

Called to the Ministry of Mercy: Prayer for the Opening of Local Doors of Mercy

PARTICIPANTS

Prepared by Sheila Carney rsm (Americas) © Mercy International Association 2015

Welcome

Song: “What Mercy May Yet Be”. Verses 1 and 2

What Mercy may yet be is held in mystery,
Yet we can find a path that winds throughout our history.
Where Mercy may yet go is in our hearts to grow.
The Living Source reveals a course that we will come to know.
What Mercy may yet be is in us as a seed,
It is our task to till and plant, to water and to weed.
When Mercy may be strong is in us as a song.
We shape our part within its art and for its time we long.

Text and Music Cynthia Serjak rsm 2003

A Reading from Pope Francis’ *Misericordiae Vultus* – Proclaiming the Jubilee Year of Mercy

We need to constantly contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of ... brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and [humankind], opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever...

With sentiments of gratitude for everything the Church has received, and with a sense of responsibility for the task that lies ahead, we shall cross the threshold of the Holy Door fully confident that the strength of the Risen Lord, who constantly supports us on our pilgrim way, will sustain us. May the Holy Spirit, who guides the steps of believers... lead the way and support the People of God so that they may contemplate the face of mercy.

[Today this Holy Door] will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope.

Knocking at the Door

The refrain, the knocking and the question are repeated three times

Refrain: “I Stand at the Door and Knock”

Leader asks: Who knocks at this Door of Mercy?

Assembly responds: naming persons who are in need of the mercy of God and of our Mercy.

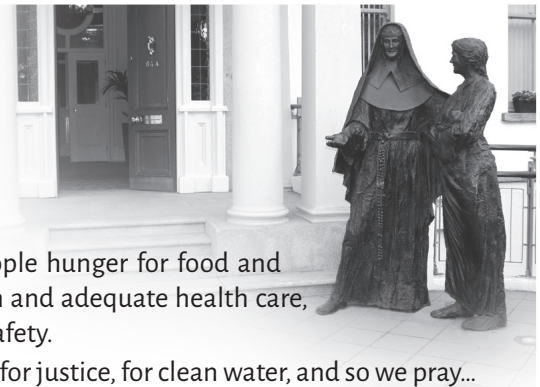
Reading: from the Gospel of Matthew

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by the angels, then he will take his seat on the throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.” Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, “Lord, when did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?” And the King will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.”



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Reflection/Homily

Video/Reading: Doorkeepers of Mercy

Pope Francis says that, in this coming Year of Mercy, “the Holy Door will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God.” The logo for our Mercy International Reflection Process, unfolding during this Year, is centered on the red doors of Baggot Street. In a profoundly mystical way, these red doors connect all our doors of Mercy – in our convents and houses, in our places of ministry, in holy places around us, in Earth which nourishes us, in the cosmos which holds us in communion, and in the hearts of all Sisters of Mercy, Associates and Partners-in-Mercy.

And now another metaphor emerges, that of the doorkeeper. The Hebrew word *Shaddai*, written on the back of the parchment attached to the doorpost of every Jewish home today, denotes that the Almighty is present in that house. It is said that *Shaddai* is short for *Shomer Dal'tot Yisrael*, Hebrew words for “Guardian of the Doors of Israel.” In the days of the Jewish temple, one of the most important offices was that of doorkeeper. In the Litany to Our Lady, one of the titles of Mary is *Gate of Heaven*. One of the powerful offices in our own tradition was that of the portress, the sister who carried the keys and controlled all coming and going through the convent door.

In accepting our invitation to participate in this reflection process, you are agreeing to be guardians of the Door of Mercy, keepers of the in-between place of Mercy in this coming year. Will you as doorkeepers hold wide the door to invite Mercy to come in to be with us? Will you as doorkeepers hold wide the door to invite those who are hungry, thirsty, imprisoned, sick, strange, or naked to come in to find Mercy? Will you as doorkeepers help us find new ways of being Mercy on an Earth and among a people crying out for justice? Will you as doorkeepers guide us into a holy place of contemplation and vision? Will you as doorkeepers guard our “going out and our coming in” (Ps 121:8) as we dare this new way of seeing Mercy and being Mercy in times that can be so fearful and discouraging?

Thank you for agreeing to be Mercy doorkeepers of our international reflection process! With you, we rejoice that there is such depth and breadth of possibility in being people of Mercy in this time. May all the doors we keep, however we keep them, be truly doors of Mercy.

Elizabeth Davis rsm

Intercessions

Leader: In the words of Pope Francis, “It is time for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more. It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters.” Ready to respond to this call to mercy, we pray for the needs of our world.

Our response will be: May we be signs of your Mercy.

Reader 1: Your people hunger for food and love, for education and adequate health care, for freedom and safety.

Your people thirst for justice, for clean water, and so we pray...

Reader 2: Your people long to be known, they long for a homeland, for right relationships, for welcome. They long to see your face.

Your people suffer from ills of body, mind and spirit. Your Earth suffers from pollution and degradation and so we pray...

Reader 3: Your people are imprisoned in unjust structures and political regimes, in dangerous relationships, in demeaning work environments.

Your people seek compassion, comfort, companionship and counsel and so we pray...

Reader 4: You have called us Mercy, to be responsive to the needs of Earth and of all people and so we pray...

Concluding Prayer

Each time we cross the threshold of this Holy Door, our God, may we be reminded that we are indeed called to the ministry of Mercy. We ask for the grace to live lives worthy of this call – to be signs, in active and practical ways, of the tender love with which you embrace us all. In this Holy Year strengthen our resolve to work for the transformation of our world to a place where all know themselves to be blessed and welcomed as you welcome us to this holy place and time. Amen.

Song: “What Mercy May Yet Be” Verses 3, 4 and 5

What Mercy may yet be is wanting to come free.

It's hard to know what we must let go and how we shall agree.

How Mercy may be formed is gospel in its core.

The path unfolds in minds and souls and shapes us more and more.

What Mercy may yet be is bound in Trinity:

Creating, saving all-embracing presence of the Three.

How Mercy may yet serve is wisdom to be learned.

As God allows, our time is now! To God's will let us turn.

This year of Jubilee is calling us to be

A witness to God's mercy at our time in history.

May Mercy now abound wherever we are found

With joy we claim this Mercy name, so let our thanks resound!