



## ***Mercy: The Heart of the Gospel***

Last month we blessed a door in our home to commemorate the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Our awareness of being more in tune with God's loving mercy towards us calls us to witness his love and mercy to others, especially those most in need.

The season of Lent begins in February. Pope Francis has recommended that Lent should be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God's mercy.

The Holy Year of Mercy coincides with "Year C" of the cycle of readings in the Lectionary: a cycle rich with themes of penance, reconciliation, and baptism. On Ash Wednesday Joel 2:12-18 reminds us that "gracious and merciful is God, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment." Throughout this season we encounter God's love and mercy toward us and our call to be transformed into merciful women of the Church.

The First Sunday of Lent presents Luke's gospel about Jesus being tempted in the desert. Throughout this week the readings caution us to resist temptations. Like Jesus, what are my vulnerabilities?

In the Second Sunday's gospel about the Transfiguration, Jesus invites us to discipleship as seen throughout the weekly readings. We can ask ourselves, "How am I called to serve?"

The parable of the withered fig tree read on the Third Sunday of Lent reminds us that God is always at work and caring for us. How can we bear more fruit in our practice of mercy?

As we pray with the Lenten readings, let us challenge ourselves to see how we can use these teachings in being more aware that "Mercy is the beating heart of The Gospel."