

PRAYER FOCUS FOR MONTH OF NOVEMBER

The ongoing challenge of the Year of Mercy

REFLECTION ONE

In this month of November, when we come to the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, **we are invited to reflect back on God's mercy in our lives, and the way we have shared God's loving mercy with others.**



At the beginning of this year of Mercy Pope Francis challenged us with these words:

“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! ” (Misericordiae Vultus)

This is indeed a challenge to us, not just for the Year of Mercy, but for all throughout our lives.

Sometimes, in the face of so many huge needs in our world, it is easy to be overcome by it all and fall into inertia or indifference.

Mary Sullivan reminds us:

“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.”

(Reading from Mary C Sullivan, “Welcoming the Stranger: The Kenosis of Catherine McAuley,”)



During this year, then we have been 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.” (“Misericordiae Vultus”)

We have been called to rekindle in each of us, our commitment in Mercy, in a way that is joyful, prayerful and compassionate.

With this prayer written in memory of Oscar Romero (1917–1980) we pray:

***“We cannot do everything,
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders;
ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.
Amen.”***

Let us take some time in prayer now, to reflect on God’s loving mercy in our lives. With hands open in trust, let us breathe in God’s mercy to us, and then let us breathe out in prayer our commitment to be truly women and men of mercy.

REFLECTION TWO

The continuing challenge of the Year of Mercy

As we come to the close of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, we take time to reflect on God's mercy to us through the year, and how we have shared that mercy with others.



Pope Francis reminds us

“We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity and peace.” (*Misericordiae Vultus*)

He challenges us, though, not to keep this gift for ourselves:

“Mercy impels us to pass from personal to the communal. We see this in the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, a miracle born of Jesus’ compassion for his people and for others. Something similar happens when we act mercifully: the bread of mercy multiplies as it is shared”

“Nothing unites us to God more than an act of mercy – and this is not an exaggeration: nothing unites us to God more than an act of mercy!” Pope Francis, (*June 2, 2016*)



With this in mind then, in our prayer this month, we ask our God to inspire in us a deep awareness of God's mercy in our lives so that not only during the Jubilee year, but beyond, we can truly share God's mercy with all we meet, without exceptions!



Fr Ron Rolheiser reflects:

“It is interesting to note in the gospels how the apostles, well-meaning of course, often tried to keep certain people away from Jesus as if they weren't worthy, as if they were an affront to his holiness or would somehow stain his purity. So they perennially tried to prevent children, prostitutes, tax collectors, known sinners, and the uninitiated of all kinds from coming to Jesus. However, always Jesus over-ruled their attempts with words to this effect: “Let them come! I want them to come.”

(On Not Being Stingy With God's Mercy | Ron Rolheiser June 16, 2014)

This insight then is a challenge to each of us to be truly open in our appreciation of God's mercy so that we may have a

“church capable of rediscovering the maternal womb of mercy. Without mercy we have little chance nowadays of becoming part of a world of 'wounded' persons in need of understanding, forgiveness and love.”

(July 28, 2013. Pope Francis)

Saint Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) understood this well when she wrote:

***“Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours.”***

With Sisters of Mercy, associates and colleagues all throughout the world, we pray the words of the Mercy Day Mass at Baggot Street, Dublin, on September 24, 2016.

Merciful God, “we ask for the grace to live lives worthy of this call – to be signs, in active and practical ways, of the tender love with which you embrace us all.”

As this Jubilee Year of Mercy comes to a close

“strengthen our resolve to work for the transformation of our world

to a place where all know themselves to be blessed and welcomed

as you welcome us to this holy place and time.

Amen.”

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