

Regional Chapter

Our Lady of the Angels
Regional Fraternity

30 June - 3 July 2016



Prayer for Guidance (Doug Clorey)

Most high and glorious God,
Bring light to the darkness
of my heart.

Give me right faith,
certain hope
and perfect charity,
Most high and glorious God.

Lord, give me insight ...
And wisdom ...
So that I might always discern
Your holy and true will.



Mercy, the Face of God's Love

What is Mercy?



What is mercy?

“Mercy is the face of God’s love turned toward sinners, searching them out, and offering them pardon and salvation.

(Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy*)

Face of God's love turned toward sinners ...



Rembrandt (1606-1669), Return of the Prodigal Son



Murillo (1618-1682), Return of the Prodigal Son

What is mercy?



The word ‘mercy’ derives from *misericordi[a]*, which means opening one’s heart to wretchedness. . . . Mercy is the divine attitude which embraces; it is God’s giving himself to us, accepting us, and bowing to forgive”

(Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy*).

Mercy - opening one's heart to another, and sometimes to another's wretchedness.


Wretchedness - being outwardly wounded and afflicted

Mercy - opening one's heart to another's woundedness

Example

On Holy Thursday, Jesus walked through the door of the upper room to go to the Garden of Gethsemane where he struggled and prayed whether to open his heart to the wretchedness of the world - that is, the woundedness of the world and its afflictions.



MERCY  Reaching out to others ...
especially to those who are wounded and afflicted

The Lord's Most Powerful Message ...

« We are the people who, on the one hand, want to listen to Jesus, but on the other hand, at times, like to find a stick to beat others with, to condemn others. And Jesus has this message for us: **mercy**. I think - and, I say it with humility - that this is the Lord's most powerful message: **mercy**.

(Pope Francis, *Homily*, March 17, 2013)

CONTEXT (quotes about « mercy » from other Popes)

« The Bride of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than arm herself with the weapons of rigor. »

(John XXIII)

« My poverty, the mercy of God. That I may at least honor who you are, God of infinite bounty, invoking, accepting, and celebrating your sweet mercy. »

(Paul VI)

« The Church lives an authentic life when it professes and proclaims mercy, the most amazing attribute of the Creator and Redeemer, and when it leads humanity to the font of mercy. »

(John Paul II)

« Mercy is in reality the core of the Gospel message; it is the name of God himself, the face with which he revealed himself in the Old Testament and fully in Jesus Christ. »

(Benedict XVI)

Why Mercy?

- Humanity is deeply wounded and is in need of mercy and compassion
- Mercy calls us to open our hearts to those who are wounded and afflicted
- People are looking for someone to grant them time, to listen to their dramas and difficulties - « apostolate of the ear »

You are NOT
listening to
ME.



- Society lacks the concrete experience of mercy - we don't believe that there is a chance for redemption; for a hand to raise you up; for an embrace to save you, forgive you, pick you up, flood you with infinite, patient, indulgent love; to put you back on your feet.

- Society encourages us to discard the habit of recognizing and assuming our responsibilities: it is always others who make mistakes; it is always others who are immoral; it's always someone else's fault, never our own.

(Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy*).

Secular Franciscan Rule

13. As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

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Are we ready to do this?

Pope Francis' dialogue with a man about mercy ...

« Oh, Father, if you knew my life you wouldn't talk to me like that! I have done some terrible things! »

Pope Francis replied: « Even better! Go to Jesus: he likes to hear about these things. He forgets; he has a special knack for forgetting. He forgets, he kisses you, he embraces you, and he says: 'Neither do I condemn you. Go, from now on do not sin anymore. ».

That is the only advice he gives ... the Lord never tires of forgiving: never! It is we who tire of asking him for forgiveness. We need to ask for the grace not to get tired of asking for forgiveness, because he never gets tired of forgiving. »

« The Church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy. »

(Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy*)

“Look in the mirror, but not to put on makeup to hide the wrinkles. No, no, no, that is not the advice! Look in the mirror to look at yourself as you are. ‘Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye and do not notice the log that is in your own eye?’ ... judgment belongs only to God, to Him alone!”

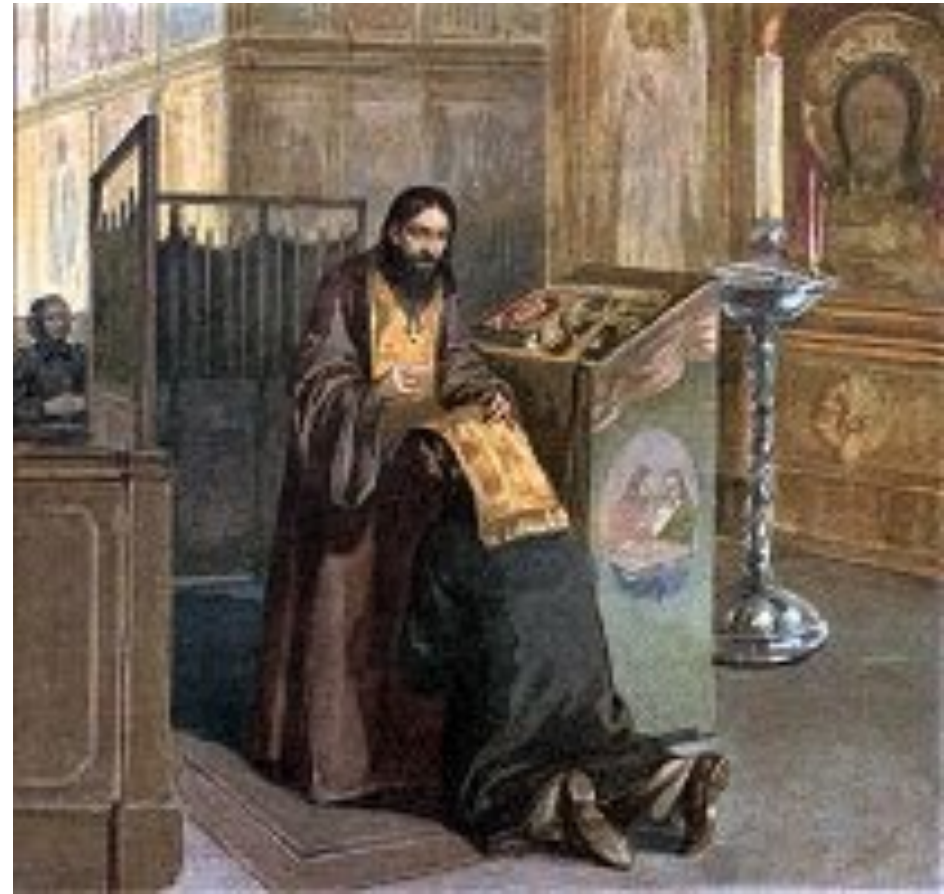
(Pope Francis' Homily, June 20, 2016)

Importance of Confession

- we are social beings and our sins have social implications (wounds humankind, my brothers and sister, and society as a whole)
- priests and bishops are instruments of the mercy of God - acting « in persona Christi »
- confessing is a way of putting my life into the hands and heart of someone else who acts in the name of Jesus
- it's a way to be real and authentic: we face the facts by looking at another person
- vehicle through which grace reaches and heals me

Gesture in tradition of Eastern churches

- confessor welcomes the penitent by putting his stole over the penitent's head and an arm around his shoulder, as if embracing him
- physical representation of acceptance and mercy - not judgement



Pope Francis reflects ... as a confessor, even when I have found myself before a locked door, I have always tried to find a crack, just a tiny opening so that I can pry open that door and grant forgiveness and mercy.

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Leonard Cohen's song:
"Anthem"

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in
everything
That's how the light gets in.



« We need to remember and remind ourselves where we come from, what we are, our nothingness. It is important that we not think of ourselves as self-sufficient. »
(Pope Francis)

« We are nothing without God above
We want nothing but our God alone.
Humility and poverty,
Freedom to love.”
(Humility and Poverty)

Humility and Poverty (Doug Clorey)



We are nothing without God above
We want nothing but our God alone.
Humility and poverty,
Freedom to love.

1. So often we see ourselves
As the answer to all
world.
And yet for all things we have
mercy
We depend on our God.
2. Possession and power
Are the lures of the
Detachment and
Is the Rule of our lives.
3. Let us care for each other.
Let us truly love God.
As we journey together
Let us trust in the Lord.

Mercy in Scripture



“Be merciful as your Father is Merciful” Luke 6:36

About the Year of Mercy Logo



- The motto is taken from Luke 6:36

- In a show of mercy, Jesus puts the sinner on His shoulders like the lost sheep

- The sinner shares an eye with Jesus, reminding us that the God of mercy wants to be as close to sinful humanity as possible

The story of Pope Francis' motto
“*miserando atque
eligendo*” (*mercifying and choosing*)





Matthew's call: "Follow Me" (Matthew 9:9)



Was Matthew's first inclination to think, "you mean him, not me, right?"

"and he got up and followed him" (Matthew 9:9)

What I want is mercy, not sacrifice (Matthew 9:13)

- Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 to the Pharisees.
- Pope Francis
 - “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life”. “
 - The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.”
- Our disposition:
 - We must first recognize our own need for mercy
 - We can’t give mercy to others if we are unaware of our own need for mercy
 - We are both beneficiaries of God’s mercy and witnesses to God’s mercy.

Two Greek words for Mercy

1. **Eleos** = mercy, compassion. Positive feelings toward someone. This is not looking down on someone.
 - e.g. Kyrie Eleison (Lord have mercy)
- Happy the merciful (*eleēmōn*), they shall have mercy (*eleos*) shown them (Matthew 5:7)

Two Greek words for Mercy

2. **Splanchnon** lit: “innards, guts, bowels; fig: “heart, affections, compassion, sympathy. It is a physical sensation in the gut.
- In the story of the Widow of Nain whose only son had died “When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity (splanchnon) for her (Luke 7:13)

OFS Rule Article 7

- United by their vocation as "brothers and sisters of penance," and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls "conversion." Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily. On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.

Parables devoted to mercy

- The lost sheep
- The Prodigal son (Luke 15:1-32)
- The unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:23-35)

The Lost Sheep (Luke 15: 4-7)



The Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32)



The unmerciful servant (Matthew 18: 21-35)



The common thread in the parables

- We have a Father who never gives up on his children
- The true children of the Father are the ones who show mercy because mercy has been shown them
- The clearest expression of merciful love:
Forgiving others

+++++

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7)

Am *F* *Gsus⁴* *G* *C* *F* *Dm* *Esus⁴* *E* *Am*
Cm *Ab* *Bbsus⁴* *Bb* *Eb* *Ab* *Fm* *Gsus⁴* *G* *Cm*

Musical notation for the phrase "Mi-se-ri-cor-des si-cut Pa-ter!". The notation is in 4/4 time, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a repeat sign. The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes. The lyrics are: Mi-se-ri-cor-des si-cut Pa-ter!