



JUST A GUY IN THE PEW

THE NARROW ROAD

AUGUST 2022 | MERCY

In loving memory of Bill Platten.
A leader, a mentor, a friend.



THE NARROW ROAD

THE EVERYDAY GUIDE FOR THE EVERYDAY GUY



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WELCOME

Brothers in Christ,

I am so excited to deliver this resource to you. As I look back over the years at what God has had us doing at Just a Guy in the Pew, it has become obvious that His goal for our ministry is to help men become virtuous. Jesus didn't ask us to be merely "good" men, no He called us to be great men. In order for this to happen we need to leave vice and selfishness behind and trade it in for virtue and selflessness. That is what will help us achieve the goal that Christ has for us all. That goal is holiness. In the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, "The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God." What is God? He is holy and that's what we should hope to become as well.

The Catechism defines virtue in this way: "A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions." (CCC1803) Did you catch that? It says in order to be virtuous we need a habitual and firm disposition. This is where I think most men struggle. Most of us desire to do good. We desire to BE good. The problem is we don't have a system in place to form the necessary habits that shore up our will. Almost every man I have worked with over the years falls prey to this. We have the intention of being virtuous, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions, as they say. As men, we need structure and accountability to help us practice and live out virtue in our lives. Put pieces of wood for building a desk in front of a guy without directions or tools and the wood will soon be pushed to the side with a promise of getting to it later. Put that same wood in front of a guy with directions and a screw gun and he will build it in an hour. You see, the desire is there, we just need good directions.

That is what I hope these books can be for you every month. In them, you will be able to practice a singular virtue over 30 days in the different relationships of your life. This will help you dial your focus in on one virtue each month and will help keep you from feeling overwhelmed. Feeling overwhelmed is what makes most guys put something down. That's why we have made each day as simple as possible for you. We have even included the daily Gospel reading for you to read and reflect on what God is sharing with you personally that day. That in itself will help transform your life.

You also will have the opportunity to list out the ways in which you have practiced that month's particular virtue in the four different relationships in your life. Those are your relationship with God, your relationship with your spouse, your relationship

with your children, and your relationship with your neighbor. These are the places God wants us to grow in virtue. He uses the very people He puts in front of you each day as opportunities to grow in virtue and holiness. If you are not married and do not have children use those two weeks to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.

The last piece we have included is the Opportunity for Grace Chart. This is not a commitment sheet but is exactly what it is called. It's an opportunity for grace. It is a list made up of simple yet powerful practices you can begin to put into place in your life. These are opportunities you can seek out throughout the month to receive God's grace or pass it along to your family or others. Most guys beat themselves up for what they don't do. This is an opportunity to shine light on the progress you are making each week in your spiritual life. It's a chance to see the positive instead of the negative.

It is my hope and prayer that you will find this simple yet powerful tool helpful. I hope that you will use this book each day to help continue on the path to holiness. If your goal is to be the man that God created you to be, then this will get you going in the right direction. I look forward to walking this journey towards becoming virtuous men beside you.

In Christ,
John

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRACE

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22									
23									
24									
25									
26									
27									
28									
29									
30									
31									

THE VIRTUE OF MERCY

My brothers,

I don't know about you, but I love movies. I was a child of the eighties and delighted in all of its masterpieces like Star Wars, The Goonies, the Indiana Jones saga, ET, and The Karate Kid. Even to this day, I can quote almost any line in those and other movies like them. For instance, one of the lines that stands out in my mind from the original Karate Kid movie is a line spoken by sensei John Kreese. He instructs all the young men of his dojo that, "Mercy is for the weak." When I heard that for the first time as a young child I remember it making me pause. I remember thinking that something about those words didn't seem right.

Fast forward to today and you see that most of the world has taken those words to heart. The world seems to believe that mercy is an archaic concept. It doesn't take long to look around and see that many people are not concerned with mercy. At least not when it isn't about their need for mercy. Now more than ever we see people being chastised and relentlessly canceled for their mistakes. We see people being cast out instead of having a chance for redemption and mercy. This is not the way things are supposed to be. Mercy is compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm. Mercy is not a sign of weakness. No, in fact, it is one of the greatest signs of strength. It is a lot harder to extend mercy to someone than it is to condemn them. Condemning someone is easy. Extending mercy to someone is hard because it requires us to deny ourselves. It calls us to ignore our emotions of outrage or anger at someone for things they have done. It requires us to turn the other cheek instead of cocking our fists to strike back. This is virtue call us too. As we know, virtue is, "A firm disposition of the will to do the good." (CCC 1803) In order to extend mercy to another, you have to have a firm disposition of the will. You have to willingly choose the harder road of mercy instead of the easy path of condemnation.

The call of a Christian is to be different in a world that wants more of the same. One of the biggest ways we can make a difference in this world is to be merciful. We need to keep in mind the many times others, and most importantly God has shown us mercy. We need to remember that mercy isn't a gift that is supposed to stop with us. It is one that is meant to be passed on regularly and continually. If we become the

people of mercy we should be you can bet that it will impact the world. People can't help but notice when someone else has received mercy. It is a light that shines all on its own. If we are to change the tide of this culture, then we have to start swimming upstream. One of the best ways we can do this is to choose to live the virtue of mercy in our everyday lives. It is then that we can show people that being merciful is not a sign of weakness but of great strength and sacrifice.

VIRTUE PLAN FOR THE MONTH

VIRTUE: MERCY

MOTTO:

“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

— Matthew 9:13

ROOT SINS:

Resentment, Judgement, Pride

WHERE DO I SEE THESE SINS IN MY LIFE?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

PLAN TO FORM MERCY

WEEK 1: Mercy and God

WEEK 2: Mercy and My Wife

WEEK 3: Mercy and My Children

WEEK 4: Mercy and My Neighbor

PRAYER FOR MERCY

God of Mercy, as you have forgiven me, so you send me forth to bear your message of mercy to all. Give me willing feet and gentle hands. Bless me with listening ears and searching eyes. Endow me with an understanding mind. Ordain me with a compassionate heart.

In my acts and in my words, make me a vessel of your mercy to reach out to the broken on behalf of the Father who wipes away my debts. As lovingly as he wipes away tears and calls his children home, help me to lift my wife, my children, and my neighbors in body and spirit up to You. And so make every day a day of mercy. Amen

WEEK 1 REFLECTION:

MERCY AND GOD

“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36) Those are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ from the Gospel of Luke. They are meant to instruct us as to how we are to live and they remind us of exactly how merciful our Heavenly Father has been to us. It is so easy to withhold mercy in our lives when we have been hurt, mistreated, or wronged. Often times we can feel angry, hurt, or wounded by the actions of others. Especially when those actions come from our enemies. That is exactly who Jesus was talking about in Luke chapter six when He spoke those words. The whole paragraph where that quote comes from is about forgiving those that are hard to forgive. He calls us to do good to those who hate us. He asks us to bless those who curse us. He implores us to pray for those that abuse us. We should do exactly as He says. I know what He is asking is hard. Especially if you have been mistreated for a long time. Just because it’s hard doesn’t make it impossible. So what is the secret to finding a way to show mercy to others when we find it gut-wrenchingly difficult? We need only to look at our Heavenly Father as the example.

You may think that’s a cheap answer. Think about it though. Really stop and think about how much mercy God bestows on us as His children each day and how woefully undeserving of His mercy we are. Every time we sin we spit in the face of God. Every time we chose to turn from Him we hurt Him. He built a paradise on earth for our first parents and they chose something other than Him. Even after that betrayal, He spent the rest of salvation history pursuing His children. He forgave the Israelites when they made idols and worshipped false gods. Time and time again He gave people second chances only to have them reject Him again. It is easy to look back at the Israelites in the Old Testament or at the Pharisees and point a finger at them. In truth, that same finger can be pointed at us. How many times this week have we turned away from God? How many times have we chosen vice over virtue or other things over time with Him? How many times have we failed to make Him the priority of our life? Yet even after all those things, God still waits for us to turn back to Him. He loves us so much and His mercy is unending. So much so that He allowed his Son to die so that we could be reconciled to Him. He loves us that much. His mercy knows no bounds. He created the Sacrament of Reconciliation so His mercy could be found each and every time we need it. Jesus gave His very body and blood so that we have the strength to live the lives He has called us to live. We didn’t deserve any of these mercies yet God chooses to bestow them anyway. That is how we can manage to extend mercy to those who may not deserve it either. We are to strive to live like Jesus. We are made in the image and likeness of God. What matters to Him has to matter to us. If we are to be the Christians God created us to be then we have to follow His example. When we really stop and take stock of what has been done for us we can’t help but pass that mercy on to others. Next time you find yourself struggling to be merciful to someone, take a look at a crucifix. Call to mind the great mercy God has shown you and then allow yourself to be a conduit of that same mercy.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“My past, O Lord, to Your mercy; my present, to Your love; my future to Your providence.”

— Padre Pio

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 14:13-21

MEMORIAL OF SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. As he went ashore he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Apart from the mercy of God, there is no other source of hope for mankind.”

— St. John Paul II



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 14:22-36

TUESDAY OF THE EIGHTEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying, “Take heart, it is I; have no fear.”

And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “O man of little faith, why did you doubt?” And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent round to all that region and brought to him all that were sick, and besought him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"If a man finds it very hard to forgive injuries, let him look at a Crucifix, and think that Christ shed all His Blood for him, and not only forgave His enemies, but even prayed His Heavenly Father to forgive them also. Let him remember that when he says the 'Our Father', every day, instead of asking pardon for his sins, he is calling down vengeance on himself"

— Saint Philip Neri

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 15:21-28

WEDNESDAY OF THE EIGHTEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

WEEK 1: MERCY AND GOD
AUGUST 4, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

— Ephesians 2:4-5

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 16:13-23

MEMORIAL OF SAINT JOHN VIANNEY

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men.”

WEEK 1: MERCY AND GOD

AUGUST 5, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

The message of Divine Mercy can be remembered using the ABC's

A - Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B - Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us.

C - Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependent upon our trust. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive.

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 16:24-28

FRIDAY OF THE EIGHTEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY MERCY TO GOD TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The Church Fathers teach us that a shattered heart is the most pleasing gift to God. It is the sign that we are conscious of our sins, of the evil we have done, of our wretchedness, and of our need for forgiveness and mercy.”

— Pope Francis, “The Name of God is Mercy”



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 9:28-36

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep but kept awake, and they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

WEEK 1: MERCY AND GOD
AUGUST 7, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“My past, O Lord, to Your mercy; my present, to Your love; my future to Your providence.”

— Padre Pio

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 12:35-40

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would have been awake and would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY MERCY TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 2 REFLECTION:

MERCY AND MY WIFE

*If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.

I recently did an episode of the podcast entitled "Trust is a Two Way Street." Well, a couple blocks over in the same town is another two-way street called marriage. I always have loved to hear marriage called a saint-making machine. It truly is for both parties. Marriage is like the dance of waves in the ocean. Sometimes the waves come smoothly and easily and sometimes they come crashing in. It is in the latter that both husband and wife get to give and receive mercy. When I think of the place where I have received the greatest amount of mercy in my life, none comes to mind more than in my relationship with Angela.

If you are in possession of this Narrow Road and are part of this community then I am assuming that you have heard my witness story at some point. That being the case I will spare you the details and just jump ahead to the part about mercy. I have spoken often about the mercy God showed me in that jail cell. What I would like to share here is about the mercy of my wife. Guys, I was a terrible husband. I cared only for myself and my selfish wants. I spent time with my wife only when I wanted something from her or when I was trying to keep up appearances. I spoke to her so badly so many times. I never physically harmed my wife, but I certainly mentally abused her. Nothing she ever did was good enough. She never had a good idea in my book. I constantly tore her down and never tried to build her up. She was constantly reaching out to me through my struggles and I did and said whatever I could to turn her away from me. Yet through all of it, when I hit rock bottom in that jail cell and she had all she would ever need to divorce me and keep my children from me, she showed me mercy. Mercy like I had never seen before. Mercy I certainly didn't deserve nor had I ever returned. It didn't make sense. She had every right to leave to rot in that jail and take everything we had. Instead, she chose mercy. She told me in the jail cell it was because of the vows she had made to God on our wedding day. She knew what God had done for her in giving His son to die for her and she took her promises to Him very seriously. If not for her incredible mercy you wouldn't have ever heard of the podcast nor would you be reading this journal right now.

You see, that's what marriage is supposed to look like. In sickness and in health until death do us part. No one ever said marriage was going to be easy. It is a giving and receiving of mercy. Just like mercy is at the center of our redemption with God, so it is at the center of our marriages. Each of us has to learn to give and receive mercy in times of strife. We have to stop and think about how much we love the other and remember the promises we made to each other and to God. There is no better place on earth to practice the virtue of mercy in our marriages. This week let's focus on how grateful we are for our wives and the mercy they have shown us. Then let's do our best to return it when it's our turn to give it.

WEEK 2: MERCY AND MY WIFE
AUGUST 8, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The most important thing in the life of every man and every woman is not that they should never fall along the way. The important thing is always to get back up, not to stay on the ground licking your wounds.”

— Pope Francis, “The Name of God is Mercy”



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 17:22-27

MEMORIAL OF SAINT DOMINIC

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed. When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, “Does not your teacher pay the tax?” He said, “Yes.” And when he came home, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?” And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: MERCY AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 9, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The moral man is not he who is namby-pamby, or who has drained his emotions of the sterner stuff of justice; rather he is one whose gentleness and mercy are part of a larger organism, whose eyes can flash with righteous indignation, and whose muscles can become as steel in defense, like Michael, of the Justice and the Rights of God

— The Most Reverend Venerable Fulton J. Sheen



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 18:1-5, 10, 12-14

TUESDAY OF THE NINETEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; “See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: MERCY AND MY WIFE
AUGUST 10, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“To say that a person is merciful is like saying that he is sorrowful at heart (*miserum cor*), that is, he is afflicted with sorrow by the misery of another as though it were his own. Hence it follows that he endeavours to dispel the misery of the other person as if it were his own; and this is the effect of mercy.

— St. Thomas Aquinas

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

JN 12:24-26

FEAST OF SAINT LAWRENCE, DEACON AND MARTYR

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.”

— Romans 12:1

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 18:21–19:1

MEMORIAL OF SAINT CLARE, VIRGIN

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave.”

— St. John Chrysostom



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 19:3-12

FRIDAY OF THE NINETEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one’? So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” He said to them, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unMercy, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman, commits adultery.”

The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.” But he said to them, “Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: MERCY AND MY WIFE
AUGUST 13, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The Spirit of God is a spirit of peace. Even in the most serious faults, He makes us feel a sorrow that is tranquil, humble, and confident.

This is precisely because of His mercy. The spirit of the devil, instead, excites, exasperates, and makes us feel, in that very sorrow, anger against ourselves. We should, on the contrary, be charitable with ourselves first and foremost. Therefore if any thought agitates you, this agitation never comes from God, who gives you peace, being the Spirit of Peace, but from the devil.”

— Padre Pio



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 19:13-15

SATURDAY OF THE NINETEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; but Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” And he laid his hands on them and went away.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: MERCY AND MY WIFE
AUGUST 14, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“How happy I am to see myself imperfect and be in need of God’s mercy.”

— St. Therese of the Child Jesus



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 12:49-53

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 3 REFLECTION:

MERCY AND MY CHILDREN

*If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.

In the first reflection of this month, I talked about how the world has become a place that doesn't desire mercy. I shared about how quick people are to withhold mercy and forgiveness from people. We have become a society that is quick to judge and hand down punishment instead of reflecting on the beam in our own eye and remembering the mercy we have been shown from others. If we desire to change this outlook of the world and the culture, then we have to begin by exemplifying mercy to those closest to us. There is no better place to start doing that than with our children.

There have been so many times when my children have made mistakes and I blew them out of proportion. There have been so many times when I was quick to anger and the punishment and wrath were not proportionate to the crime. Most of the time this was because I was stressed out over something else. Most of the time it had nothing to do with the mistakes they had made at all. It just became another thing on a list of things that were causing me anxiety and bringing me to anger. The funny thing is when I knew I was becoming a father I swore to myself that I wouldn't be like that. I often experienced that kind of treatment from my father. He was quick to anger and fast to fly off the handle. I found myself to be the same way in my early fatherhood. Our children learn how they are going to handle their children and other people from us. I am not saying that children don't need to face consequences for their wrong choices. That indeed needs to happen. The question is, are we showing mercy to them in their mistakes so that they may show mercy to others in theirs? If not then we will have more of the same treatment that we see in the culture today.

Nowadays, I take a moment to discern when my children have made wrong choices. I make sure to calm myself and examine if the way I am feeling is coming from something else or from the situation involving my children. I also try to show mercy to those around me when my children are with me. Our children are always watching us no matter if they are five or thirty-five. Whenever we can show them there is another choice besides anger or retribution we are living as an example of mercy. It isn't just about giving mercy though. It is also about receiving mercy. Our children also have to learn how to receive mercy in their mistakes. Due to our pride, one of the hardest things for a man to do is ask for mercy. It requires humility and a laying down of one's pride. Whenever we find ourselves in a place to model this for our children we should take it. Showing them both side sides of the coin of mercy will help them be the merciful people God desires them to be. They will never have a better example to learn from than the example you are capable of giving to them. It is an awesome way to instruct and disciple our kids to become merciful Christians. All it takes is some humility on our part and a desire to see our children become the disciples they are called to be. My brothers, this week, let's look for ways we can exemplify giving and receiving mercy to our kids. Even though it may not feel like it, you are making an impact on the world you will leave behind.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Forgiveness is essential to any relationship and frees us from hate and resentment. It can recover the happiness that those feelings block. Forgiveness is an act of the will, not emotions. It is a decision. It does not eliminate the hurt but leads to an acceptance that modifies the negative feeling in a healthy way. If we don’t forgive, love “cools” and can even turn to hatred, and friendship with all of its value, can be lost forever. Whether the relationship is romantic or not, forgiveness will be key to a peaceful heart.” -

— Father Martin Connor, LC



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 1:39-56

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.” And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

WEEK 3: MERCY AND MY CHILDREN
AUGUST 16, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love;
according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!”

— Psalm 51:1-2

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 19:23-30

TUESDAY OF THE TWENTIETH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Then Peter said in reply, “Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

WEEK 3: MERCY AND MY CHILDREN

AUGUST 17, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Extend your mercy towards others, so that there can be no one in need whom you meet without helping. For what hope is there for us if God should withdraw His Mercy from us?”

— Saint Vincent de Paul



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 20:1-16

WEDNESDAY OF THE TWENTIETH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ So the last will be first, and the first last.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“How can I bear this life of misery unless You comfort me with Your mercy and grace?

Do not turn Your face from me. Do not delay Your visitation.”

— Thomas Kempis, Imitation of Christ



GOSPEL

MK 2:23-28

THURSDAY OF THE TWENTIETH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The judgments of God have terrified me.

The darkness of death has overtaken me: and the fear of hell has invaded me.

But in solitude I will expect thy consolation: and in my chamber I will wait for thy mercy.”

— Saint Bonaventure



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 22:34-40

FRIDAY OF THE TWENTIETH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“To become saints only one thing is necessary: to accept the grace that the Father gives us in Jesus Christ. There, this grace changes our heart. We continue to be sinners for we are weak, but with this grace which makes us feel that the Lord is good, that the Lord is merciful, that the Lord waits for us, that the Lord pardons us—this immense grace that changes our heart.”

— Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 23:1-12

MEMORIAL OF SAINT BERNARD, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. 9 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

Lined area for writing the response to the question above.

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

Lined area for writing the response to the question above.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Place your heart gently in Our Lord’s wounds. Have great confidence in His mercy for He will never abandon you.”

— Padre Pio



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 13:22-30

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. And some one said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us.’ He will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity!’ There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

WEEK 4 REFLECTION:

**MERCY
AND MY NEIGHBOR**

One of my favorite talks I give on the road is our Restoring Your Identity talk. In that talk, we discuss who we are, and who God is, and we look to figure out our purpose here on this earth. One of the many reasons we give this talk is because so many people wonder what they are doing here. They get to a certain point in life where they have checked off all the boxes the world told them they needed to check off to have a successful life. Well, success in the terms of the world that is. Most people are longing to find a higher purpose for being here. There has to be more to life than this is the common thread. Within that thread is a desire to leave a mark on this world. Most people want to do something worth remembering. We find our purpose in understanding that we are beloved sons of God and that our purpose is serving Him the way His Son Jesus Christ asked us to. One of the greatest ways to accomplish this is by being the merciful neighbors that Jesus called us to be.

Jesus taught us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. He implored us to love our enemies as well. He taught us to turn the other cheek. To give unconditionally things that people ask us for. He taught us to get out of ourselves so that we could put others first. Jesus was teaching us to be merciful. The greatest sign of this mercy is the sacrifice of His own life on the cross. Even in the midst of all that hate and rejection Jesus showed mercy. He asked his Father to forgive us. He extended mercy to the good thief at the end of His life. Jesus had every right to withhold forgiveness and mercy and yet he gave it. He gave everything to people that didn't deserve it. As His disciples, we are called to do the same. We are called to lay down the swords we easily pick up when someone mistreats us, embarrasses us, or makes us angry. WE are called to forgive and forget the pain and hurts people have caused us no matter how difficult. It is difficult to do this with people you love, but even more so with people you barely love. Jesus knew this and he knew that by doing this we would be overwhelmingly different, from the rest of the world. Being merciful disciples makes us stand out. Living mercy each and every day helps us become the light that Jesus talked about. Giving and receiving mercy is not the way of the world anymore. It is the way of the Christian though. That is why living mercifully is so important.

Living as merciful Christians is so important that Jesus even placed smack dab in the middle of the prayer He taught us. Right there in the middle of the Our Father is mercy. Every time we pray that prayer we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We are literally asking God not to show us mercy for our sins if we don't show others mercy for theirs. Have you ever thought about that? How we treat our neighbor is so important to Jesus that he placed in the Our Father. This is one of those things as a Christian we have to get. There's no getting around this. Jesus tells us in the Gospels that we will be measured as we measure out. How we treat people matters. We either chose to retreat people with indifference, anger, and spite like the world or with mercy like our Lord. This is how they will know that we are His disciples. We have to love those who hate us. We

have to forgive those who hurt us. That is living mercy with our neighbors. No one, including our Lord, ever said it would be easy. Then again, nothing worth doing ever is. Be merciful to your neighbors my brothers, and open another door to God's grace in your life.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“He who knows how to forgive prepares for himself many graces from God.

As often as I look upon the cross, so often will I forgive with all my heart.”

— St. Faustina



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 23:13-22

MEMORIAL OF THE QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; and he who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Grant, o merciful God, that I may ardently desire, prudently examine, truthfully acknowledge, and perfectly accomplish what is pleasing to You for the praise and glory of Your name. Amen.”

— St. Thomas Aquinas



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 23:23-26

TUESDAY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisee! first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

Lined area for writing responses to the question above.

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

Lined area for writing responses to the question above.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Some virtues are so universally useful that we ought not only to practice them for their own sake but particularly for their usefulness in the practice of all the others. For instance, we seldom have the opportunity to practice fortitude, great generosity or greatness of soul. In the other hand, some virtues such as gentleness, MERCY, honesty and humility are the sort which should characterize all of our actions.”

— St. Frances de Sales

SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

JN 1:45-51

FEAST OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“We are called to look beyond, to focus on the heart to see how much generosity everyone is capable of. No one can be excluded from the mercy of God; everyone knows the way to access it and the Church is the house that welcomes all and refuses no one. Its doors remain wide open, so that those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness. The greater the sin, so much the greater must be the love that the Church expresses toward those who convert.”

— Pope Francis



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 24:42-51

THURSDAY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The Lord said to me, ‘The loss of each soul plunges Me into mortal sadness. You always console Me when you pray for sinners. The prayer most pleasing to Me is prayer for the conversion of sinners. Know, My child, that this prayer is always heard and answered.’”

— Jesus, the Diary of St. Faustina (No. 1397)



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 25:1-13

FRIDAY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution; justice without mercy is cruelty.”

— Thomas Aquinas

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MT 25:14-30

MEMORIAL OF SAINT MONICA

For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and

slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: MERCY AND MY NEIGHBOR
AUGUST 28, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“MERCY is simply a disposition of the mind which sets bounds to the passions.”

— St. Thomas Aquinas

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 14:1, 7-14

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

One sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees, they were watching him. Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, “When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come, and say to you, ‘Give place to this man,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, go up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"It is not because I have been preserved from mortal sin that I lift up my heart to God in trust and love. I feel that even had I on my conscience every crime one could commit, I should lose nothing of my confidence: my heart broken with sorrow, I would throw myself into the Arms of my Savior."

— St. Therese of Lisieux



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

MK 6:17-29

MEMORIAL OF THE PASSION OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero di-as, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Hero di-as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. For when Hero di-as' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." And she went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the baptizer." And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion.

For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!”

— Isaiah 30:18



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 4:31-37

TUESDAY OF THE TWENTY-SECOND WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

And he went down to Caper na-um, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath; and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority. And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried out with a loud voice, “Ah! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.” And reports of him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“There is nothing more man needs than Divine Mercy - that love which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights to the holiness of God.”

— St. John Paul II



SAY THE PRAYER FOR MERCY

GOSPEL

LK 4:38-44

WEDNESDAY OF THE TWENTY-SECOND WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

And he arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they besought him for her. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her; and immediately she rose and served them.

Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. And when it was day he departed and went into a lonely place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them; but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF MERCY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MERCY IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

LITANY OF HUMILITY

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart,
Hear me.
From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being loved,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being extolled,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being honored ,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being praised,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being preferred
to others,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being consulted,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being approved,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being humiliated,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being despised,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of suffering rebukes,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being calumniated,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being forgotten,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being ridiculed,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being wronged,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being suspected,
Deliver me, Jesus.
That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be esteemed more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That, in the opinion of the world, others
may increase and I may decrease,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be chosen and I set aside,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be praised and
I unnoticed,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be preferred to me
in everything,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may become holier than I,
provided that I may become as holy as
I should,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

THE LITANY OF TRUST

From the belief that I have to earn
Your love,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear that I am unlovable,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the false security that I have what
it takes,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear that trusting You will leave
me more destitute,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From all suspicion of Your words
and promises,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the rebellion against childlike
dependency on You,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From refusals and reluctances in
accepting Your will,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From anxiety about the future,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From resentment or excessive
preoccupation with the past,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From restless self-seeking
in the present moment,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From disbelief in Your love and presence,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of being asked to give
more than I have,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the belief that my life has no
meaning or worth,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From the fear of what love demands,
Deliver me, Jesus.
From discouragement,
Deliver me, Jesus.
That You are continually holding me
sustaining me, loving me,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That Your love goes deeper than my sins
and failings, and transforms me,
Jesus, I trust in you.

That not knowing what tomorrow brings is
an invitation to lean on You,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That you are with me in my suffering,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That my suffering, united to Your own, will
bear fruit in this life and the next,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That You will not leave me orphan, that You
are present in Your Church,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That Your plan is better than anything else,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That You always hear me and in Your
goodness always respond to me,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That You give me the grace to accept
forgiveness and to forgive others,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That You give me all the strength I need for
what is asked,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That my life is a gift,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That You will teach me to trust You,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That You are my Lord and my God,
Jesus, I trust in you.
That I am Your beloved one,
Jesus, I trust in you.

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by His Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities. O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness. As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.



JUST A GUY
IN THE PEW