

Meditations on Mercy: December 2015

For each month of the Jubilee of Mercy, we offer reflections based on scripture passages that Pope Francis uses in his Bull *Misericordiae Vultus* (MV). By beginning with a scripture passage and a reference to paragraphs in *Misericordiae Vultus*, each reflection offers a way to more deeply embrace the call to embody mercy that is asked of every Christian. These reflections can be done on your own, with your family, or with small groups in your parish.

GATHERING

(10 minutes)

- Pray: Prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee of Mercy (www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/gdm/en/giubileo/bolla.html)
- Discuss: Outside of our group activity, how did you see the mercy of God working in your life over the past few weeks?

DECEMBER 2015

Lk 6:36-38; MV, nos. 13-14

“Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

The Jubilee of Mercy begins this month! As we strive to live out the mercy and love of God, we

should take heart in the motto for the Jubilee of Mercy, “Merciful Like the Father” (MV, nos. 13-14). What does it mean to be merciful like the Father—how is God merciful? Throughout Scripture, we see many examples of God’s mercy, such as his judgment of individuals and nations. Additionally, powerful examples are found in God’s salvific actions throughout history—in the history of Israel in the Old Testament, in the prophets, in the life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, in the sending of the Holy Spirit to the Church at Pentecost, etc. Mercy is not just an act of clemency for those who have done wrong. It is a way of life that is manifested in the compassion, love, and joy we see that God has for all creation.

While it is easy to see how God is merciful through the witness of the Scriptures and the life of the Church, it is sometimes challenging for us to apply it to our daily actions. How do we live out what Christ calls us to in Scripture? Our ability to live out this motto is dependent on our accepting God’s superabundant love and mercy that he pours out on us. Once we are nourished with God’s mercy and allow his merciful love to transform us, we are better able to show others this merciful love (MV, no. 14). Adopting a merciful attitude is not simply a spiritual action; it also includes physical acts that witness to God’s love. Luke 6:37-38 provides us with examples of how our actions can reflect the way that God treats us: through not judging or condemning, by forgiving others, and by giving generously to others (MV, no. 14). However, our actions of mercy are not simply things we do so that we will be judged worthy by God. They are actions that flow from our embrace of God’s mercy and love for us. By

Mercy in Motion

showing mercy and love to others, we illustrate how we have accepted God's merciful love and how we want to continue this outpouring of mercy (*MV*, no. 14).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where do I see God's love and mercy acting in my own life? What is one way that I can receive these gifts from God and acknowledge them in my own spiritual life?
2. What does it mean for me, for my family, or

for my parish, to be merciful as God is merciful? How can I/we concretely express this merciful attitude that is grounded on the love of God?

CLOSING PRAYER

(5 minutes)

- Assemble intentions and reflections from this week's gathering.