



Merciful Like the Father

Prayer Discussion

SUGGESTED SETTING – Cruet (small glass container) of oil to symbolize healing. Small bowl with layer of cotton or absorbent toweling at the bottom.

INTRODUCTION – Taken from a Homily of Pope Francis
Vatican Radio, 3/13/2015

My dear brothers and sisters, I have often thought about how the Church might make clear its mission of being a witness to mercy. It is a journey that begins with a spiritual conversion. For this reason, I have decided to call an extraordinary Jubilee that is to have the mercy of God at its center. It shall be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live this Year in the light of the Lord's words, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Lk 6:36)" The Holy Year will begin on this coming Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (12/8/2015) and will end on November 20, 2016, the Sunday dedicated to Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

I am convinced that the whole Church will find in this Jubilee the joy needed to rediscover and make faithful the mercy of God, with which all of us are called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time. From this moment, we entrust this Holy Year to the Mother of Mercy, that she might turn her gaze upon us and watch over us.

Misericordiae Vultus – Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, 4/11/2016

MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER, is the “motto” of this Holy Year. In mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always freely, asking nothing in return. He comes to our aid whenever we call upon him. What a beautiful thing that the church begins her daily prayer with the words, “O God, come to my assistance. O lord, make haste to help me” (Ps 70:2)!

PAUSE TO REFLECT: How has “mercy” personally touched my life?

SONG – Mercy and Compassion, by Noel Miranda

(Google – Mercy and Compassion: Songs for Pope Francis. The song will be found on YouTube)

You are the mercy for us all
You are love and joy
You are our God, You are our God
You are compassion for the lost
You are grace and hope
You are our God, You are our God
Here, we meet you face to face
In the people who are longing to know who You are
Here, we long for Your embrace
And seek to know Your very heart
Jesus, You are mercy and compassion for us all
You are our Savior
Jesus, make us mercy and compassion for the world
Without fear, in perfect love
You are our God

You are freedom from all fear
Healing for our pain
You are our God, You are our God
You are our life, our truth, our way
You are love and grace
You are our God, You are our God
Here we meet you face to face
In the people longing to know who you are
Here we long for Your embrace
And seek to know Your very heart
Jesus, You are mercy and compassion for us all
You are our Savior
Jesus, make us mercy and compassion for the world
Without fear in perfect love
Jesus, You are mercy and compassion for us all
You are our Savior
Jesus, make us mercy and compassion for the world
Without fear in perfect love
You are mercy and compassion for us
You are our God.

First Reading – Luke 6: 27-36

But I tell you who hear me; Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you.

If anyone hits you on one cheek, let them hit the other too; if someone takes your coat, let that person have your shirt as well. Give to everyone who asks you for something, and when someone takes what

is yours, do not ask for it back. Do for others just what you want them to do for you. If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good only to those who do good for you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that. And if you lend only to those from whom you hope to get it back, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. No! Love your enemies and do good back to them. You will then have a great reward, and you will be sons and daughters of the Most High God. For he is good to the ungrateful and the wicked. **Be merciful just as your father is merciful.**

OTHER SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO MERCY – Read alternately

A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. (Eph.2: 4)

He forgives all your iniquity, he heals all your diseases, he redeems your life from destruction, he crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. (Ps.103:3-4)

Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you. (Mk.5:19)

Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you? (Mt.18:33)

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. (MT.5:7)

May the words of the Apostle accompany us: they who do acts of mercy, let them perform them with cheerfulness. (Rom.12:8)

For God has consigned all people to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all. (Rom.11:32)

Let us be brave then and approach God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us when we need it. (Heb. 4:16)

Be merciful to me, O God, Because of your constant love. (Ps.51:1)

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Where in my life do I need mercy?

What are some examples of mercy from the news media, our local community or family?

SECOND READING – Misericordia Vultus, (15) (25)

In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outmost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates. How many uncertain and painful situations there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich! During this Jubilee, the church will be called even more to heal these wounds, to

assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care. Let us not fall into humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine that prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism! Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask hypocrisy and egoism.

May the church echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid and love. May she never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort. May the church become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: "Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old" (PS 25:6)

BLESSING OF THE OIL

"Let this oil, symbolizing God's great healing mercy and love for us, strengthen us in our efforts to show mercy and compassion to others."

Pour some oil in the bowl.

ANNOINTING EACH OTHER – Using the oil in the bowl, make the sign of the cross on each other's forehead saying:

“Jesus, make us mercy and compassion for the world”

LISTEN ONCE AGAIN to the opening song: Mercy and Compassion