

“Mercy Meets Need”

First Reflection for the Jubilee of Mercy

What Is Mercy?

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 daily life of each person has been hobnailed by original sin. This means that what we need to live fully human lives (known as human goods) are not always offered to all or accepted by all. Therefore mercy always meets need. Memorize this definition for the coming year and think of what you lack in your life.

The Greatest Act Of Mercy

God created all material things to function as a unity. When this happens it is an evident reflection of the unity of the Holy Trinity. In order to know what the inner life of God is like, each human person has been given their individual freedom to choose to participate in a union with all things and persons around them. This is what each person of the Trinity does with each other. This is what love is. When we fail to do this as God has designed we simply cannot know what God is like. When Adam and Eve decided not to live in true union with the world around them it deprived the rest of us with the ability to fully live this way. Therefore, each person now has a tendency to live for themselves as individuals instead of connected to others. The Trinity shares all things completely with each other even their mind and will. We now tend to segment ourselves from others. When our true human needs are not met we tend to seek whatever brings the most available pleasure. This limits our lives even to the point of our ignoring God and resenting anyone or thing which limits the pleasures we seek including members of our own families - which Cain demonstrates so clearly as he kills his brother Abel.

In order to give mankind a new opportunity to experience this godly type of union God performed an act of mercy. God the Son personally entered the material world as a human like us to show us what is lacking in our knowledge and choices. To do this in a world of selfishness meant that he would be rejected by those around him even to his death on the Holy Cross. Once a person believes that Jesus of Nazareth is truly part of the Holy Trinity they can accept the way Jesus taught to live (love), and then can receive from the Church he established the graced ways of knowledge and strength to fill what is lacking in their lives. Be determined to seek what you lack in the coming year.

How We Receive Mercy

The greatest mercy we receive is faith in Christ Jesus as our Savior and baptism into the Catholic Church. Then we can experience Christ personally through Word and sacrament and prayer. The height of this experience is to partake in the great sign that we recognize and accept God's mercy. This is Holy Communion. First we accept the truth that to live in imitation of the life of Christ is our priority. Second we accept the mercy of Christ in the sacrament of Reconciliation which prepares us to receive Communion. To obtain these fully and often we are nurtured by the teachings and communal life of the Catholic Church. We need these and God in His Mercy provides them. During the Jubilee of Mercy we are especially encouraged to prepare for and receive Reconciliation and our priests have been asked to offer it in the most generous and merciful way possible. Start preparing now for your next confession.

How We Bring Mercy to Others

Anytime we provide something good that someone lacks in their life we are showing mercy. The greatest thing anyone can lack is faith in Jesus. The priority of all Catholics is to spread the Good News. The best way to prepare someone to receive it is to offer them the human goods they do not have. This happens when we perform the Spiritual and Corporal works of Mercy. The Pope has requested that we focus on these in the coming year. Choose one from each group that you will do more of in this Jubilee of Mercy.