

Blessings of the Year of Mercy



We all know that we have been in the Jubilee Year of Mercy which started from December 8, 2015 on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and is coming to a close on 20th November 2016, on the Solemnity of Christ the King. We are privileged to live in this graceful time of the jubilee Year of Mercy in which we are even able to obtain plenary indulgence (complete remission of temporal punishment due to sins), provided we sacramentally confess our sins and make all effort to live in a state of grace (the doctrine and practice of indulgence in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the Sacrament of Penance), receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and praying for the intentions of our Pope. Pope reminds us that Confessional is not only the place to put our sins down but it is also the place of God's mercy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches in para 1465 that the 'Priest at the Confessional 'is the sign and the instrument of God's merciful love for the sinner'.

While declaring this Jubilee Year Pope Francis intended that we become more convinced of the wonderful Mercy of God, and experiencing that merciful love in our day to day life, we also in turn share this mercy with others.

There are people who think that they have committed many grave sins and there is no way out. If we tend to think so, it is because we have a false image of God, our Father. Moses introduced to Israelites, "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. (Exo. 34.6). Jesus, the visible face of the invisible Father (Col. 1.15), reflected this Merciful Father through his life and teachings. Let us rely on this Mercy of the Lord and lead people to embrace it. St. John Chrysostom has said: "Instead of crying over our repeated sins, think of the mercy of God".

St. Faustina is known as the Apostle of Mercy. Once Satan told her: "You do me more harm than a 1000 souls coming together to attack me. When you tell about the mercy of God to the sinful souls who are to come to me, I lose them. When you soak them in the ocean of God's Mercy, they reach heaven".

Once a woman who was the parishioner of St. Cure of Ars, Fr. John Mary Vianny went to him and said quite happily: "Today, my husband fell from a bridge, broke his head and died. His body and soul will go to hell". Then Cure of Ars asked her: "Why are you saying so?" The woman replied: "My husband was a very cruel man. Every evening he comes fully drunk and beat me a lot. This evening he was coming back after drinking and he fell from a high bridge. The Cure asked her: How high was the bridge from the water beneath?" She said: "Oh! it was so high. His head hit on a rock and immediately he died". Deep in thought, the Cure told her gently: "While falling from such a height, if he had cried out to the Lord, when you go to heaven after your death, your husband robed in white cloth will be welcoming you"!

This is the wonderful Mercy of the Lord. Recalling what God said through Prophet Joel, Peter proclaimed in his first speech at Pentecost: "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2.21). Let us try to turn as many people as possible to this Merciful Saviour who 'desires everyone to be saved' (1 Tim.2.4). "He was slaughtered and by his blood he

ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5.9). St. John saw the heavenly scene in revelation: "I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands" (Rev.7.9)

In our life-time, the door of Mercy is opened to us. To St. Faustina, the Lord said: "Those who do not pass through the door of Mercy will have to come through the door of judgment". Let us continue to fulfill the conditions which our Pope has said in order to gain the indulgences in the Jubilee Year, even after its closure. With the grace of God, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, let us try to live in a state of grace, detaching ourselves from every sin, with true repentance frequenting the Sacrament of Confession and receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist in a worthy manner and praying for the intentions of our Pope. Let us try to save our souls, the souls of others who sink deep in the darkness of sin and confusion, and also the souls in Purgatory (CCC 1471) through our righteous lives, prayers and penance. Let us "go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that the house of our Master may be filled" (Lk. 14.23).

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