

## PRAYER FOCUS FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2016

### *A New Beginning in Mercy*

#### REFLECTION ONE

As we begin this year, 2016, the Jubilee Year of Mercy, and a leap year, we are conscious of the opportunity to start afresh –and we have one extra day - all 24 hours, 86,400 seconds of it.

So many days pass by without our recognition of the gifts that are there. How are we going to give thanks for today? [Let us pause to be grateful for the gifts of today.](#)

Catherine McAuley speaks to us today, as she did in her retreat instructions. ‘Each day is a step which we take toward Eternity and we shall continue thus from day to day until we take the last step bringing us into the Presence of God.’ *Retreat Instructions*, p. 185



On Mercy Day last year, Pope Francis spoke these challenging words at a centre for homeless in Washington DC “Jesus keeps knocking on our doors, the doors of our lives. He doesn’t do this by magic, with special effects, with flashing lights and fireworks. **Jesus keeps knocking on our door in the faces of our brothers and sisters**, in the faces of our neighbors, in the faces of those at our side.” 24/9/2105, Washington DC.

In 'The Joy of the Gospel' (*Evangelii Gaudium*) Pope Francis reminds us. 'Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel.'(20) E.G

The challenge is there every day for each of us.

*"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"* Mary Oliver

*we leave today  
going into a future as yet unmapped  
take faith with you as you go;  
into the parts of your life not yet travelled by  
love  
into the parts of the world unexplored by  
grace  
let compassion and hope  
be the roads that you follow  
today and always* Cheryl Lawrie

## REFLECTION TWO

*The challenge of a new beginning in Mercy*



In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, how are we going to bring to birth a reality of mercy which is more palpable in our lives?

'If we wish to sow the seeds of real hope in our world, I think Catherine McAuley would say: This is the way we must do it - one person at a time: one answering of the figurative

doorbell, one opening of the figurative door, one embrace of the stranger, one welcoming of the other, one sharing of our bread and milk - one person at a time. *Patricia Smith. RSM*

**"Mercy Values Today: Ever Ancient, Ever New."**

Pope Francis gives us a further challenge: 'I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful ... I see the church as a field hospital after battle....Instead of being just a church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a church that finds new roads ... to those who have quit or are indifferent.' *September 30, 2013, interview, America magazine.*

Let us pray this special prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

*Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,  
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.  
Show us your face and we will be saved.  
Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;  
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;  
made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.  
Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan  
woman:  
"If you knew the gift of God!"  
You are the visible face of the invisible Father,  
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.  
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness  
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.  
Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,  
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,  
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.  
We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary,  
Mother of Mercy;  
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen*

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*These prayer reflections were prepared by Sisters Anne McGuire rsm, Celestine Pooley rsm and Patricia McDermott rsm*