



EMBRACE THE YEAR OF MERCY

To Be Continued...

The Year of Mercy will “officially” end on Sunday, November 20th when the Holy Door at the Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman will be closed by Bishop Callahan. The faithful of the Diocese are invited to join with our Bishop in the celebration of Holy Mass at 10:30 a.m. and the meaningful Rite of Closing of the Holy Door to offer thanksgiving for the Lord’s abundant mercy showered upon us during the Jubilee Year of Mercy. However, just because the Holy Year is coming to an end, we must remember that “the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are **new every morning**; great is His faithfulness.” (Lamentations, 3:22-23). So how are we to move forward?

Continue to Receive God’s Mercy

One way of moving forward is to go deeper in our understanding of God’s mercy. The entire Bible reveals the merciful love of God who never gives up on His children, no matter how far we stray from Him. How about committing to ten minutes a day (or even five) to read a short passage from the Gospel of Luke, which is referred to as the Gospel of Mercy? The theme of God’s mercy ties the whole book together, from Mary praising God for showering His mercy upon her to the 15 parables which are unique to St. Luke’s Gospel. Indeed, the entire New Testament encourages everyone to place all of our trust in the Son of God who is overflowing with merciful love, to the point of giving His life for us.

We will always have need of receiving the mercy of God, which is “the loving kindness, compassion, or forbearance shown to one who offends.” (Glossary of the Catechism) Mercy means an offense has been committed – a wrongdoing, an unkindness, a selfish act, a sin – and yet still there is the offer of loving kindness, compassion, forbearance. And if we take the time to examine our conscience, doesn’t each one of us offend God and our neighbor at various times, in one way or another? In the Sacrament of Mercy – in Confession – we receive forgiveness of our sins, which brings peace, joy, unburdening from guilt, clarity, healing, a greater desire to pray, freedom, etc.

In His desire for us always to receive His mercy, Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist on the night before He died. “In order to leave us a pledge of His love, in order to never depart from His own and to make us sharers in His Passover [from death to life], He instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of His death and Resurrection, and commanded His Apostles [and all bishops and priests] to celebrate it until His return” (Catechism, paragraph 1337). In the Holy Eucharist, we are able to receive Jesus Himself – who is the presence of mercy! In being truly united with the Son of God, we are strengthened to show mercy to others.

Continue to Show to Others the Mercy God Shows to Us

As we grow in our understanding of how utterly dependent we are on God’s mercy, and how eager He is to give it, we are more willing to show mercy to others as a witness to Jesus in our lives. The Works of Mercy as explained to us by Christ in Matthew 25: 31-46 are “charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal [bodily] works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead” (Catechism, paragraph 2447).

Let us make a conscience effort, with the help of God’s mercy – obtained through crying out to Him in prayer and receiving Him in the Sacraments – to personally help other persons in need. This is the essence of living out the Year of Mercy in an ongoing way, “for His mercy endures forever.”

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