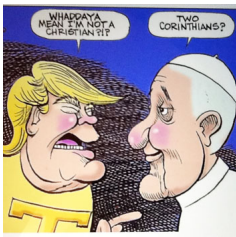


***And hope does not disappoint because  
the love of God has been poured into our hearts..Romans***



**Mercy and Power: Pope Francis: Feb. 24 Address:**

**The Holy Father explained that various passages of the Bible speak about kings and men of power, and their arrogance and abuses. Demonstrating that their wealth and power can be used for the common good IF placed at the service of the poor and of all with justice and charity. However, as often occurs, if lived as a privilege, with selfishness and arrogance, they become tools of corruption and death."**

**Reflection on today's Readings:**

The Holy Spirit has "been poured into our hearts." Lent is our special time to stir up our hearts, not with fear nor trembling, but with love and compassion. Siren voices are stirring up fear and anger in our land.

To be bellicose, belligerent, bombastic is to stir up the crowds. To pander to our worst selves.

And as the Holy Father observes "selfishness and arrogance become tools of corruption and death."

Once upon a time in Italy there was a man who promised to make his land "great again!"

He was bellicose, beligerent, and bombastic, and the crowds loved him.

His name: Benito Mussolini.

His memory casts his shadow over our times!:

The Gospel

The Samaritan woman is the ultimate outsider. She goes to the well in the heat of the day rather than in the morning when all the other women went because they despised her.

Yet it is with her that Jesus wishes to have a dialog.

**Then he sends HER to spread his good news!**

**His disciples are amazed.**

**And so we pray:**

**Today the handicapped are mocked**

**by a politician,**

**and the masses applaud.**

**The migrants are scapegoated as the cause of all our problems,**

**and the masses applaud!**

**These are "the outsiders" of our times.**

**Help us to have the wisdom supplied by the Spirit,**

**to sit with them, the Samaritan Woman, and Jesus**

**by the side of the well.**

**Help us to draw up the living waters of:**

**compassion,**

**mercy,**

**acceptance.**

**Deliver us from bombast and beligerence.**

**As we make our way on our Lenten Journey.**

**Amen**