

“*Mercy Meets Need*”

Third 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.

Trusting Others

In America we are known to be very independent? This flows from several cultural legacies. Our ancestors originally came to America to escape the authority structures of Europe. Many times those authorities left those below them stuck in poverty and dependence and used them as pawns in whimsical acts of war. When the poor and those tired of having so little economic, political and religious control over their lives heard about the wide open spaces of America it did not take long for the most adventuresome among them to come here. This and the promise of wide open spaces of farmland resulted in generations of Americans that trusted their neighbors but was often skeptical of strangers. They did their own work and reaped their own harvest and clearly saw the advantage over their former homelands. They also wove into our culture the primacy of choosing our political leaders one man one vote. That sense of independence still exists in our land today.

The Catholic Church is an authority structure by nature because its head is Christ the Son of God. Unlike many others which are guided by a bloodline or sheer political power, the Church sees herself as provided leadership and guided in the truths she promotes by the Holy Spirit which was promised by Our Lord. The Lord's earthly authority was passed to St. Peter by Jesus Christ and passed down from him by the initiative of the Holy Spirit to others since then. Since Peter this office has been protector of the Gospel message, the holy sacraments and the doctrinal and moral teachings necessary for salvation held in deposit by the Church. Others called bishops share in these responsibilities but only the successor of Peter in Rome holds a prime position which serves to guide the entire Church. Accepting this authority can be a challenge today but in the end the heart of a Catholic must pursue the teachings of the Church and drink of God's mercy which fills one full. *Have you ever without coercion followed the advice or authority of another when you did not understand their demand or if you disagreed? Most all have. Certainly when a pope calls the world to walk the road to the Father the risk is slight even if the benefit is great.*

Deciding to Trust in Mercy

For this Jubilee Year our leadership has focused us on the mercy of God. By participating in the call of Pope Francis and Archbishop Lucas to participate you will have to make one or more acts of trust. Trust means you do something or you change an inner attitude without really knowing what will happen to you or others. *Can you trust the church's leadership by following the prescriptions for the year of mercy? Only by trust can you receive God's mercy and only by trust can you be the tool of mercy to others. By these acts you will see more ways by which God will use you for others. Each person's uniqueness is always exploited by the Lord to fill what is lacking in the unique situations of others. When you see the effect on others you will see the possibility of change in yourself. The lack of trust our ancestors had in authority was rooted in how they could be hurt or their security could be taken away. Our trust in the call of the Church in the Jubilee Year can only bring healing and make us safer along the road to the Father which we have been asked to travel. *Can you trust not just in small things but in the great as well?**