



Scripture Theme 2015-2016

From the Gospel According to Luke

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." Luke 6:36



Background

Pope Francis has declared this liturgical year (starting December 8, 2015) as a Year of Mercy. The Pope is challenging us to see that mercy is a way to understand God. God is mercy and love. Jesus' words from Luke's Gospel are simple, yet profound. God is merciful (loving and compassionate) and calls us to be merciful (loving and compassionate).

Mercy is the ready willingness to help anyone in time of need. It is an attitude, a way of treating others and the world around us, which comes to us automatically in situations. Mercy is compassionate care for others. It is an active quality of the virtue of charity, motivated by love. Quite simply, mercy is love's response to suffering.

Pope Francis' Official Prayer for 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 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.

Questions for Reflection

1. Why might it be difficult to take on the attitude and actions of mercy? What are some of the distractions that can take away our focus and motivation to be merciful?
2. In the Pope's writing about the year of mercy, he says, "In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes modern society itself creates." What or whom do you think is the Pope referring to, and what action might that inspire in you?
3. The foundation of mercy is compassion, love and humility. How might you be the living example of mercy to your friends, family, BSM community and the world?

