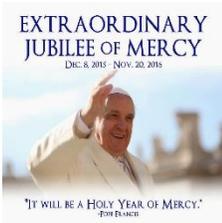


Lent 2016: with Mary in the Year of Mercy

RICH IN MERCY, RICH IN MUSIC

Misericordiae Vultus - The Face of Mercy



1. Jesus Christ is the face of the **Father's mercy**. The Father, "rich in mercy" (*Eph 2:4*), after having revealed his name to Moses as "a **God merciful** and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (*Ex 34:6*), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. *Jn 14:9*). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the **mercy of God**.

El Shaddai by John Thomson

*El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El-elyon na Adona. Age to age, You're still the same
By the power of the name. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, Erkamka na Adonai
We will praise, And lift You high, El Shaddai*

2. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. **Mercy: the bridge** that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

Turn to me by John Foley, SJ

*Turn to me, O turn and be saved, says the Lord;
For I am God. There is no other, none beside me, I call your name.
I am God who comforts you. Who are you to be afraid,
Of flesh that fades, Is made like the grass of the field, Soon to wither.*

3. And so he turned his gaze to Mary, holy and immaculate in love (cf. *Eph 1:4*), choosing her to be the Mother of man's Redeemer. (**Mother of Mercy!**) When faced with the gravity of sin, God responds with the **fullness of mercy**.

Gentle Women by Carey Landry

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women
and blest is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of death. Amen.*

*Refrain Gentle woman, quiet light, morning star, so strong and bright,
gentle Mother, peaceful dove, teach us wisdom; teach us love.*

*You were chosen by the Father; you were chosen for the Son.
You were chosen from all women and for woman, shining one.*



Bro. Mel Mever, SM

4. Recall the words of Saint John XXIII when, opening the Council, he indicated the path to follow:

- "Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use **the medicine of mercy** .."
- "We point out ... the old story of the Good Samaritan has been the model of the spirituality of the Council ..."
- We shall cross the threshold of the Holy Door fully confident that the strength of the Risen Lord, who constantly supports us on our pilgrim way, will sustain us.

Which One? By Nick Cardilino (Nickcardilino.com)

*Once there was a man who was robbed and beaten. On the road to Jericho
A priest came by in a hurry and thought, "I should help, but I really must go."
Along came a Samaritan who saw the beaten man. And was moved with pity
So, he picked him up and took him to be cared for. At an inn in the closest city
And Jesus asked, "Which one? Which one? Which one was the neighbor?"*

5. How much I desire that the year to come will be **steeped in mercy**, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May **the balm of mercy** reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst!

6. **God's mercy**, rather than a sign of weakness, is the mark of his omnipotence.

- "**Patient and merciful.**" These words often go together in the Old Testament to describe God's nature.
- "he crowns you with steadfast **love and mercy**" (Ps103:3-4).

Before you go from the musical "Spectacle"

*Before I go, please listen
Before I go, hear my prayer
My faith in God is not shaken
I'll follow God anywhere*

*This I know, God will provide
This I know, your faith must be strong
Carry on with your good works
A magnificent work is born.*

*Oh Fr. Chaminade please don't go
Our fears are high and our faith is low
Who can we turn to who can we seek
No one to follow no promises to keep*

You my children will save souls



*You my children must pray daily
I place you and all my children
In the safe keeping of Jesus and Mary*

*Someday, I will return
Which day, I wish I knew
Until that time, pray for me
Until that time, I'll pray for you
(J. Ford, November 2015)*

7. "For his **mercy endures** forever." This is the refrain that repeats after each verse in Psalm 136 as it narrates the history of God's revelation.

Dust in the wind (Kansas)

I close my eyes only for a moment, and the moment's gone
All my dreams pass before my eyes, a curiosity
Dust in the wind, all they are is dust in the wind
Now, don't hang on, nothing lasts forever but the earth and sky
It slips away, and all your money won't another minute buy
Dust in the wind, all we are is dust in the wind

8. "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8,16), John affirms for the first and only time in all of Holy Scripture. This love has now been made visible and tangible in Jesus' entire life. His person is nothing but love, a love given gratuitously. The relationships he forms with the people who approach him manifest something entirely unique and unrepeatable. The signs he works, especially in favour of sinners, the poor, the marginalized, the sick, and the suffering, are all meant to teach mercy. Everything in him **speaks of mercy**. Nothing in him is devoid of compassion.

There is only Christ. *He is everything. He is in everything.* (Ford, 1975)

After freeing the demoniac in the country of the Gerasenes, Jesus entrusted him with this mission: "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had **mercy on you**" (Mk 5:19). Saint Bede the Venerable, commenting on this Gospel passage, wrote that Jesus looked upon Matthew with merciful love and chose him: *miserando atque eligendo*. This expression impressed me so much that I chose it for my episcopal motto.

- Lowly but chosen / By having mercy, by choosing him (Latin) / Mercifying (Pope's word) and Choosing
- Describes the vision of Jesus / Who gives gift of Mercy and chooses and takes unto himself

9. In the parables devoted to mercy: lost sheep, lost coin and father with 2 sons. In these parables, God is always presented as full of joy, especially when he pardons. In them we find the core of the Gospel and of our faith, because mercy is presented as a force that overcomes everything, filling the heart with love and bringing consolation through pardon.

Father, Mercy by Bob Dufford, SJ

*Father Mercy; Father, hear me. Why have you gone from me?
Broken, humbled, waiting, hopeful, Father return to me.*

Another parable: “Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had **mercy on you?**” (Mt 18:33). Jesus concludes, “So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” (Mt 18:35).



In short, we are called to **show mercy** because mercy has first been shown to us. Pardoning offences becomes the clearest expression of **merciful love**, and for us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully. Let us therefore heed the Apostle’s exhortation: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph4:26). Above all, let us listen to the words of Jesus who made **mercy an ideal of life** and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: “**Blessed are the merciful**, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7): the beatitude to which we should particularly aspire in this Holy Year.

Blessed are the Merciful

*Blessed Are the merciful, mercy shall be theirs.
Mercy is a blessing Lord, I t shows in those who care.
When we are the victims, Lord, Mercy seems so hard.
Shower us with your graces Lord,
especially when we’re scarred.
Help me to be merciful, life just goes so fast.
I have hurt so many Lord, forgive me for my past.
Most of all, I’m in need of your mercy Lord.
Forgive me for all the hurt I’ve caused you my Lord.
Forgive me for wrongs I have done.
As I forgive the hurts of everyone,*

*I’m merciful. Be merciful.
Shower me with your Mercy Lord in my final hour.
Open up your heart oh Lord like a blooming flower.
Your promise to be merciful fills my heart with glee.
I promise to be merciful ‘till you I will see.
Forgive me for wrongs I have done.
As I forgive the hurts of everyone.
I’m merciful. Be merciful.*

(From “A Way To Life” Music by Declan Duffy
Lyrics by Ray Duffy)

10. However, without a **witness to mercy**, life becomes fruitless and sterile, as if sequestered in a barren desert. The time has come for the Church to take up **the joyful call to mercy** once more. It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope.

He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother

*The road is long. With many a winding turn. That leads us to who knows where. Who knows when
But I’m strong. Strong enough to carry him. He ain’t heavy, he’s my brother
She ain’t heavy, She’s my sister*

11. “The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and **proclaims mercy...**” St. John Paul II

I still haven’t found what I’m looking for by U2

*I believe in the Kingdom Come. Then all the colours will bleed into one. Bleed into one. But yes, I’m still running.
You broke the bonds. And you loosed the chains. Carried the cross of my shame
Oh my shame, you know I believe it. But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for.*

12. It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and **testify to mercy**. Her language and her gestures must **transmit mercy**, so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father.

City of God (Dan Schutte)

*Let us build a city of God. May our tears be turned into dancing.
For the Lord our light and our love. Has turned the night into day.*

In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an **oasis of mercy**.

13. We want to live this Jubilee Year in light of the Lord's words: **Merciful like the Father**. The Evangelist reminds us of the teaching of Jesus who says, "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). In order to be **capable of mercy**, therefore, we must first of all dispose ourselves to listen to the Word of God. This means rediscovering the value of silence in order to meditate on the Word that comes to us. In this way, it will be possible to contemplate God's **mercy** and adopt it as our **lifestyle**.

I will wait for you by Mumford and Sons, 2012

Well I came home. Like a stone
And I fell heavy into your arms
These days of dust. Which we've known
Will blow away with this new sun
But I'll kneel down. Wait for now
And I'll kneel down. Know my ground
And I will wait, I will wait for you

So break my step. And relent
You forgave and I won't forget

Know what we've seen. And him with less
Now in some way. Shake the excess
I will wait, I will wait for you
Now I'll be bold. As well as strong. And use my head
alongside my heart. So take my flesh. And fix my
eyes. A tethered mind free from the lies
*And I'll kneel down. Wait for now
I'll kneel down. Know my ground
Raise my hands. Paint my spirit gold
And bow my head. Keep my heart slow
I will wait, I will wait for you*



14. The practice of *pilgrimage* has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a *viator*, a pilgrim travelling along the road, making his way to the desired destination. 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 the strength to embrace God's mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.

Turn (Ford, 1997, from the play ACTS)

I'm on a journey, searching for the answers, to the questions that fill my life.

Where did my love go, how can my friends know? I'm reaching out and no one is there to help me so. Turn - Turn

Goals: Judge not; forgive and to give; *Merciful like the Father*, therefore, is the "motto" of this Holy Year. **In mercy**, we find proof of how God loves us.

15. 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. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy.

Whatever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me. By Willard Jabusch, 1966

16. May the words of the Apostle accompany us: he who does **acts of mercy**, let him do them with cheerfulness (cf. Rom 12:8).

Happy Together by the Turtles

Imagine me and you, I do. I think about you day and night. It's only right.
To think about the God you love. And hold God tight. So happy together
I can't see me lovin' nobody but you for all my life.
When you're with me, Oh God, the skies will be blue for all my life.

17. The season of Lent during this Jubilee Year should also be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and **experience God's mercy**.

- Micah: "You, O Lord, are a God who takes away iniquity and pardons sin, who does not hold your anger forever, but are pleased to show mercy." (cf. 7:18-19)

Ashes by Tom Conroy

*We rise again from ashes, from the good we've failed to do.
We rise again from ashes, to create ourselves anew.
If all our world is ashes, then must our lives be true,
an offering of ashes, an offering to you.*

- Isaiah: "Then shall your light break forth like the dawn...if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday" (58:6-11).

A time will come for singing by Dan Schutte, 1977

*A time will come for singing when all your
tears are shed, when sorrows chains are
broken, and broken hearts will mend. The
deaf will hear your singing when silent
tongues are freed. The lame will join your
dancing when blind eyes learn to see.*



*A time will come for singing when trees will
raise their boughs, when all lay down their
armor and hammer their swords into plows,
when beggars live as princes, and orphans
find their homes, when prison cells are
emptied and hatred has grown old.*

Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the centre once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God's mercy with their own hands. In short, confessors are called to be a sign of the primacy of mercy always, everywhere, and in every situation, no matter what.

18. **Missionaries of Mercy**. They will be, above all, living signs of the Father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon.

One Love, One heart. *Let's get together and it will be alright.* (Bob Marley, 1965)

19. This is the opportune moment to change our lives! This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched! When faced with evil deeds, even in the face of serious crimes, it is the time to listen to the cry of innocent people who are deprived of their property, their dignity, their feelings, and even their very lives.

*The Lord hears **the cry of the poor**. Blessed by the Lord.* (John Foley, SJ, 1978)

20. The relationship between **justice and mercy**. In Sacred Scripture, justice is conceived essentially as the faithful abandonment of oneself to God's will. 'I **desire mercy** not sacrifice'. (Mt 9:13) "I desire love and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6) Jesus is bent on revealing the great **gift of mercy** that searches out sinners and offers them pardon and salvation. God's justice is his mercy (cf. Ps 51:11-16).

See

See I am God. See! I am in everything. See I do everything.
(Words; Julian of Norwich, 1373 / music, Ford, from the play CTS)

22. Let us live this Jubilee intensely, begging the Father to forgive our sins and to bathe us in his **merciful "indulgence."**

Wash (Ford, © 2010)

*Wash away my feelings, wash away my sins.
What am I believing, can I start again?
Do you have the power to heal and give grace?
Believe in miracles with the crashing of the waves.
Wash me, and toss me in the tide.
Heal me, and let me feel so I can't hide.*



23. Among the privileged names that Islam attributes to the Creator are “**Merciful and Kind**”. This invocation is often on the lips of faithful Muslims who feel themselves accompanied and **sustained by mercy** in their daily weakness. I trust that this Jubilee year celebrating the mercy of God will foster an encounter with these religions and with other noble religious traditions; may it open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; may it eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination.

Everyday People (Sly and the Family Stone, 1968)

*Sometimes I'm right and I can be wrong. My own beliefs are in my song
The butcher, the banker, the drummer and then.
Makes no difference what group I'm in
I am everyday people, yeah yeah
There is a yellow one that won't accept the black one
That won't accept the red one that won't accept the white one
And different strokes for different folks
And so on and so on and scooby dooby doo. I am everyday people.*

24. My thoughts now turn to the **Mother of Mercy**. Her entire life was patterned after the **presence of mercy** made flesh. The Mother of the Crucified and Risen One has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she participated intimately in the mystery of His love. Her hymn of praise was dedicated to the mercy of God which extends from “generation to generation” (Lk 1:50). We too were included in those prophetic words of the Virgin Mary.

Let it Be (Beatles)

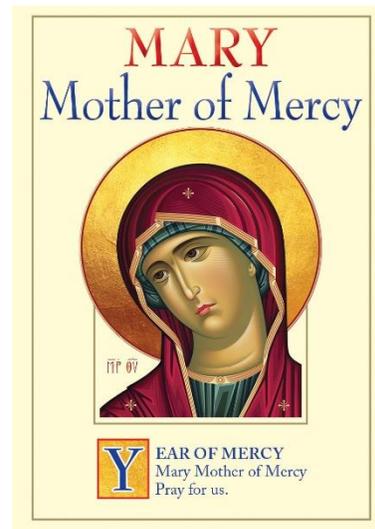
*And when the night is cloudy, there is still a light on me. Shine on tomorrow, Let it be.
I wake up to the sound of music, Mother Mary comes to me, speaking words of wisdom, Let it be.*

Let us address her in the words of the *Salve Regina*, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she may never tire of turning her **merciful eyes** upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the **face of mercy**, her Son Jesus.

Hail Holy Queen

*Hail holy queen enthroned above, Oh Maria.
Hail mother of mercy and of love, Oh Maria.
Triumph all ye cherubim,
Sing with us ye seraphim.
Heaven and earth resound the hymn.
Salve, salve, salve regina.*

*Our life, our sweetness here below, Oh Maria.
Our hope in sorrow and in woe, Oh Maria.
Triumph all ye cherubim cherubim
Sing with us ye seraphim seraphim
Heaven and earth resound the hymn
Salve, salve, salve regina.*



25. I present, therefore, this Extraordinary Jubilee Year dedicated to living out in our daily lives the mercy which the Father constantly extends to all of us. In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us. Church's life is authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing **herald of mercy**.

The Church is called above all to be a credible witness to mercy, professing it and living it as the core of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great **river of mercy** wells up and overflows unceasingly.

In this Jubilee Year, may the Church echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love. May she never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort. May the Church become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: "Be **mindful of your mercy**, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old" (Ps 25:6).

We Shall Rise From the musical "Spectacle"

The evil one has spoken, an emperor's decree.
As enemies of the state, we'll suspend activities.
Like a decade ago, we'll work underground.
God's more powerful than evil, this we have found.

We shall rise! We shall rise! We shall rise!

The holy father's a prisoner,
our groups are suppressed.
All throughout France, for us there is no rest.
I'd be tempted to lose heart,
but hear God's words instead.
To our solemn enemies, "She shall crush thy head!"

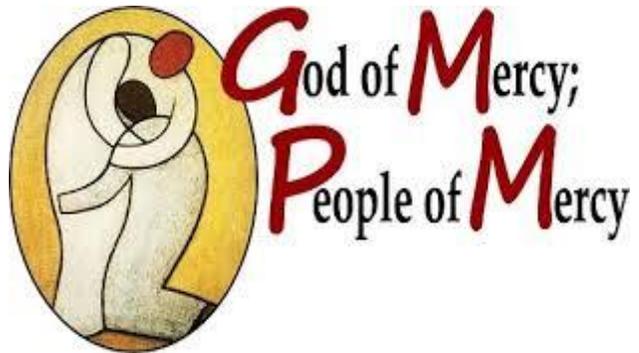
We shall rise! We shall rise! We shall rise!

Though we walk through the darkest valley,
with evil by our side.
In the presence of our enemies,
yet still like smoke we rise.
Like shepherds who guards their sheep,
from the terror of the night.
Just like love from on high, still we rise.

(Verse 1 and 2: "Running Giant" page 91
Verse 3: Psalm 23, J. Ford, 11/15)

RESOURCES:

- Books:
 - Short bios on Fr. Chaminade, Adele and Marie Therese by Joseph Stefanelli, SM, available from the North American Center for Marianist Studies (<http://www.nacms.org/>)
 - "The Name of God is Mercy" by Pope Francis
 - "The Monastery of the Heart" by Joan Chittister
 - "The Way of the Heart" by Henri Nouwen's
 - "The Miracle of Mindfulness" by Thich Nhat Hanh
 - "God does not love you because you are good; God loves you because God is good." Richard Rohr
- Archdiocese of St. Louis Website:
<http://archstl.org/mercy>
- New Retreat Opportunities at the Marianist Retreat Center in Eureka:
 - **Palm Sunday Weekend** Retreat with Msgr. Michael Witt: March 18, 19, 20, 2016
 - **Good Friday Day of Prayer** with Fr. Jose Ramirez, SM & Sr. Paulette Patriitti, OP, March 25, 2016,
 - **Embraced by God Retreat**, a weekend retreat exploring the spirituality of living with cancer and other chronic diseases. April 8,9 10, 2016
 - **"Next Step Retreat"** for teens. June 22, 23, 2016
 - **4 & 8 Day Directed Retreats:** This experience invites people to leave the busyness and noise of daily lives behind, enter into deep quiet, and there encounter the voice of God. 4 day: June 16-19, 2016 and 8 day: July 17-24, 2016
 - For more information go to www.mretreat.org or call 636-938-5390



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