

Praying as a Family



*“The spirit of prayer gives time back to God,
it steps away from the obsession of a life that is always lacking time,
it rediscovers the peace of necessary things, and discovers the joy of unexpected gifts.”*

H.H. Francis, General Audience August 26, 2015



Created by Sr. Rachel, scjtm
Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary

Program Goals:



- To illuminate the beautiful vocation and mission that God has given you as spouses, mothers, and fathers: *by going deeper into our Church's rich teaching on the identity and mission of the family*
- To equip you with resources and ideas to help your family grow together in love, faith, and prayer: *as you are the primary educators of your children in the faith*
- To edify and inspire your hearts to live your mission more fully: *by hearing others' testimonies and sharing together*

Session 2:
Itinerary for the Evening



- Explore how the family is a “domestic Church”
-St. John Paul II: “Familiaris Consortio”
- Reflect on one experience of families sharing the faith
- Explore more deeply the prayer of the Holy Rosary
St. John Paul II: “Rosarium Virginis Mariae”
- “Praying as a Family” Book: explore a few different prayer practices
to implement over the coming month as a family



The Family: The Domestic Church



- The family is the “Church in miniature,” called to reflect the life of Christ and to participate, in its own unique way, in the Church’s mission

“The Christian family's actual participation in the Church's life and mission is in direct proportion to the *fidelity and intensity of the prayer with which it is united with the fruitful vine that is Christ the Lord.*”

St. John Paul II, “Familiaris Consortio,” 62, emphasis added

The Mission of the Domestic Church

- To make the life of Jesus grow in its members
- To experience the love, forgiveness, union, and worship of God together: to en flesh the Gospel in daily life
 - The reading and teaching of Sacred Scripture in the home is one way that this is done, as St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom taught



The Mission of the Domestic Church

- **Recall from last time:** communion is one of the greatest gifts and tasks of the family—and one of its key missions as a domestic Church



"All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, the communion of persons, making the family 'a school of deeper humanity': this happens where there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, the aged; where there is mutual service every day; when there is a sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows."¹



The Mission of the Domestic Church

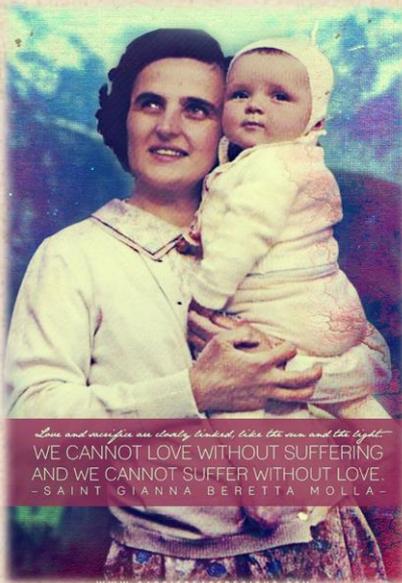
“The Christian family is also called to experience a new and original communion which confirms and perfects natural and human communion [. . .]

The Holy Spirit [. . .] is the living source and inexhaustible sustenance of the supernatural communion that gathers believers and links them with Christ and with each other in the unity of the Church of God.

The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can and should be called ‘the domestic Church.’”

St. John Paul II, “Familiaris Consortio,” 21, emphasis added

Wisdom from the Saints



Saint Gianna Molla,
1963—1978

“With God’s help and blessing
we will do our best
to make our new family
a little Cenacle where Jesus reigns
over all our affections, desires, and actions”²

Letter to her husband Pietro,
10 days before their marriage

The Prayer of the Rosary



“The rosary should be considered as one of the best and most efficacious prayers in common that the Christian family is invited to recite [.]

In this way authentic devotion to Mary [.]

constitutes a special instrument

for nourishing loving communion in the family and for developing conjugal and family spirituality.

For she who is the Mother of Christ and of the Church is in a special way the Mother of Christian families, of domestic Churches.”

St. John Paul II, “Familiaris Consortio,” 61

To Jesus through Mary



Saint John Vianney
1786—1859

“When our hands have touched spices,
they give fragrance to all they handle.
Let us make our prayers pass through the hands of the
Blessed Virgin. She will make them fragrant.”

“When the Holy Spirit finds Mary in a soul, He flies to it.
He enters therein and communicates Himself
to that soul with abundance.”



Saint Louis Marie
de Montfort
1673—1713

The Holy Rosary



Our Lady of the Rosary

- Although Marian in character, a Christocentric prayer

“It has all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety, of which it can be said to be a compendium.”³

- Sitting at the school of the Heart of Mary:

“With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love.”⁴

The Holy Rosary cont.



Our Lady of the Rosary

- An “exquisitely contemplative prayer:”

“Without contemplation, the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation runs the risk of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas’ [. . .]

By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are disclosed”⁵

Learning, Being Conformed to, Praying to Christ with Mary



■ Knowing Christ:

“It is not just a question of learning what he taught but of “learning him.” In this regard could we have any better teacher than Mary? [...] among creatures no one knows Christ better than Mary; no one can introduce us to a profound knowledge of his mystery better than his Mother.”⁶

Learning, Being Conformed to, Praying to Christ with Mary



■ Being Conformed to Christ:

“Blessed Bartolo Longo has written: “Just as two friends, frequently in each other's company, tend to develop similar habits, so too, by holding familiar converse with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary and by living the same life in Holy Communion, we can become, to the extent of our lowliness, similar to them and can learn from these supreme models a life of humility, poverty, hiddenness, patience and perfection.”⁷

Learning, Being Conformed to, Praying to Christ with Mary



■ Praying to Christ with Mary

“If Jesus, the one Mediator, is the Way of our prayer, then Mary, his purest and most transparent reflection, shows us the Way [. . .] At the wedding of Cana the Gospel clearly shows the power of Mary's intercession as she makes known to Jesus the needs of others: “They have no wine” (Jn 2:3).”⁸

“They have no wine [. . .]
Do whatever He tells you”

John 2:3, 5

The contemplation of the face of Christ



- Our Lady is the “incomparable model” of such contemplation:



“No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. The eyes of her heart already turned to him at the Annunciation, when she conceived him by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the months that followed she began to sense his presence and to picture his features. When at last she gave birth to him in Bethlehem, her eyes were able to gaze tenderly on the face of her Son, as she “wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger” (Lk2:7). Thereafter Mary's gaze, ever filled with adoration and wonder, would never leave him.

The contemplation of the face of Christ, cont.



“At times it would be a **questioning look**, as in the episode of the **finding in the Temple**: “Son, why have you **treated us so?**” (Lk 2:48); it would always be a **penetrating gaze**, one capable of **deeply understanding Jesus**, even to the point of **perceiving his hidden feelings and anticipating his decisions**, as at **Cana** (cf. Jn 2:5). At other times it would be a **look of sorrow**, especially **beneath the Cross** [. . .] On the morning of **Easter** hers would be a **gaze radiant with the joy of the Resurrection**, and finally, on the day of **Pentecost**, a **gaze afire with the outpouring of the Spirit** (cf. Acts 1:14).”⁹

The Memories of the Heart of Mary



■ The Gospel tells us twice that she kept all of the words about her Son and spoken by her Son, and pondered them in her heart:

“Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: “She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19; cf. 2:51). The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her Son's side. In a way those memories were to be the “rosary” which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.”¹⁰

The Memories of the Heart of Mary



■ She sets these treasures before the faithful: she is our Mother!

“Mary constantly sets before the faithful the “mysteries” of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power. In the recitation of the Rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary.”¹¹

The Holy Rosary in Your Home



- **Invoke the Holy Spirit:** Ask Him to enlighten your mind and heart to know Christ more deeply and to help you contemplate each Gospel scene
- **Marian Songs:** Hail Mary, Gentle Woman; Immaculate Mary, Ave Maria; in between each decade, “Ave, Ave”
- **Scriptural Rosary:** Invite each member of the family to read the Scripture at the beginning of each decade, where the Mystery comes from
- **Decade Intentions:** Offered by each member of the Family



Closing Prayer

Written by St. John Paul II



Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of Marriage,
may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials
through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission
in the family and through the family.

We ask this of You, who are Life, Truth, and Love with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.¹⁰

Works Cited

Text

1 Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 21.

2 "Saint Gianna's Life: Children," Saint Gianna Beretta Molla: Wife, Mother, Doctor, Pro-Life Witness, <https://saintgianna.org/children.htm>, accessed 16 October 2015

3 St. John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 1

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*, 12

6 *Ibid.*, 14

Pope Paul VI, "Marialis Cultus," 47, c.f. St. John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 12

7 *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 15

8 *Ibid.*, 16

9 *Ibid.*, 10

10 *Ibid.*, 11

11 *Ibid.*



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Praying as a Family

Annunciation Catholic Church 2016



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Itinerary for the Evening



- Living the Year of Mercy as a Family
 - What is mercy?
- Explore three different paths that we have been given:
 - The message of Divine Mercy
 - Pilgrimage through the Holy Door; Plenary Indulgence
 - Works of mercy: corporal and spiritual



What is Mercy?



- Mercy: the love of God for man
- For mercy to be exercised, there must first be misery—and there is no greater misery than our sinfulness!

“Even if God had not created man,
He would still be perfect charity,
but in reality He would not be merciful,
for mercy can only be exercised over misery...

Our misery is the throne of God’s mercy.”

St. Francis de Sales, “Spiritual Conferences,” Conference 2





Now is the time of Mercy!



- The Year of Mercy is, therefore, not just about *giving* mercy—we must first *receive* it from Jesus, by allowing ourselves to encounter His merciful love that forgives, heals, and restores our hearts

“The love of the Father has been fully revealed in the face of Christ... this love is Merciful because it receives and forgives the sinner, because it heals him, returns to him his greatest dignity and teaches him the path of authentic liberty and his fullest realization.

Mercy is the essential core of the Gospel!”

Mother Adela Galindo, Foundress, SCTJM, “Witnesses and Missionaries of Mercy”





Now is the time of Mercy!



- The cycle of mercy: Forgiveness → Healing → Restoration

Were a soul like a decaying corpse, so that from a human standpoint, there would be no hope of restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full.

St. Faustina Kowalska, "Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul," 1448

- We first experience these things from the Lord in order to become witnesses and missionaries of His merciful love, which is what the Year of Mercy is all about!
- How can we experience this Merciful Love? *The gaze of Jesus*



Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, “Discerning the Spirit: Now is the Time for Mercy” (39:20—40:43)
“Power and Purpose” Conference, June 2015, Franciscan University of Steubenville



Experiencing the Merciful Gaze of Jesus



- In the Tabernacle:

“Do you let yourself be looked at by the Lord? Letting ourselves be gazed upon by the Lord. **He looks at us and this is itself a way of praying.** Do you [let] yourselves be gazed upon by the Lord? But how do you do this? You look at the tabernacle and you let yourselves be looked at... it is simple! *‘It is a bit boring, I fall asleep.’* Fall asleep then, sleep! He is still looking at you. But know for sure that he is looking at you!

H.H. Francis, Address to Catechists, September 27, 2013



Experiencing the Merciful Gaze of Jesus



“My child, do you fear the God of mercy?
My holiness does not prevent Me from being merciful.
Behold, for you I have established a **throne of mercy on earth** — **the tabernacle** —
and from this throne I desire to enter into your heart.
I am not surrounded by a retinue or guards.
You can come to me at any moment, at any time;
I want to speak to you and desire to grant you grace.”

Words of Jesus to St. Faustina Kowalska, “Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul,” 1572



The Divine Mercy Message

- St. Maria Faustina:
1905—1938
- Religious Sister in the
Congregation of Our
Sisters of Our Lady of
Mercy, Poland



- Visions and locutions
from Jesus, Our Lady,
the saints
- Jesus transmitted to her
the message of Divine
Mercy—not a new
Gospel, but a new
fountain of grace for the
Church in the modern
world

Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, "The Divine Mercy Devotion"



The Divine Mercy Message

- The first revelation of the mission of mercy: Feb. 22, 1931

"Paint an image according to the pattern you see with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You ... I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world"

(Words of Jesus to St. Faustina,
Diary of St. Faustina, 47)





Key Elements of the Message



- Now is the time for recourse to God's mercy
 - Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Interceding for mercy for the whole world
 - Hour of Mercy: 3:00pm
 - Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- Trust in God's mercy
- Adoring and Glorifying God's Mercy:
 - **FINCH: Feast** of Divine Mercy (Divine Mercy Sunday); **Image** (Veneration of); **Novena** (Good Friday to Divine Mercy Sunday); **Chaplet** of Divine Mercy; **Hour** of Mercy



The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy



- December 8, 2015—November 20, 2016

“At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective.”

H.H. Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy,
“Misericordiae Vultus,” 3



Focal Points of the Jubilee



- Holy Doors—Indulgence
- Receiving Mercy:
 - Prayer
 - Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Giving Mercy: Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy



Pilgrimage to and through the Holy Doors

- Every Bishop has named a particular Church(es) to be the site of pilgrimage. In our Diocese: The Basilica Shrine of Our Lady, Queen of the Universe

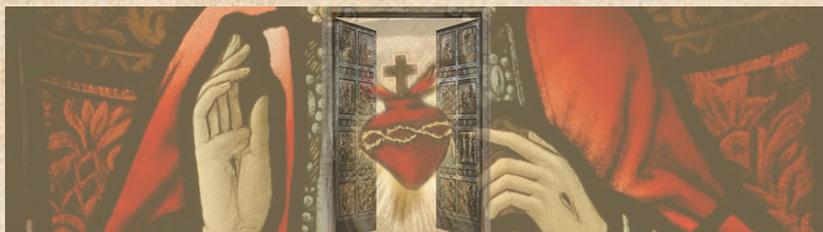
“Similarly, to reach the Holy Door in Rome or in any other place in the world, everyone, each according to his or her ability, will have to make a pilgrimage. This will be a sign that mercy is also a goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice. May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: **by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being with others as the Father has been with us.**”

H.H. Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy “*Misericordiae Vultus*,” 14



Crossing the Holy Doors

- To pass through the Holy Door is to enter the Heart of Christ! It is to be bathed in the rays of His Divine Mercy
- Mother Adela Galindo, SCTJM, gives the following recommendations for crossing the Holy Door:
 - To make a sign of reverence before the door (genuflecting, touching, kissing the door)—because it is a sign of Christ's mercy for us, won at the price of His Blood
 - Repentance: we cannot become recipients of mercy if we do not ask forgiveness of the Lord for our sins
 - For this reason, to pass through with a quiet, reflective heart



Crossing the Holy Doors

- Recommendations for the Holy Door continued:
 - To ask the Lord for the grace to see the areas of our hearts that are still attached to sin or inclinations to sin—it is precisely there that He desires to—and can—heal, elevate, and restore us
 - Couples pass through together





The Jubilee Plenary Indulgence

Decorative flourish below the title.

- Every time we pass through the Holy Door in a spirit of repentance, faith, and contrition, we have the great gift to receive a Plenary Indulgence
- What is an indulgence? *The removal of the temporal punishment/ consequence due to sin*



Fr. Mike Schmitz, "Did the Church Ever Sell Indulgences?" (1:58—4:58)
for Ascension Presents



The Jubilee Plenary Indulgence



- This is the grace of receiving the Indulgence—it is to allow holiness to touch our entire lives, so God’s love and mercy may reach us and through us, to many

“To live the indulgence of the Holy Year means to approach the Father’s mercy with the certainty that **His forgiveness extends to the entire life of the believer.**

To gain an indulgence is to **experience the holiness of the Church,** who bestows upon all the fruits of Christ’s redemption, so that **God’s love and forgiveness may extend everywhere.”**

H.H. Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy,
“Misericordiae Vultus,” 22



How Do We Obtain the Indulgence?

- Making a pilgrimage and passing through the Holy Door
- Performing any spiritual or corporal work of mercy
- To fulfill the prayers and actions required:
 - To pray the following for the Holy Father and his intentions: an Our Father, a Hail Mary, the Creed
 - At the end of these prayers, invoking the Merciful Jesus: (“Merciful Jesus, I trust in You”)
 - Receive Holy Communion on the day of the indulgence
 - Go to Confession 8 days before or after the indulgence



Notable Points on the Indulgence



- You can receive it for yourself, or for any soul in Purgatory (relatives and friends who have died, etc.)
 - Thus, we cannot obtain an indulgence for another person on earth
- If we remain in a state of grace and receive Holy Communion every day, we could receive a *Plenary indulgence every day of this Jubilee Year!*
- Those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned have special ways of obtaining the indulgence, as indicated by the Holy Father

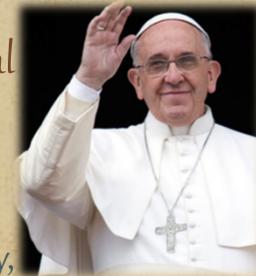


Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy



“It is my *burning desire* that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty.”

H.H. Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy,
“*Misericordiae Vultus*,” 15

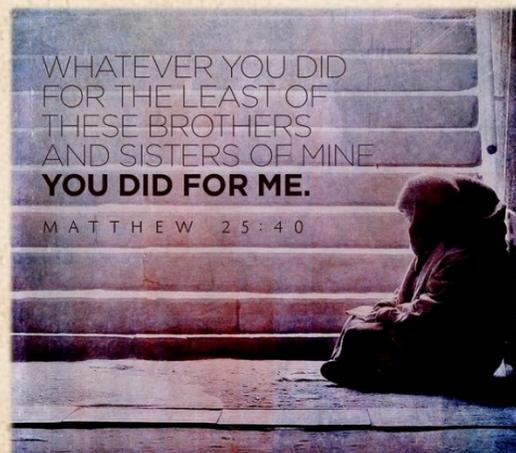


Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy



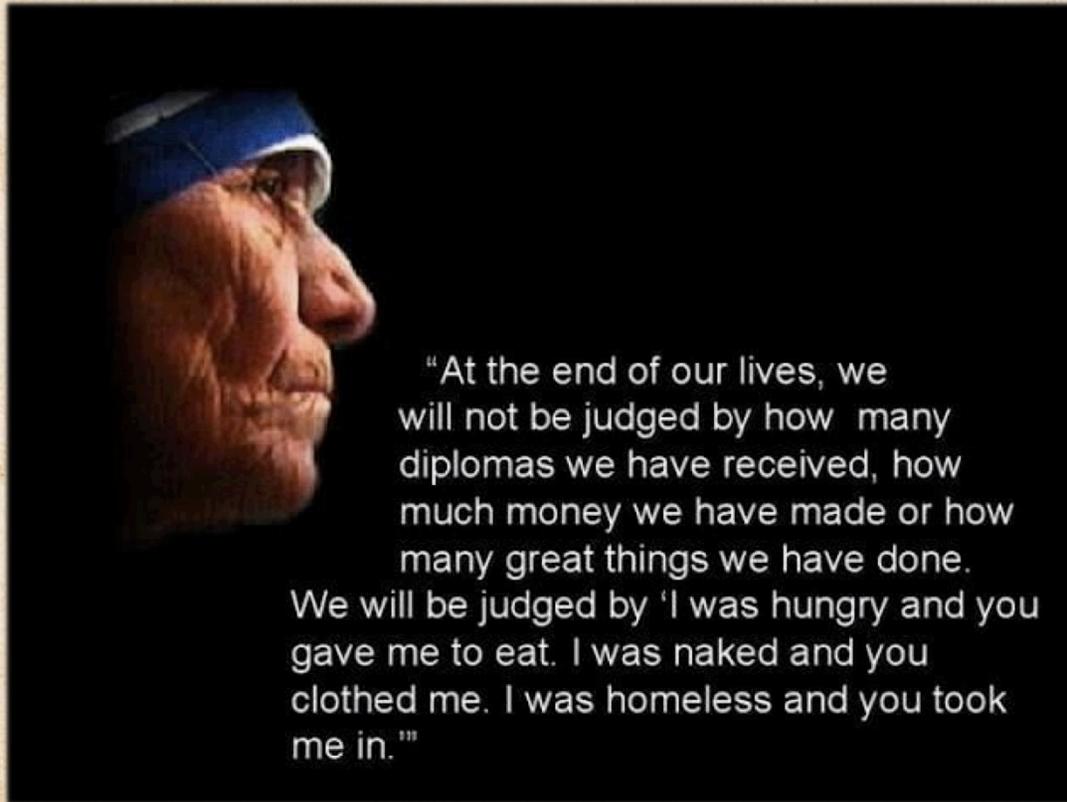
- The 7 Corporal Works of Mercy come straight from the Gospel, Jesus' teaching on how we will be judged: Matthew 25:31-46

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Shelter the homeless
- Clothe the naked
- Visit the imprisoned
- Visit the sick
- Bury the dead



- Although not included in the official list of 7, Jesus also mentions that “welcoming the stranger” is something that when we do to others, “we do it for Him”

Mercy: Enfleshing Love.



"At the end of our lives, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in.'"

Mercy: Enfleshing Love



“If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him?”

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:17-18)

“Mercy is a key word that indicates God’s action towards us. He does not limit Himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible.

Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction.

By its very nature, it indicates something concrete:

intentions, attitudes, and behaviors that are shown in daily living [. . .]

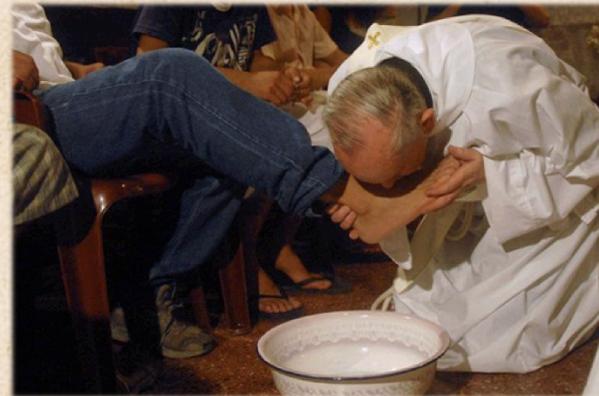
This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel.”

H.H. Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy,

“Misericordiae Vultus,” 9

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

- The 7 Spiritual Works of Mercy:
 - Counsel the doubtful
 - Instruct the ignorant
 - Admonish sinners
 - Bear wrongs patiently
 - Forgive all offenses
 - Pray for the living and the dead
 - Comfort the afflicted



Many souls ... are often worried because they do not have the material means with which to carry out an act of mercy. Yet spiritual mercy, which requires neither permissions nor storehouses, is much more meritorious and is within the grasp of every soul.

Words of Jesus to St. Maria Faustina, "Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul," 1317



The Three Degrees of Mercy

- Jesus gives us three ways by which we can exercise mercy:
 - By actions
 - Words
 - Prayer

“In these three degrees is contained the fullness of mercy, and it is an unquestionable proof of love for Me. By this means a soul glorifies and pays reverence to My mercy.”

Words of Jesus to St. Maria Faustina, “Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul,” 1317



Testimony from St. Faustina

“Jesus came to the main entrance today, under the guise of a poor young man. This young man, emaciated, barefoot and bareheaded, and with his clothes in tatters, was frozen because the day was cold and rainy. He asked for something hot to eat. So I went to the kitchen, but found nothing there for the poor. But, after searching around for some time, I succeeded in finding some soup, which I reheated and into which I crumbled some bread, and I gave it to the poor young man, who ate it. As I was taking the bowl from him, he gave me to know that He was the Lord of heaven and earth. When I saw Him as He was, He vanished from my sight. When I went back in and reflected on what had happened at the gate, I heard these words in my soul:

*‘My daughter, the blessings of the poor who bless Me as they leave this gate have reached My ears.
And your compassion, within the bounds of obedience, has pleased Me,
and this is why I came down from My throne — to taste the fruits of your mercy’*

St. Faustina Kowalska, “Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul,” 1312



St. Faustina's Prayer for Mercy



O Most Holy Trinity! As many times as I breathe, as many times as my heart beats, as many times as my blood pulsates through my body, so many thousand times do I want to glorify Your mercy. I want to be completely transformed into Your mercy and to be Your living reflection, O Lord. May the greatest of all divine attributes, that of Your unfathomable mercy, pass through my heart and soul to my neighbor.

Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbors' souls and come to their rescue.

Help me, that my ears may be merciful, so that I may give heed to my neighbors' needs and not be indifferent to their pains and moanings.



St. Faustina's Prayer for Mercy



Help me, O Lord, that my tongue may be merciful, so that I should never speak negatively of my neighbor, but have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all.

Help me, O Lord, that my hands may be merciful and filled with good deeds, so that I may do only good to my neighbors and take upon myself the more difficult and toilsome tasks.

Help me, that my feet may be merciful, so that I may hurry to assist my neighbor, overcoming my own fatigue and weariness. My true rest is in the service of my neighbor.

Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor. I will refuse my heart to no one. I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock myself up in the most merciful Heart of Jesus. I will bear my own suffering in silence. May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me.



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