

“*Mercy Meets Need*”

Sixth 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.

Pilgrims Now On the Way

A pilgrim is one who travels with a goal which will bring God’s blessings upon them when they complete the prescribed journey. The pilgrim’s journey is often viewed as a penance for sins. We are now on our way to complete a year’s journey aimed at finding God’s mercy along the road to the Father. Pilgrims are often helped by people of good will who try to keep the pilgrim on his journey so he can find God and therefore himself. This is to help the pilgrim live a better future bringing a new wisdom and perspective of peace and sacrifice to all they do. The key to the pilgrimage is that the end is not really an end if properly reached—it is a new beginning which extends into everlasting life. It is best looked at as a journey of a soul.

Ancient pilgrims had to walk. Their pilgrimages often took months or even years as in the case of the Holy Land. Ours is different. It will be walked in the footsteps that we have trod many times over. It is where we walk past our family members, our neighbors, those with whom we work and those that perhaps we fail to see along our path. It will see us engage with saint and sinner, those pleasant and caustic, those who inspire us and encourage us along the way and others who see no evil, hear no evil and speak of no evil. Our course is to seek the opportunities when God offers us His sweet mercy.

May we come to know in a greater way this year what we lack, not to see how others are better or worse off, but to foment the urgency within us to persist in our mission to receive and to offer others mercy as much as the Lord will allow the graces to accomplish.

The View From Behind

The greatest help on a pilgrimage does not come from those who supply the food or offer encouraging exclamations. It comes from the sacrificial witness of one’s fellow pilgrims. It is one thing to be convinced to make a run at the whole project but quite another when your provoker is leading ahead of you doing the drill. This shows the greater bond we strive for. We may want God above all but until we get to Him our place is with others who seek, so that one day perhaps we can all stand in the glory of the Lord. We are just made this way. We thank God that there are many who wish to be holy. It makes facing our own sins much easier.

No matter who we are we can increase the mercy of God which is reflected in our lives. No matter how we have sacrificed we can offer it with purer intent. No matter what our suffering has been it has only prepared us to be a better representative of God’s divine ability to reach out and pull us up from the ash pit. This is the kind of pilgrim we must be—a pilgrim of resolve to live life beyond its heartaches and its confusions, beyond its broken dreams and failed promises and especially beyond the doubts about belief in God. For these are not what a pilgrim finds at the end of his journey.....these are the things that he leaves behind at the roads edge. *Can you look up and forward? Will you help others find what they lack? Let us walk through the door of forgiveness and mercy together trusting what is on the other side.*