with the ancestral religion and began searching.

He ended up in a household of "hidden Christians" in Nagasaki: he found his heart open to the faith and married the daughter of the family named Midori. They had 4 or 5 children

9th August 1945 the atom bomb dropped on the epicentre of the catholic community in Nagasaki. Utter devastation!

Up to 75,000 people died

At the time the bomb fell Dr. Nagai was working in the radiology department of Nagasaki Medical College Hospital and was badly injured because of the building collapse. But with the rest of the staff he helped the victims of the atomic explosion.

On returning home he entered the house and all he found of his wife was her atomized rosary beads

The two children survived.

Tagashi builds a rudimentary house and continued. He preached peace and forgiveness and died in 1951.

His faith was strong but his heart was broken

He wrote the book: "The bells of Nagasaki". With the money earned he planted cherry trees all around.

Mercy, forgiveness, love: mercy till the end

St Francis Xavier had pity and understanding for people.

Blessed John Sullivan as well.

In the things that come our way in life may we also have that mercy. Father forgive them: they know not what they do.