



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just one of his inspirational homilies.

Fr. Danny Murphy – 24th Sunday of the Year 2017

Today we'll reflect on the scriptures and then we'll reflect on the story. Our first reading and our Gospel reading speak about the importance of forgiveness. How we must forgive everyone every time. It seems to me that if forgiveness is to be complete, we might also have to forgive God; we might also have to forgive our self. Do you need to forgive God? After 9-11, so many people asked: "Where was God? How could God allow this to happen?" After Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, some people asked the same questions. Do you ever ask yourself, "Where was God, how did God allow this to happen to me?" Is there something in your life for which you need to forgive God? Do I need to forgive myself? A priest friend of mine tells us this sad story. He celebrated a funeral Mass for a forty-two year old

parishioner. Twenty years prior to that, when she was twenty-two, she was a stunningly attractive and really talented actress. When she was auditioned for a big part in a Broadway play, she froze – she missed her cues, forgot her lines and she broke down into tears. Of course she did not get the part and became so disappointed in herself, that she stopped taking care of herself. She became an alcoholic, she became obese, she died at forty-two. At her wake, her broken-hearted mother said that right to the very end her daughter would lament: "I blew my chance to become a successful actress." She never forgave herself. Is there something in my life for which I need to forgive myself? Now we'll reflect upon this story: a wise saying from a wise grandmother: "There's no ill-wind, that doesn't blow in some good!" Irma was an ill-wind, let's see if some good blew in with Irma. In the weeks leading up to Irma we were encouraged to make practical preparations for the hurricane. Hopefully, those practical preparations helped us to weather the storm. Now, please allow me to make some spiritual suggestions so that, please God no, but if there should be another hurricane sometime, we might be spiritually prepared. My favorite scripture passage is Romans 8:28, St. Paul's letter to the Romans chapter eight, verse twenty-eight which says "All things work for the Good for those who love God." Was I able to apply Romans 8:28 to Hurricane Irma, not that all things are good, no, not at all, Irma was not good, no hurricane is good. But can I trust that God, in some way or another, at some time or another, will bring good from the mess. Every day I try to hear God say to me, "I am with you – I am with you." During Irma, did I hear God say to me, "I am with you." And did that bring me

any peace? At every Mass, after the Our Father, we pray: "Deliver us O Lord from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our day, so that with the help of your mercy we may always be free from sin and SAFE FROM ALL DISTRESS." Did those words come alive for me during the hurricane? In the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed: "Father let this cup pass from me, but not my will, your will be done!" Every time we pray the Our Father, we say "Thy will be done." Was I able to say those or similar words preparing or enduring Hurricane Irma. It has been said that holiness is less a matter of what we do and more a matter of what we allow to happen. In my frequent and fervent prayers that Irma spare me and Vero Beach, did I pray just as frequently, just as fervently that Irma spare everyone everywhere, since we're all one? The bottom line in the story of Adam and Eve eating the apple is that they wanted to know as much as God knows. There were a lot of things, prior to or during Irma that I didn't know: was it going this way or that way or some other way? Should I evacuate? If so, when should I evacuate? Where should I evacuate? Well, I still have running water. Will I lose electricity? If so, for how long? Will a tornado touch down? How well did I cope with the unknown? Maybe the wind adage is applicable: "There's no ill-wind that doesn't blow in some good." Please God, we'll never have to, but there should be another hurricane, will I be spiritually prepared?