

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today (Sunday, November 20) ends the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. I pray that you received so much of that extraordinary grace through this year. Of course, while this year meant receiving many extra graces of mercy, it is not meant to be done and over. What we have received, what we have learned this year is meant to help us to trust God's Mercy in a greater way, and to *become* "Merciful Like the Father." Let's review some of the themes from this past year, and then we can look ahead to next year!

Do you remember the acronym **FINCH** that we mentioned at the beginning of the Year of Mercy? This is from the revelation of Jesus to St. Faustina in the 1930s about His Divine Mercy. **FINCH** stands for **Feast, Image, Novena, Chaplet, Hour**. The Feast of Divine Mercy is on the Sunday following Easter Sunday (this coming year it will be on April 23). The Image is the Image of Divine Mercy which we have in our parish and have passed out throughout the year. The Novena is nine days of prayer with the Chaplet. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy offers to God the Father the Passion of Christ in order that He may pour His mercy upon us and on the whole world. The Hour of Mercy is 3:00pm, the time that Divine Mercy poured upon the world at the death of Jesus.

We also want to remember the **ABCs** of Divine Mercy. We Ask for God's 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. 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. 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.

We are called to be merciful to others, as the Father is merciful. We see some of the incredible ways of being merciful through the **Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy**. These are feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, comforting prisoners, visiting the sick, burying the dead, teaching the ignorant, praying for the living and the dead, correcting sinners, counseling those in doubt, consoling the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving wrongs willingly. We will continue to track these works of mercy through the **1,000,000 Acts of Mercy** that we are doing in our Parish.

So this is a quick summary of this past year. I pray that you continue to live out the mystery of God's Mercy – trusting in His Mercy pouring out into your life, and living mercy with others.

So what about next year? As far as I know, the Church has not declared next year to be a year set aside for a particular purpose. However, 2017 is the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions of **Our Lady of Fatima**. These apparitions are still applicable for today. Over the course of the next year, I will go through the messages of Fatima, and what this means to us. At the core of it, though is the call to **prayer, expiation and reparation**.

I hope to break this open more in the next year, but quickly, **expiation** is acting in union with Christ, whereby our sacrifices offered up to God the Father through the infinite merits of Christ's Passion pour out mercy and grace on the world. This grace is for conversion, peace, transformation and healing. Sometimes we're afraid of the word "Sacrifice," since we usually think it means suffering of some sort. Sacrifice comes from the Latin words "*sacrum facere*" which means "**to make holy**." To offer a sacrifice to God means that we make something holy – our daily duties, our joys, our praise, our time with our family, and any suffering, pain or discomfort we may endure – we can make all of these holy by offering them to the Father through Jesus Christ. When we do this, we pour out God's grace on the world, for conversion of sinners.

Reparation comes from the word "repair." With reparation, we repair the wounds in God's Heart for those who are indifferent and hurt Him by sin. Our loving attention to God heals Him of His suffering (can you believe that we can heal God????).

Prayer, of course, is union with God. Our Lady emphasized and reemphasized the power of the Rosary. She said that if we wanted peace in our world, we needed to *pray the Rosary daily for peace* (and she said this during World War I, when the world was at war!). The family Rosary is **POWERFUL!!**

This is why starting next weekend (November 26-27) we will be praying the Rosary before each of the weekend Masses. The Rosary will begin 25 minutes before Mass time. I encourage you to dust off this weapon of grace, and pray together for our divided and broken world!