

Reflection 1 – 2017

In 2016 as the Mission Animation Team and myself in my role as Executive Leader Mission and Ministry visited you across Papua New Guinea and Australia, you asked for reflective material to support your life and ministry/mission. This is the first of what we hope will be a monthly reflection in response to that request. It is accessible visually and audibly. You can engage with it in many different ways as it is reflective material more than a single reflection.

Reflection 1

You are invited into your own reflective space to listen to or read the words which follow, to pause at those points where you are touched and urged to reflect more deeply.

Place yourself within this point in the unfolding of Mercy life in ISMAPNG. Remember that we have just concluded MIRP (the Mercy International Reflection Process) undertaken across the Mercy World. Touch again into its two-fold focus: the cry of the Earth, the cry of the Poor, emphases given to us in Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. As this month unfolds you may wish to read again reflectively segments of that document.

Pope Francis gave us further material for reflection as last year drew to a close.

- On 1 September in a *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, Pope Francis extended the *works of Mercy* to include *care for our common home*. You may wish to pause here and reflect on his words:

***As a spiritual work of mercy, care for our common home calls for a “grateful contemplation of God’s world” (Laudato Si’, 214) which “allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us” (ibid., 85).
As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires “simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness” and “makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world” (ibid., 230-31)***

[To read the full message, see
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160901_messaggio-giornata-cura-creato.html]

Take time in your reflection to ponder deeply what this new invitation to mercy might be for you/for us: care for our common home.

- Pope Francis closed the Year of Mercy with an Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera*. In the short piece for our reflection, Pope Francis introduces a significant phrase for us: a culture of mercy. You may wish to read and ponder §20 in which this phrase occurs or even the whole document. For now, these few words provide us with an invitation:

***We are called to promote a culture of mercy based on the rediscovery of encounter with others, a culture in which no one looks at another with indifference or turns away from the suffering of our brothers and sisters.
The works of mercy are “handcrafted”, in the sense that none of them is alike.
Our hands can craft them in a thousand different ways***

In this particular piece, the Pope does not mention ‘care for our common home’ explicitly but it is included now in ‘the works of mercy’.

[You may wish to read and reflect on his words, see
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20161120_misericordia-et-misera.html]

Ponder here the 'culture of mercy' to which we are invited by the gospel. Are our homes, our work places, our relationships places in which the 'culture of mercy' is evident as we respond to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor

Pause with Reflective Song – Jan Novotka – *Earth Community*. Allow the refrain to go with you into all aspects of your day, reverently, consciously, compassionately as the song invites.

Final Segment of our Reflection: Engaging the Biblical story

This year we are invited in our Sunday liturgies to engage the Gospel of Matthew. As we read we are invited to hear in the gospel the voice of the Earth as well as the voice of the Poor. The opening words of the gospel demonstrate this and call for our reflection.

The very first words of the Gospel of Matthew are “the book of the genealogy” and they are followed by 39 generations of human unfolding. Echoing through these opening words, however, are two texts from Genesis. The first is Gen 2:4a—the book of the genealogy of the heavens and earth—the phrase which concludes the story of the creation of the universe. The second is Gen 5:1-2—the book of the genealogy of the human community male and female.

You are invited to ponder these words—the book of the genealogy—allowing its two intertexts (Gen 2:4a and Gen 5:1-2) to seep into your being so that together we may hear our gospel anew, to hear it speak not only the voice and cry of the poor [the human poor] but also the voice and the cry of the Earth and Earth's poor.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christos that opens Matthew's gospel invites us to hear the story of Jesus, Emmanu-el, of God with us in this Jesus as not only a story of the human community but also the entire Earth community. It is here that God is with an 'us' much more expansive than we humans.

Week by week as you hear the Gospel of Matthew each Sunday, listen for the Earth community. Hear the story of Jesus among not only us, the human community but the entire Earth community.

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