

CLC PRAIRIE REGION

APRIL 2ND, 2016 SPRING FORMATION AND RETREAT DAY-RESOURCES & SUMMARY – by Ruth Chipman (Winnipeg), Helen Kroker/Penny Fitzpatrick (Thunder Bay), and Kwan-Sui Crowe (Prairie Region Representative)



Merciful Like the Father

CLC Prairie Region gathered in Thunder Bay and Winnipeg, in quiet retreat, to contemplate the mystery of God's tender mercy for each of us. We shared Howard's sorrow on the passing of his dear mother, Doris, and delighted in the company of Nicole's baby daughter Basme, which means "smile." We were all profoundly touched by the personal experiences of mercy that were shared. In reflecting on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy we were all struck at how we could deepen our responses.

Thanks to Fr. Charles for the terrific presentations and resources. Thanks to the group guides and coordinators for organizing the day. The retreat program and resources follow.



Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy

These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him. The Father, “rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4), after having revealed his name to Moses as “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex34:6), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature. In the “fullness of time” (Gal 4:4), when everything had been arranged according to his plan of salvation, he sent his only Son into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to reveal his love for us in a definitive way. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. Jn 14:9). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.

(Pope Francis: from the proclamation letter: *Misericordiae vultus*)

Theme: **Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's Mercy**

Goal: Active participation, as a CLC region, in the Jubilee Year of Mercy through our Retreat Day and its connection to Commitment.

Grace: That we will know more deeply the tender mercy of God for each of us and that we will be merciful to others as our Heavenly Father is to us. Some references on theme of Mercy to reflect on:

“I say we are wound

With mercy round and round

As if with air." (G.M. Hopkins, SJ)

"The quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven"

(W. Shakespeare in Merchant of Venice)

In this Jubilee year dedicated to the theme of God's mercy, with the motto, "Merciful Like the Father," this retreat day will serve as an invitation to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure. Pope Francis' intention for this "holy year" is that it be a way for the church to "make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy."

We had input on the theme, time for personal and communal prayer, and sharing together on this theme, concluding with the celebration of the Eucharist.

Introduction to theme of Mercy - Different meanings and roots of the word MERCY (text below) were read first as a group; followed by a sheet with various Scripture passages (also see below text.) Retreatants, then, chose one or another to pray on for about 45 minutes.

Meaning of word MERCY:

Latin root: *misericordia*: *miseri* (misery, suffering, misfortune) and *cor/cordis* – the heart: having one's heart touched and turned to those in need and misfortune. In everyday language, it is identified with forgiveness and sometimes compassion. Involves God's mercy toward us and our mercy toward others as part of a covenantal love.

Other words express this movement: steadfast love, tenderness, tender love, loving kindness, pity, clemency and grace or gift of God, graciousness.

Hebrew roots: two expressions: a) *hesed*: a profound attitude of kindness, love and grace; b) *raham*: whose root denotes the love of a mother that entails kindness, tenderness, patience, understanding and willingness to forgive. (See Psalm 117; 135)

Greek root: *eleos*: as in *Kyrie* (Lord) *eleison* (have mercy); also, "giving alms" (Latin – *eleemosyna*)

In summary, mercy in the Bible expresses the deep-felt interior movement that we experience when faced with want and misfortune, together with the action that rises from the interior feeling, that is, to have compassion and pity, to be moved by, to feel deep affection (like a mother), to love tenderly, to have tender emotion, to take pity, to be gracious.

God's "mercy" – loving us even when we have refused his love, embracing us with pardon (enduring love) – is the paradigm of our showing "mercy" toward each other.

Input on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Went through each of the concrete ways of showing mercy and gave examples how members are trying to live these out, or what still needed to be done.

The corporal works of mercy:

To feed the hungry; To give drink to the thirsty; To clothe the naked; To harbour the homeless; To visit the sick; To ransom the captive; To bury the dead.

The spiritual works of mercy:

To instruct the ignorant; To counsel the doubtful; To admonish sinners; To bear wrongs patiently; To forgive offences willingly; To comfort the afflicted; To pray for the living and the dead.

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 117)

SCRIPTURAL TEXTS

for “Lectio divina” (mediation) and “imaginative contemplation”.

Hosea 6: 1-6: *I desire steadfast love (mercy) and not sacrifice.*

Hosea 11: 1-9: *My compassion grows warm and tender.*

Joel 2: 12-18: *Return to the Lord, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...*

Isaiah 54: 1-8: *With everlasting love, I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer.*

Isaiah 43: 1-5a: *You are precious in my eyes, and I love you.*

Isaiah 55: 1-11: *Come to the waters.... I will make with you an everlasting covenant.... My Steadfast, sure love for David.*

Isaiah 58: 1-14: *Is this not the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice...to share your bread..?*

Jeremiah 31: 31-34: *I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel....I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sin no more.*

Psalms: 25 (*To you I lift my soul... according to your mercy, remember me*)

41 (*Be gracious to me*)

51 (*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your merciful love*)

57 (*For your mercy is great in the heavens*)

92 (*It is good..to declare your merciful love in the morning, your faithfulness by night*)

103 (*Bless the Lord, o my soul....The Lord merciful and gracious....*)

136 (*O Give thanks.... For his mercy endures forever*).

Luke 7: 36-50 - *Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.*

Luke 15: 1-10 – *Parables of lost sheep and lost coin.*

Luke 15: 11-32 – *Parable of prodigal son and compassionate father.*
Mark 1: 40-45 – *Moved with compassion, Jesus cures the leper.*
Matthew 7: 1-5 - *Do not judge so that you may not be judged.*
Matthew 9: 9-13 – *Call of Matthew(Levi)....I desire mercy not sacrifice...*
Matthew 18: 23-35 - *Parable of the unforgiving servant.*
Matthew 18: 21-22 – *How often do we forgive others? Not 7 times but 77 times.*
Luke 18:9-14 – *The Pharisee and the Publican*
Luke 6: 27-36 - *Love of enemies... Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*
Luke 7: 37-42 - *Do not judge, and you will not be judged.*
Luke 10: 25-37 - *The compassion of the good Samaritan.*
John 20: 19-23 – *Christ's peace, Christ's forgiveness.*

Ephesians 2:1-10 – *God has given us new life through Christ Jesus*
Ephesian 5: 1-14 - *Live as children of the light.*
Colossians 3: 1-10, 12-17 - *The Lord has forgiven us, we are to do the same.*
1 John 4: 16-21 – *The one who loves God, loves also his brother/sister.*

Evaluation of the Retreat

Grew closer to God's mercy, exhilarating/tiring, unifying/energizing/challenging, more awareness/mercy/being helped to grow, sense of community/together/share, grew from the deep sharing/gently encouraged, liked it/helped to deal with loneliness, surrounded by mercy despite of who we are, Christianity defined, thankful, happy, felt strength in numbers and through prayer.

Really struck with the energy in the region. While there are struggles, signs of Hope include the Come & See actions, the Vocation panel, regional gatherings and collaboration.

Hymn for the Holy Year of Mercy

Inno per l'Anno Santo della Misericordia

Paul Inwood (Music)
Eugenio Costa (Text)

J = c. 80

Assembly *Mi - se - ri - cor - des si - cut Pa - ter! Mi - se - ri - cor - des si - cut Pa - ter!*
Be merciful as God our Father! Be merciful as God our Father!

Ass. *1. Give thanks to the Father, for he is good in æ - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.*
2. Give thanks to the Son, Light of the Nations flesh in æ - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.
3. Let us ask the Spirit for the seven holy gifts For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.
4. Let us ask for peace from the God of all peace For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.

Ass. *1. He created the world with wisdom in æ - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.*
2. He loved us with a heart of flesh in æ - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.
3. Fount of all goodness and the sweetest re - lief For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.
4. The earth waits for the Good News of the Kingdom For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.

Ass. *1. He leads his people throughout history in æ - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.*
2. As we receive from him, let us also offer give to him For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.
3. Comforted by him, let us offer hearts of the little ones For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.
4. Joy and pardon in the hearts of the little ones For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.

Ass. *1. He pardons and welcomes his children in æ - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.*
2. Hears open to those who hunger and thirst For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.
3. Love hopes and bears all things For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.
4. The heavens and the earth will be re - newed For God's mer - cy is for ever and ever.

Christe Salvator

J = 50

Christe Sal - va - tor Fi - li - us Pa - tris do - na no - bis pa - cem.
JESUS our SAVIOR, SON of the FATHER, show to us your MERCY.

Misericordias Domini

J = 78

Mi - se - ri - cor - di - as Do - mi - ni in æ - ter - num can - ta - be.
Your tender mercies, O Lord, are pardon. Now & always we give praise.

Link for Official Hymn for the Jubilee of Mercy: <https://youtu.be/eYg0jirqgSg>

OCEAN OF MERCY video:

<https://youtu.be/CvZ4I9ZI67A?list=PL5sexwzkyqUXgYK9AJZTgt2cRcJBY0hJR>