

Reflection after Parable Reading:

Today marks the beginning of the Year of Mercy called for by Pope Francis in April this year. At the end of November, he opened the first Holy Door for the Year of Mercy during his visit to the Cathedral of the capital city of Central African Republic, and when today eventually comes to Rome, he will be opening the Holy Door at St Peter's. Today this Door – the Door of (the Gabriel Hall, Historic Chapel, Mercy House, McAuley House) becomes one of our Doors of Mercy within Aotearoa. Throughout Aotearoa, Samoa and Tonga there will be more doors opened in the new year in our Mercy ministries – in our Mercy Colleges, Health and Aged care homes, our hospital and hospice, in our community development initiatives, at our Earth Promise Centre, Mercy Retreat centres, in our communities and the homes of our many companions. You may wish to have a ceremony at your home making your own door a Sacred Door of Mercy through which you enter. Opening these doors reminds us that anyone who enters seeking Mercy will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, heals and brings hope to all. We are offered Mercy and in turn are called to bring Mercy to others.

The parable we have just heard gives us a wonderful example of mercy – the Samaritan saw need, felt compassion deep within himself toward the wounded man and, by crossing societal barriers acted with great Mercy toward him. It was an act of stepping over the threshold of the Door of Mercy to assist him. I am sure Pope Francis wouldn't mind if we also read this parable seeing Earth as the victim – our common home robbed and left critically wounded. In *Laudato Si'* he calls us to respond to the urgent cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor. During 2016 the Mercy world is going to reflect on this urgent cry through the Mercy International Reflection Process, to which you are all invited to participate.

But over the next few days, after entering this Door of Mercy you may like to reflect on the following 3 questions:

- What door do you hope Mercy will open in the coming year?
- What threshold does Mercy need to cross?
- What door of Mercy can you open?