

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend we celebrate the first anniversary of our **1,000,000 Acts of Mercy** Campaign. You remember that we started this campaign last year in the midst of the Year of Mercy, the day Mother Teresa was canonized (declared a saint), the day before her feast day (September 5). As we celebrate our “Paper Anniversary,” it is good to look back and reflect on why we are doing this.

Remember that that Year of Mercy was all about recognizing in a greater way the mercy of Almighty God, and how we become “Merciful Like the Father.” God’s great mercy is such that no matter what we have done to offend God (which, let’s be honest, we do much to offend Him... case in point, see my article from last week as I wrote about my hedonistic tendencies – seeking my own comfort as opposed to God’s will for my life), He willingly forgives, if we but turn to Him in repentance. Looking at the love of the Father manifested in the person of Jesus, we see over and over how He heals and forgives, welcoming the outcast, but always calling to conversion: He always encouraged them to “go and sin no more.” God’s mercy pours out superabundantly on each of us; but we have to *want* to receive that mercy.

The challenge of Pope Francis was that once we receive the mercy of Almighty God, we are to go out and BE MERCY to the world. This is manifested most clearly in the Acts of Mercy – specifically the Spiritual and Corporal Acts of Mercy.

<u>SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY</u>	<u>CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY</u>
1. Teach the ignorant	1. Feed the hungry
2. Pray for the living and the dead	2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Correct sinners	3. Clothe the naked
4. Counsel those in doubt	4. Shelter the homeless
5. Console the sorrowful	5. Comfort the prisoners
6. Bear wrongs patiently	6. Visit the sick
7. Forgive wrongs willingly	7. Bury the dead

So how are we doing with these? These are the measure of our likeness to God the Father.

Obviously, we have a long way to go. None of us does these perfectly. But, then again, the name of the game on this earth is not getting it perfect, but continually, gradually improving. The grace of God helps us to do this better each day. Maybe you’ve found that you are able to bear wrongs patiently, but struggle with feeding the hungry. Today may be the day you make the commitment to volunteer at the Community Dinners, or to add a few items for the Food Pantry as part of your regular grocery shopping routine. Maybe you’ve found that you visit the sick well, but struggle in bearing wrongs patiently. Today may be the day that you make the commitment to smile at the person who gets most on your nerves.

As of the writing of this article (before I went on vacation!), as a parish, we have reported over 162,000 Acts of Mercy in one year! I think that that is incredible!!!! I am incredibly proud of St. Patrick Parish! Remember, it is not pride to share the good things God does through us. We are actually commanded to do this. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus says, “

your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father”

Contrast this with Matthew 6 which speaks about not performing righteous deeds *in order that others may see them...* don’t do it so people look at **ME**, but so that people look at **GOD**. The point of the **1,000,000 Acts of Mercy** campaign is to stir up in us the desire to be more merciful that we may *be the Face of God* in our community – we point to God’s love and mercy.

I pray that this first anniversary of the Acts of Mercy Campaign will remind you of God’s great mercy for you, and help you to grow in mercy to others. God bless!