

## SPEECH – THANK YOU

Jubilee, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017

The Readings for today's liturgy were specially chosen, a conversation of quotes between the writings of Pope Francis and the Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

If you thought you have heard the last of them today, be assured that you have not!

Pope Francis wrote in "Misericordia et Misera":

*"Mercy is (the) concrete action of love that, by forgiving, transforms and changes our life. In this way, the divine mystery of mercy is made manifest".*  
(Misericordia et Misera: para 2)

And the Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy say:

*We must know our dependence on another's mercy before we can give and receive the mercy of God (1.06)*

Carmel, Cheryl and I experienced that Mercy throughout our lives. We were born to loving parents who lived Mercy in *concrete action of love that transformed and changed our lives*. It was firstly from Billie and Owen Ruddick, Tom and Beryl Camp and Ellen and Colin Lowcock that we *depended on mercy* and because of that mercy we were able to *give and receive the mercy of God*. For that, we are all truly grateful.

Each of us grew up in different places: Carmel in Home Hill; Cheryl at the base of Castle Hill in Belgian Gardens; and me in Bowen but our lives had many similarities. Our parents

struggled financially but they gave us every opportunity they could afford.

Life was very simple:

- + there were many hours spent together as a family;
- + children walked or rode bikes; school was just around the corner;
- + hours were spent listening to the radio and television had not yet come to north Queensland;
- + the telephone was a valued communication tool but there were no mobiles, iPads, or computers;
- + letters and cards were written and sent by post;
- + family holidays were spent with other relatives or friends so that accommodation was not expensive;
- + we were environmentally friendly as plastic was only just being invented and food scraps were thrown to chickens and ducks in the backyard;
- + ... .....and the list can go on!

But what was most important, they gave us love and affection; they listened; they attended to our every need; they were there for us.

They were **mercy** for us and for this we will always be grateful. Five of them could be celebrating somewhere in cyberspace together.

My own father who just turned 101 would have loved to have been here but physically could not make it.

Once again Pope Francis wrote: *Mercy gives rise to joy, because our hearts are opened to the hope of a new life. The experience of mercy brings joy.*” (Misericordia et Misera: para 3)

It is this mercy that each of us received through interaction with our siblings.

Together we lived the ups and downs of life as children but those early experiences turned into valued life relationships where the three of us have received untold support and affection from our brothers and sisters and their descendants.

- ❖ Carmel misses her sister Pat who died of cancer some years ago but delights in the relationship she has with her niece, Carmel, and her family. Carmel is delighted that her niece could be with her here today.
- ❖ I only had teasing from one brother but Cheryl is a martyr as she endured three times that teasing from Vince, Alan and Kevin. But that mocking and bantering is now thoughtfulness and kindness from brothers, sisters-in-law and numerous nieces and nephews and their children.
- ❖ For myself, words cannot express the friendship and affection that I now have for and from my two sisters, Janice and Colleen and my brother, Michael, and the joy that Colleen and Ted's children have brought into my life. Today I value the presence of Colleen and Ted and Charlotte, one of my nieces who travelled from Brisbane to be with me today; Janice who is lovingly caring for Dad; and Michael (who gave up an extended holiday overseas to be here today).

Mercy that we received from our families made the many friendships that we have today possible. We each have numerous relatives and friends who have revealed the mercy of God to us. Each of us has served in many ministries and

built up numerous relationships with colleagues. We are delighted to have some of our close families, relatives and friends with us here today.

You and many others with who have crossed our paths in our Mercy journey have *transformed and changed* us; you have been our *witnesses to hope and joy*; upi have *opened our hearts to hope*; from you we *know God's loving kindness* and are *able to share it with others*.

Through our families, relatives and friends, Carmel, Cheryl and I have been blessed. For this, today, we want to say thanks.

.....

After the line “.....but delights in the relationship she has with her niece, Carmel, and her family.” Could you please say: “ Carmel is delighted to have some of her close family members and friends with her here today”.

Quote:

- a. Our gift as Sisters of Mercy is to know God’s loving kindness and to share it with others.” (1.02)
  - b. *“Mercy is (the) concrete action of love that, by forgiving, transforms and changes our lives. In this way, the divine mystery of mercy is made manifest”.*  
(Misericordia et Misera: para 2)
  - c. *“Mercy gives rise to joy, because our hearts are opened to the hope of a new life. The experience of mercy brings joy. May we never allow this joy to be robbed from us by our troubles and concerns. May it remain rooted in our hearts and enable us to approach with serenity the events of our daily lives”.* (Misericordia et Misera: para 3)
  - d. *“We need witnesses to hope and true joy if we are to dispel the illusions that promise quick and easy happiness through artificial paradises. The profound sense of emptiness felt by so many people can be overcome by the hope we hear in our hearts and by the joy that it gives”.* (Misericordia et Misera: para 3)
  - e. *“Now ..... it is time to look to the future and to understand how best to continue, with joy, fidelity and enthusiasm ,experiencing the richness of God’s mercy.”*  
(Misericordia et Misera: para 5)
- A. Our gift as Sisters of Mercy is to know God’s loving kindness and to share it with others.” (1.02)
  - B. We must know our dependence on another’s mercy before we can give and receive the mercy of God (1.06)

- Mary Lowcock rsm