



The Director's Message

By: Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM



I am grateful for Pope Francis for declaring The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. I am a bit ashamed to admit that I have not reflected on the mercy of God before this year. Pope

Francis had opened my mind and heart to how essential it is to understand the very nature of God as merciful.

In "The Face of Mercy," the papal bull that announced the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis described our tradition of understanding God as a God of Mercy. He also talked about mercy being an essential quality of God. "In Short, the mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality through which he reveals his love as that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths. Out of love. It gushes forth from the depths naturally, full of tenderness and compassion, indulgence and mercy." (Paragraph 7)

I find that Pope Francis is inviting me to understanding mercy as a core attribute of who God is along with such qualities as generative, compassionate, inclusive, and inviting. These qualities rise to the fore as God reveals God's self over and over throughout history and thus points to God's desire for us to understand God in this light. This face of God invites me to approach, to draw near, and to let God know me as I am fully, without veils that I use to soften the blemishes. This is a journey for a lifetime not just a year.

Fr. Paul

P.S. This e-newsletter is dedicated to the Mercy of God. I hope that reflections that are offered here help each one to reflect on God's Mercy in each of our lives. Our web page also offers weekly quotes and reflection questions to help further your reflection. You can find these quotes on our web site: [Year of Mercy Reflections](#)

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Our E-Newsletter:

The Focus of this issue is on the role of mercy in relationships. Several readers share their experience.

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Claiming God's Mercy

By: Anne Marie

As I age, I need to consistently claim God's Mercy. I say "claim" because God's Mercy is always available. I don't need to beg, plead, or cajole God into hearing me. I need to claim God's powerful Mercy moment by moment; physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Physically, my feet, knees and back seem to be proceeding with the takeover of arthritis. Each day a new pain develops, an old one resides or relocates. I claim God's Mercy upon my pride. I obtained a scooter to cover large distances, I plan my day to save steps, I take medication as prescribed, and I rest when I hurt. I resisted wheel chair help and special treatment until I could submit to the reality of my pain. I claimed God's Mercy on my pride and independence. I took the wheelchair ride; I obtained a handicapped parking sign. I allowed God's Mercy to flow through me, to wash away the tears of embarrassment and to restore my usually cheerful spirit. Participation in life is more important than how I look. God's Mercy taught me that.

Emotionally, I want to be accepted and loved. I like to avoid hard discussions and difficult decisions. I claim God's Mercy each time I move forward with

decisions that I dread making. They must be made. God's in charge. I just need to claim God's Mercy; God's Wisdom and then proceed. God can't work if I don't cooperate.

Spiritually, I claim God's Mercy in my prayer. I am resolute about not judging my prayer, my quality of prayer, my discipline at prayer; my devotion at prayer. All those actions are focused on me; not on God. I claim God's Mercy when I say, "God, I don't know where _____ (fill in the blank) is going or how it will proceed. I give up all curiosity and desire to control and know. I trust your Mercy to guide and direct this." I have not been failed by God's Mercy. Things may not progress as I planned or expected, but it is always better and timed perfectly after it is claimed by God and relinquished by me.

I'm glad there is a Jubilee Year of Mercy to bring to my attention that God is in charge, that God's Mercy is always available; and that I need to submit to God's Mercy; to claim God's Mercy. I pray to continue to be open to God's desires and works.

I think a saying of St. Francis, taught near the end of his life, fits well here: "I have done what is mine to do; may you do what is yours."

Additional Web Resources

The intention of the e-newsletter is to provide a resource for the spiritual life and a place for people to share their personal experience, which serves as a spring board for others. We invite your comments, suggestions, and personal reflections. Use the following links to start a thread on our [Community Forums](#), or to send us an [email](#). In addition, we have [additional articles](#) on our website for your spiritual nourishment.



**COMMUNITY
FORUMS!**



Learn more about our [e-newsletter contributors](#). We would appreciate your [feedback](#).

Mercy in our Marriage

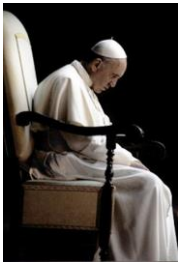
By: Lance and Mary Dufour

For us, the year of mercy serves as a reminder not only that we are each utterly reliant on God's mercy in our lives but that our marriage is also dependent on that mercy. In fact as married people, we cannot fully embrace God's mercy without letting that mercy flow into our marriage. Truly recognizing that we are sinners in need of God's mercy means also admitting that I have not loved my spouse perfectly—that I have and will continue to do wrong against my spouse, despite an earnest desire to love them.

We need God's mercy to heal those injuries to our marriage, whether they are large or small. It is easy to fall into the traps of thinking of ourselves first, taking our spouse for granted, or closing in on ourselves in our marriage. It can also be easy to find the faults in our spouse while ignoring those in

ourselves; sometimes we are more eager to forgive than to say, "I'm sorry for..." It is important to remember that we need mercy as much as we need to be merciful.

As God is generous in His mercy, so we too should be generous in showing forgiveness to our spouse. One thing we do to open our marriage to the healing power of God's mercy is to use the words "I forgive you" when our spouse apologizes to us. We used to say things like, "It's ok" or "It's no big deal." But we have found it more humbling and more healing when we recognize that a wrong has been done and that it is forgiven. And above all, we try to remember that for us married people there is no better place than in our marriage to practice these words taught to us by our Blessed Lord: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."



"Spreading the Gospel means that we are the first to proclaim and live the reconciliation, forgiveness, peace, unity, and love that the Holy Spirit gives us. Today I ask you in the name of Christ and the Church, never tire of being merciful."

- Pope Francis, The Church of Mercy

The Grammar of Mercy

By: Carol Bauer

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, it's as though Pope Francis has taken a bright yellow highlighter to the central truth of our faith: "God is very loving; God is very merciful. God never tires of forgiving us. We are to be a people of mercy."

Given that highlight, I think MERCY deserves to be a verb. It probably already is, somewhere on the internet. Grammar changes happen all the time in social media: nouns become verbs...verbs become nouns..."this parish has 674 Likes on Facebook"... "be sure to Friend us on Facebook"

So if Mercy is a verb, and this is the Year of Mercy,

then I need to learn how to "mercy" on a regular basis.

My daily examen becomes:

- Who did I "mercy" today?
- How did I "mercy" another person today?
- Who "merced" me today?
- Did I "mercy" myself and allow myself to be "merced" by God?

May I be awake to opportunities to live into these grammar switches:

- May this "Year OF Mercy" be my "Year-graced-with-countless-ways TO MERCY my sisters and brothers."
- May we who are called to be a people of mercy be a people WHO MERCY.

Mercy in the Workplace

By: Dan Defino

Mercy is not only found in our relationship with God, but in every aspect of our relationships with one another. We are in communion with each other, so as we feel God's mercy in our lives, we are bound to bring that mercy to others.

As partial owner of a family owned marketing company in Chicago, I find that mercy fits into my everyday life at many levels. I am often reflecting on how I can be a better leader or boss, by treating all who work for me and with me, with respect, and mercy. Mercy is not just rectifying wrongdoing and offering compassion, but it's about being proactive, and looking out for challenges within those around me, even if they do not ask for help, assistance, or kindness. It is about bringing mercy and offering support before it's needed. This culture builds a sense of support, and comfort, as opposed to being

in a toxic and always 'on edge' environment. If I see in someone where they may be challenged in a work scenario, or how a personal scenario may be weighing on them in the workplace, I am bound to sense that and offer support; love; mercy.

The mentality and feeling of looking at each other through a merciful heart goes upward as well. I bring that to my clients who have the same challenges as those who work for me. They have the problems in their workplace, and the same troubles in life that weighs them down. Although my customers are at a business level, I can still act the way God intends for me to act, and bring them peace, and mercy where I may see hurt or a hardened heart.

Our eyes need to be open to those around us, and our love needs to always be evident. God, help me to bring love and mercy in the workplace so that we may all feel your presence in every aspect of life.

Mercy

By: Rev. Tom Schoenherr, PhD

I wonder if mercy is something like grace. We don't expect it. We never see it coming. But when we receive it we discover that it is what we were hoping for, and what we always needed.

During the years I served as a Pastor in congregations in Michigan and Missouri, there were a number of conflicts. There will always be conflicts when people are working closely with one another. Even though these conflicts did not always involve me directly, they were always painful for me. I don't like conflict. What I learned is that, just as a person can't recover from surgery or injury without going

through pain, I needed to look the pain in the eye and enter into the conflict in order to experience healing. Finally what emerged where there was confession, forgiveness and care for one another, was mercy, unexpected but needed.

I began to see mercy as the experience of death and resurrection with Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus cannot be our Savior and Redeemer who rises from the dead without going through suffering and death for us, so the person we really are under our fears, addictions, cover-ups and letting go of our pre-conceived ideas about others, needs to die. What emerges with Christ is a new person, unexpected, never saw it coming, but what we were hoping for and what we really don't deserve.



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"I remind you, My daughter, that as often as you hear the clock strike the third hour, immerse yourself completely in My mercy, adoring and glorifying it; invoke its omnipotence for the whole world, and particularly for poor sinners; for at that moment mercy was open wide for every soul. In this hour you can obtain everything for yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world - mercy triumphed over justice."

- Diary of St. Faustina



Upcoming Retreats

<u>Retreat Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
<u>Youth Ministers Day</u>	Aug 19	
<u>Through the Eyes of Love: A Spirituality for Everyone</u>	Sept 17	Sr. Laura Jean Spaeth, SSND
<u>Healing Mother Earth: the Role of the Feminine</u>	Oct 1	Kathleen Davis

Private Retreats Can Be Scheduled Anytime

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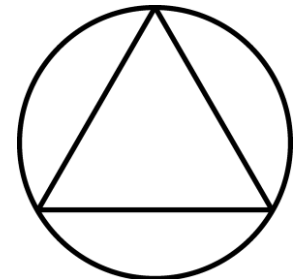
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Spring and Summer Retreat Promotion

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Next Issue

In our next e-newsletter, we would like to devote articles to recovery from addictions, and we would like to include some of your reflections. What are your reflections on recovery experience, strength, and hope? We would ask you to keep it short, personal, and practical so that your thoughts can be spring board from which others might begin their own reflection. Send us an [email](#) with Recovery in the subject line.



Sunday Gospel reflection questions are available on our webpage or can be sent to your e-mail each week. Click here!