

“*Mercy Meets Need*”

Fifth Reflection for the Jubilee of Mercy

What Is Mercy?

Let us remind ourselves of what mercy is as we continue this great extraordinary Jubilee Year.

What is Mercy? Mercy is the application of charity to the needs of another person. This means that the act of loving selflessly, as God does, manifests itself by filling up something that is lacking in someone else’s life. God lacks nothing but we lack much.

The Mercy Granted Through Prayer

The church for all ages has gathered in prayer as well as taught all members to go before the Lord ceaselessly. For much of the church’s history earning a secure living and spending much time in prayer were mutually exclusive. This gave rise to individuals and groups of men and women who were supported by benefactors, including bishops, or by community division of labor to be able to find the mercy and joy of constant prayer. Most of these groups were known as religious orders.

A benefit of the group was that they needed to know how to read and write in order to read the psalms and scriptures during prayers. Most people had no reason to read or write in daily life let alone the money for the materials. The life of the orders became dependent upon the times of group prayer. Everything came to a halt five or six times a day including prayers in the middle of the night. Millions of Catholics devoted their lives to the pursuit of God’s mercy of granting holiness of life. Something is holy if it is set aside only for use to glorify God. Thus, members of the orders pursued daily lives that would constantly glorify the Heavenly King. *How many times a day do you take time to pray?*

All people have conflict with others in their lives—some slight and some very troubling. One great advantage of returning to prayer many times per day was that even if there was someone or some goings on which caused you immense anxiety in the order, you always knew that in only a few hours you would be returning to the beauty and serenity of the chapel and the presence of the divine who would rain His peace upon you. This was the great mercy found in religious life along with the security and friendship enjoyed.

The Greatest Mercy Found in Prayer

The greatest blessing of prayer is knowing that you are not and never will be alone. Once this is known you then want to be pleasing to the one you are with. But unlike human beings who need us to help fulfill them, God has no such need and only demands from us what we need for ourselves. So by His mercy we learn that all we need do is rest in Him. This is our greatest expression of trust because we are then saying that there is no need to pursue anything but the Father, through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. We then are on our way to holiness. We then sing praises and proclaim His mercy shown to us and those in all ages. This is why we open the door of mercy for the Jubilee Year at the Cathedral with vespers (evening prayer) led by our shepherd who calls each of us to the green pastures where we find rest from the wolves and dangers of the cliffs at the waters edge. *Do you pray? Do you feel the presence of one who refuses to leave your side? Are you willing to offer the time it takes to hear in the quiet of prayer the whispers revealing that you have found your beginning and your end?*

If we accept the gift of mercy in prayer we must share it. Like the monks and nuns who often served the missions of the church works of mercy are needed this year. *Give someone a prayer book especially if you think they will not use it for they may just do so. But tell them what you have come to know...that you are no longer alone.*