

SO, HOW DOES ONE  
MAKE THIS STICK TO  
THE SOUL?



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**ON MERCY**



## “PEACE BE WITH YOU “ ( Jn 20:19)

With these words, Pope Leo XIV addressed the world for the first time, placing more force, on the Gospel because he added the “all”. Accustomed as we have this expression in the dialogue prayer of the Eucharist, he helped us to focus our attention and recover the value of this daily sign, reminding us that this is the first greeting of the Risen Christ.

At the face of a wounded and complex world, in which mistrust, rivalry and aggressiveness have been gaining ground among the common people, in which there are armed conflicts - some more present and others more forgotten - with all that it entails of violence, death and desolation, the wish that this greeting “enters into our hearts, may reach to your families, all people, wherever they are, the whole earth.”

And to this peace of the Risen One, Pope Leo has given adjectives: “unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering.” Everything that comes from God comes by offering itself as a proposal, without imposition. No matter how noble what we want to achieve is, it makes no sense to impose it with the same tools (“weapons”) that we want to banish. That is why he arrives with humility and determination, extending the time if necessary, but without renouncing his originality.

It is important that we live contextualized day today life. We live in an era marked by increasing inequalities, in which a market model that does not take into account the vulnerability of person and creation that dominates, and with the tendency – on the rise – to resolve conflicts by force rather than dialogue <sup>1</sup>.



The prevalence of individual interest over the common good has damaged not only the fabric of society and international relations, but also our relationships, those that takes place on the street and those that flow uncontrollably on social networks. We are a global community threatened by individualism. Nor do angry speeches and the lack of filters in the use of networks help, in which something that at first is presented as good because of its possibilities – weaving a social network – envelops us intimidatingly like a toxic cloud of superficiality and tension.

The clear way of situating ourselves at the face of all this is what can distinguish us as countercultural references, prophets of hope, heralds of the Good News of Jesus.

It is about breaking the cycle of evil and violence to restore peace, overcoming the old law of retaliation, that “eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” that, in an aggressive

way, feeds revenge and the supremacy of the strong over the weak. "You have heard that it was said... but I say to you...", Jesus tells us. Since then it has been in force. Let us ask ourselves what our reactions and our movements are, at the face of disagreements, in discussions, controversies, rivalries...

Only with forgiveness it is possible to start a new future together.

## **A NEW OPPORTUNITY**

Pope Francis told us – and it continues to echo – in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*: *"Every day we are offered with a new opportunity, a new stage. (...) We enjoy a space of co-responsibility capable of initiating and generating new processes and transformations. Let us be an active part in the rehabilitation and assistance of wounded societies. Today we are facing a great opportunity to manifest our fraternal essence, to be other Good Samaritans who bear the pain of failures, instead of emphasizing hatred and resentment. (...) All that is missing is the free, pure and simple desire to want to be a people, to be constant and tireless in the work of inclusion, integrating, raising the fallen. (...) Let us nourish what is good and place ourselves at the service of good" (FT 77).*



In order to get closer to rehabilitating and helping societies and wounded person, it will be necessary to assume that no one saves anyone. We are only preparing to build a community that dreams, inserted in the world, in the midst of the people, active and alive members of society, being the germ of something good, leaven in the dough that generates processes -slow- and transformations -that our eyes probably do not see-, patiently buildup, "tireless in the work of including, integrating, to raise up" "everyone, everyone, everyone",<sup>2</sup> with the greatest care as a way of anointing life.

This will be – is – an evangelical way of building a friendly society. That Samaritan does not pass by indifferent; his heart reacts to fragility – the fruit of violence and injustice – and he has compassion: he can only act with mercy. Their eyes, see; his hands anoint wounds with oil; his arms carry up to the mount with the weight of total misery; He shares his resources with those who need them. It is not mere solidarity. It's not a just mere justice.

## **CHANNEL OF GOD'S MERCY**

We act from within society – this is how the Kingdom of God acts! – and from the core – the authentic truth of who we are. We have the opportunity – and the duty – to live and be witnesses of mercy, in words and deeds, so that we can be balm in this wounded and complex world with our gestures.

We are heirs to a history that, personally, we assume and integrate into our own history. This common heritage forges in us a root of identity that, from its origin, has looked at Mt 25 and its logic of understanding that it is Christ himself who is not behind, but in every face. In a Christian key, mercy consists in encountering Jesus Christ in the person who suffers. Hence, mercy is not in the first place a moral question (a 'having to...'), but it is a question of faith, of following and of encounter with Christ. They will look at all the sick and recognize the person of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup>

Since the origin of our Congregation, it has been in our hands—through them, not because of them—to carry out the works of mercy that feeds the hungry, gives to drink to those who are thirsty, cloths those who live in nakedness, welcome those who come from other places, care for those who lack health, and visits those who lack freedom.

And for these works, God blesses us: “Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation 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 welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in jail and go to see you?’ And the king will say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me.’” (Mt 25:34-40)

In this passage of the last judgment, we find that “the cut-off mark,” way to enter the “kingdom prepared since the creation of the world” is not found in the Ten Commandments; no one is being condemned who has murdered, or stolen, or lied, or defrauded, or committed adultery. In the judgment that Matthew relates in chapter 25, the omission of the good is condemned<sup>4</sup>. I would dare to say that every day we are confronted with the possibility of doing good, of acting by alleviating the suffering and relying on the justice that restores the dignity of the person.

But mercy – the key to the Gospel and to the Christian life – is something more than justice. It is a matter of paying attention to the concrete needs that is presented to us, the circumstances that is in front of us, the person who is close to us, with his or her history and his or her ability to sustain oneself, and to recognize in him the person of Jesus Christ. It consists of freely choosing (that is, not excluding) the good<sup>5</sup>, overcoming self-referentiality and placing the heartbeat on the hardness of heart at the face of God’s call that comes to us through the needs of others.<sup>6</sup>

### **“WHAT ENHANCES THE DESERT IS THAT IT HIDES A WELL ANYWHERE” <sup>7</sup>**

In the midst of dryness it is possible to maintain hope. Mercy does not understand narrow gazes, that is why our way of looking is important: we are taking a chance there to fine-tune and make that leap from superficiality to depth that the experience of the Salz proposes to us. “In the hermitage of Our Lady of Salz, together with John Bonal, we learn to look with contemplative eyes capable of penetrating to the depths of reality in order to commit ourselves to it. We also learn the art of ‘knowing how to listen’ (obedience) to pronounce the occasional ‘yes’ in our life that awaits us with affection. And we learn to live from who we are and not from everything we do or have.”<sup>8</sup>

Our mission is to be visible signs of the Kingdom in the midst of the world, exercising the charity that becomes hospitality and proclaiming the Gospel (cf. Const. 6 and 41). Proclaiming the Gospel of mercy from mercy. Hospitality that welcomes the person as he or she is and not as he or she is wanted or expected to be. And this is done not by imposing, but by proposing, transmitting, infecting. It will be necessary to let God be God, let his mercy and grace act in our lives, making not only visible but also evident the power of transformation that resides in the small and in what is born from the core that are patiently intertwined by the God’s merciful love.

If mercy is compassion (miser-) that is born from the heart God’s gaze can only be merciful.

Where there are, lies, envy, distrust, rivalry, injustice, aggressiveness, hatred, confusion, threats... Everything we do that is aimed at restoring dignity and justice will beautify the world. No matter how small it may be, then it will sense the greatness of God, which is manifested in his compassion and mercy.



**“YOUR GOODNESS AND YOUR MERCY THEY WILL ACCOMPANY ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE” (PSALM 23)**

We could repeat these verses of Psalm 23 over and over again, as a mantra or, better, to the rhythm of the journey of that Russian pilgrim and his prayer of Jesus, until we internalize it in such a way that we live surrounded by God’s goodness and mercy. Every day of our lives.

To let ourselves be looked at and to let ourselves be embraced, without having to do anything else with our effort. This is how our lives are illuminated and we can recognize how in it God – by his grace – writes the history of salvation. How through us, the Charity that springs from the heart, is capable of leaving traces of Hospitality.

Someone dared to say that “the Street of Mercy has not changed its name because Ràfols and Misericordia sound the same”.<sup>9</sup> The time has come to ask ourselves how our life is the channel of God’s mercy, if we are “an expression of the merciful love of God the Father in the community and in the world” (Const. 90), with this proper style of living Charity made service ‘with the greatest care’, ‘with all love’ (cf. Const. 39)

## FOR PRAYER (AND CHERISHMENT)

(those that are also songs, have video or audio linked to the song by clicking on the title)



### MERCY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

To insert the wounded into the world.

To integrate into society those excluded from the existential peripheries.

To open the Church to the separated, divorced and other groups who feel marginalized...

To live in families the joy of reconciliation.

To remove labels from people with whom I do not agree.

To forget excuses and justifications with my person.

To awaken acceptance of what I did not know how to do better.

To go out to meet those who are capable of recognizing their lies.

To bring a word and a gesture of comfort to the discouraged.

To accompany the prisoner of the new social slavery.

To learn to forgive and forgive myself.

To conquer the silence that enlivens the interior.

To feed the hungry and join so many "food banks".

To give drink to the thirsty by the "wells of joined hands."

To clothe the naked with the dignity that "Caritas in its work of love" gives.

To welcome the stranger with the joy of many "open arms" and many red crosses that carry the emptiness of solitude.

To assist the sick with so many "big people" in homes and hospitals.

To bury the dead and "vibrate with the relatives."

To offer advice to those who need it and to "listen" to the story they live and feel,

To teach those who do not know and "let myself be surprised in their learning".

To correct the one who errs and "recognize my weakness".

To console the sad and "strengthen me with their experience".

Please, let us live the primacy of the Father's mercy in a gratuitous way, and in harmony with the Spirit, cry out that Jesus of Nazareth is God's tenderness.

*(Juan Ignacio Villar, Vily)*





SINCE LOVING ONE ANOTHER  
HASN'T WORKED, MAYBE WE  
SHOULD TRY LOVING EACH  
ANOTHER ONE?

### **PRAYER TO BE MERCIFUL**

O Lord, I desire to be transformed entirely in Thy mercy and to be a living reflection of Thee. May your unfathomable mercy pass through my heart to my neighbor.

Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful so that I may never be suspicious or judge according to appearances, but may seek the beautiful in the soul of my neighbor and come to his aid.

Help me, O Lord, that my ears may be merciful, that I may take into account the needs of my neighbor and not be indifferent to his sufferings and complaints.

Help me, O Lord, that my tongue may be merciful, that I may never speak negatively of my neighbor, but that I may always have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all.

Help me, O Lord, that my hands may be merciful and full of good works, so that I may know how to do good to my neighbor alone, and take upon myself the most difficult and painful tasks.

Help me, O Lord, that my feet may be merciful, so that I may always hasten to help my neighbor, overcoming my own fatigue and my weariness. (...)

Help me, O Lord, to make my heart merciful so that I may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor. To no one will I refuse my heart. I will be honest even with those I know will abuse my kindness. (...)

May your mercy, O my Lord, rest within me.

*(St. Faustina Kowalska)*



IT'S OKAY THAT YOU MADE  
US FROM CLAY , BUT  
COULDN'T YOU AT LEAST  
PULL US A LITTLE OUT OF  
THE MUD?

## **YOUR MODE**

Jesus, when I contemplate in your life  
the way you treat others,  
I allow myself to be challenged by your  
tenderness,  
your way of loving moves us to love.  
Your treatment is like the crystal clear  
water  
that cleanses and  
accompanies the walk.

Jesus, teach me your way  
of making the other feel more human,  
that your steps are my steps,  
my way of proceeding

Jesus, make me feel with your feelings,  
look with your gaze, engage my action.  
To give myself to death for the sake of  
the Kingdom,  
to defend life to the cross. Love each  
other as a friend  
and in the dark carry your light

Jesus, I want to be compassionate with  
those who suffer,  
seeking justice, sharing our faith. That I  
find an authentic harmony  
between what I believe and want to be.  
My eyes be a source of joy  
that embraces your way of being  
I would like to know you, Jesus as  
you are. Your image of me is what will  
transform  
my heart into one like yours,  
which comes out of itself to give.  
Capable of loving the Father and his  
brothers and sisters,  
he is serving the Kingdom in freedom.

*(Francys Adão)*

## **YOU AND NOT ME**

Let it be you and not me who move,  
Let your fire be the life that fills me,  
what he lives, what he  
gives, what he finds,  
May your Word be the  
bread on this journey,  
and may my weariness and  
helplessness rest in you,  
that I may find you, that I live

you, that I give you up,  
You and not I, You my  
source, You my guide,  
May it be You and not me who move,  
that it is You and not me,  
that be You.

*(Ruah)*

## **GIVE ME YOUR EYES**

Give me your eyes, I want to see  
Give me your words, I want to talk.  
Give me your opinion.  
Give me your feet, I want to go  
Give me your desires to feel.  
Give me your opinion.  
Give me what I need to be like You  
Give me your voice, give  
me your breath,  
Take My Time IT is for you.  
Give me the path I must follow.  
Give me your dreams, your longings,  
your thoughts, your feelings.  
Give me your life to live  
Let me see what You see,  
give me your grace, your power.  
Give me your Heart.  
Let me see inside you  
To be exchanged for your love.  
Give me your Heart  
Give me what I need to be like You

*(Marcela Gandara and Jesús Adrián Romero)*

## **YOUR GOODNESS**

Your goodness and your mercy  
They will accompany me  
Every day, every day  
every day of my life.  
Every day, every day,  
every day of my life.

*(Ixcís)*



## **TO REFLECT (AND TRY TO SHARE)**

From the logic of Mt 25, how do I use each of the senses to welcome?

-what is my gaze like

-how I Listen

-how I approach, what my gestures are like

-what taste is left in the mouth after the match (interest, indifference...)

-what do my words smell like (what do they sound like)

Have I ever felt included and lifted up? How does that experience make me react?  
Does it help me to change my outlook and prepare me to welcome "with the greatest care as a way of anointing life"?

On what occasions do I find myself omitting the good? Why? I reflect on what it should transform.

In what way is my life a channel of God's mercy, in the community and in the world? I name at least three.

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I see how God's grace works in my life, and I ask that this awareness accompany me all the days of my life.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. cf. Final Document of the Synod, 47
2. Pope Francis in his address to young people at WYD Lisbon 2023: "In the Church there is room for everyone, everyone, everyone: young and old, healthy and sick, just and sinners. There is room for everyone. The Lord does not point with his finger, but opens his arms; it is curious, the Lord does not know how to do that, but embraces us all. (...) He never closes the door, ever, but invites you in. Come in and see. Jesus receives, Jesus welcomes."
3. Barcelona Manuscript, Chapter VI, p. 11.
4. cf. Walter Kasper, *La Misericordia. Key to the Gospel and the Christian Life*, Sal Terrae, 2012, p. 141
5. "Behold, today I set before you life and happiness, death and disgrace" (Deuteronomy 30:15).
6. cf. Walter Kasper, *op cit*
7. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *El Principito*.
8. Cristina Pascual Alconchel, *From Search to Delivery. A journey through the spiritual movements of the Charismatic Formation Itinerary*, 2022, page 32
9. Mr. Mariano Pin, President of the Provincial Council of Zaragoza, October 15, 1923.



Sisters of  
Charity of  
Saint Anne