



THE YEAR OF MERCY



October, 2016

Franciscan Reflection: Compassion Through the Lens of Mercy

Pope Francis - "Misericordiae Vultus" - Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, April 11, 2015

"Jesus affirms that mercy is not only an action of the Father; it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who his true children are. In short, we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us. Pardoning offenses becomes the clearest expression of merciful love and for us as Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge is a necessary condition to living joyfully."

St. Francis of Assisi, *Early Documents, The Saint, Admonitions (XXVII)*, "Virtue Puts Vice to Flight", pp. 136-137.

A medieval admonition was more than a warning or a calling to mind; it had more of a religious sense in which a biblical passage or image was presented and in light of it, a practical application was made.

Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance.
Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor disturbance.
Where there is poverty with joy, there is neither greed nor avarice.
Where there is rest and meditation, there is neither anxiety nor restlessness.
Where there is fear of the Lord to guard an entrance,
there the enemy cannot have a place to enter.
Where there is a heart full of mercy and discernment,
There is neither excess nor hardness of heart.

Life of St. Francis of Assisi by Thomas of Celano, First Book, (Early Documents, The Saint, p. 195)

"Then [Francis] the holy lover of profound humility moved to the lepers and stayed with them. For God's sake he served all of them with great love. He washed all the filth from them, and even cleaned out the pus of their sores, just as he said in his *Testament*, 'When I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers, and the Lord led me among them and I showed mercy to them.' For he used to say that the sight of lepers was so bitter to him that in the days of his vanity when he saw their houses even two miles away, he would cover his nose with his hands."

Reflection:

- What event in my life has convinced me that compassion is the generous "instrument of pardon" from my merciful God?
- How do I take rest and time for meditation to balance my life mercifully?
- Think of a time when something was bitter and turned sweet.



Listen to the song on YouTube – *Mercy and Compassion* by Jaymee Duran. (Click or copy and paste the link into your browser) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DkX3XN9JrE>