

Encouragement Encouragement

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MERCY AND TRUST

THE HOST APOSTOLATE

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It is by no means an error or coincidence that the Feast of God's Mercy is so close to the resplendent feast of the Resurrection. It is within the Octave of Easter and in many ways completes the celebration of the Lord's rising and concludes with a joyful celebration of His Merciful Love and is a pointer to continue living out the mercy that we have so bountifully received from Jesus.

What more abundant mercy can be received that be given eternal life. What greater mercy can we receive than to have been redeemed by the Saviour and Creator of the world who looks upon each of us with tenderness and love and lifts us out of misery and death and gives us life. What greater gift can we receive than being known and loved perfectly, as no other can supply that kind of love. He knows us through and through, forgives us our misdeeds and holds us in His absolute care.

Mercy is a great attribute of God Himself and one that we are bidden to copy and live, for we cannot truly be a follower of Jesus if we are not trying to be merciful. We are called to love God and neighbour in equal measure and intrinsic to love is mercy.

It saddens me greatly when people demean the feast or downgrade it, or worse still ignore it completely. One of the reasons why is the language itself and the words used. Because it was originally translated into 'American English' as a 'devotion' – which it then was, it was given a title that somehow, especially in English, has given it a kind of separate and aloof meaning. The words used all the way through the Old and New Testament are of God's Mercy. Many Psalms reflect this and so do the prayers, Collects and the final prayers of the Mass. God's Mercy is echoed throughout the teachings of the Church, such as the Corporal and Spiritual works. However, when first translated from the Polish, as part of the revelations to St. Faustyna Kowalska, it was presented as Divine Mercy,....

"Tell souls that from this fount of mercy souls draw graces with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to my generosity." St. Faustyna –Diary 1602

although the words given to her spoke of God's Mercy. Now clearly this gave it an 'air' of something different and indeed associated more with the devotion, rather than the absolute fact that **God is Merciful**.

There are those too who say we already have the Sacred Heart Devotion and dismiss Mercy as 'another devotion' – of course only the Sacred, Holy Lord of All can have such love that He is always Merciful – these cannot be separated. We venerate the Heart of Jesus because it is totally loving and merciful (and wasn't this too first revealed in a private revelation to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque). The revelation to St. Faustyna in the twentieth century about Mercy was a deepening of our understanding of a profound truth. This adds, rather than detract from, our knowledge.

Furthermore one of St. Pope John Paul's first encyclicals was on mercy and now Pope Francis has brought forward, our imperative, to truly reflect a Merciful God to our neighbour and brought centuries of implied tradition to the fore. Was it not the blind beggar on the Jericho road who called out to Jesus, 'Have mercy on me,' – and was healed? (Luke 18 vs. 35-42) Wasn't God's Mercy seen in the Garden of Eden, when God still loved Adam and Eve (man and woman) that give All a second chance by sending Jesus to save us.

Following is a reflection by **Sister Seraphim** on the actual Icon used to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy. It says much of the nature of the gift to us.

Merciful like the Father Luke 6:36

The Good Shepherd, in His great mercy takes humanity upon Himself; His eyes are merged with those of man. Jesus sees with the eyes of Adam and Adam with the eyes of Jesus. Every person discovers in Jesus, the new Adam, one's own humanity and the future that lies ahead, contemplating, in His gaze the love of the Father.

The almond shape is used in iconography as a symbol of the two natures of Jesus, human and divine.

Jesus' feet rest upon the gates of the underworld which He has smashed once and for all. This is found on icons called 'Holy Saturday' because it is the day Jesus descended into the underworlds to break the chains of death. (Repentant drug addicts in the religious setting of the 'Cenacolo'[Cenacle] use the 'Holy Saturday' icon to show Jesus has descended into their hell and set them free.)



The varying shades of blue show the journey out of darkness into the ever-brighter light of Jesus. The Father's love for us is greater than any sin we can commit and Jesus goes right down into the pits into which we have fallen and carries us back. One sincere Sacramental

Confession can restore our freedom in Jesus together with the peace of mind our Father desires for us.

Come back to the Father. He is longing for you to come home.....



But let us reflect too on the second part of the statement which is often seen on the image of Jesus as Merciful, and completes the picture, so to speak – **Trust** – is a consequence of accepting God as Merciful and trust is engendered when we are merciful to one another. If we accept that God is Merciful and Loving, surely we can then trust Him with everything. It is difficult to trust anyone if they waver, or their judgments are unsound or unpredictable. We find it hard to accept anything from anyone if they have proved themselves untrustworthy and unreliable. We tend to trust those who have proved their love or compassion, their steadfastness and consistency. We hope that our friends will be trust-worthy and trust is a backbone of all sound relationships.

Yet God, who is Perfectly Merciful and Perfectly Loving, we trust in lesser measure. This is partly because we have either not opened ourselves to His Mercy or have not pondered how mercy is above all an attribute of the perfection of God's Love.

If we did understand and accept it, then we would have no problem in trusting our whole lives to His infinite care, and even if we fail or go astray, return to Him as He is Merciful. **Jesus I trust you** should be on every lip of every Christian person.

Ironically, in our time, we still understand mercy, even if the term 'love' has been abused and betrayed. The woman who wiped Jesus' feet with her tears had experienced mercy. Isn't that why she trusted Him so completely and ferociously, defying convention in doing this act of mercy for Him? She even broke her precious ointment-filled jar, to the horror of Simon the Pharisee. The jar may even have represented her security for the future, or been a prized possession, yet she recklessly 'gave it away', in love.

Trust and Mercy go hand in hand, in a never ending circle. God wishes us to pour mercy on each other as He has been Merciful to us. The more we realise this, the more trusting we become, the more merciful and the more open to Him. Can we attune ourselves to this abundant Mercy, and let God do with us what He wills?

Halina Holman

Pope Francis

'Let the Risen Lord enter your life - welcome Him as a friend, with trust, He is life! If up to now you have kept Him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk; you won't be disappointed. If following Him seems difficult, don't be afraid. Trust Him, be confident that He is close to you, He is with you and He will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as He would have you do.

Today I ask you - in the name of Christ and the Church, never tire of being merciful.'

ROME 2015

Feast days in April

3rd Feast of Divine Mercy,

4th The Annunciation of the Lord

5th St. Vincent Ferrer

7th St. John Baptiste de la Salle,

11th St. Stanislaus of Krakow,

16th St. Bernadette

17th World day of Prayer for Vocations (Sun)

20th St. Beuno, 21st St. Anselm

23rd St. George, 25th St. Mark (Evang.)

28th St. Peter Chanel & St. Louis de Montfort

29th St. Catherine of Sienna