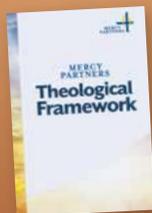


2018



Church of Mercy





Gathering: The *Theological Framework* places mercy at the heart of the Church, the scripture messages and the call to be inclusive, caring and generous. We experience Christ through our encounters with others. Yet some experiences turn our beliefs on their heads and challenge us to see things in a different light and through a new lens.

From the *Theological Framework*

The whole history of the Church thus begins with the most profound experience of mercy. It begins with the appearance of the risen Christ to those who had tragically lost him, their broken hopes for God's mercy astonishingly restored and fulfilled, and his commissioning of them to embody mercy in every corner of the world. The apostolic experience of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost dramatically communicates the meaning of ecclesial life: being church means being sent, an assembly and communion that go forth, making Jesus present by loving others throughout the changes of human history. And this implies that ecclesial mission in the world prioritises interpersonal relations in the midst of labouring for the material and social changes that satisfy real human needs. The pastoral and social ministries of the Church receive their identity by Christians' personal love for others in Christ. Such love gives the highest meaning and deepest value to the vital, social, and cultural functions of their ministries. In this way, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, their labours are truly sacramental, visible signs of Jesus' presence.

For personal reflection

Can you recall 'Pentecost' moments when your beliefs have been challenged?

SCRIPTURE
PASSAGE

Luke 24:32

“Were not our hearts filled with ardent

Reading

The disciples on the road to Emmaus are turned inwards, blind to all else but their own troubles. Meaning is hard to find when we only search within ourselves. Jesus comes, not with ready-made solutions but with an invitation to meet a God greater than our own images, beyond the limits of our interpretation and understanding. It is in word and sacrament that this God is revealed, always stretching the boundaries we set, always calling us deeper and closer. How can we know if it is the God of Jesus that we have found? Not through glib religious clichés, but through a word alive and active that probes us to our depths. Even in dark times, faith can be strengthened, hope rekindled, love for God made visible in service to others. We walk by faith without seeing, but the response of heart and life guides the way.

– Gemma Simmonds, *Glimpses of the Divine – The Art and Inspiration of Sieger Koder*, 2010.

Discussion

How can we foster encounters that facilitate a change of mind and a new way of seeing?

Prayer

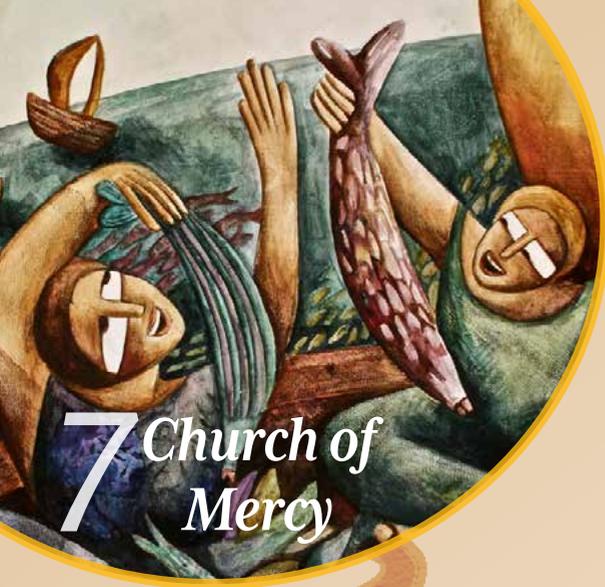
God of Encounter,
You placed love and mercy at the heart of the Church,
May we be open to experience Christ through our encounters with others.
Help us to embrace your mission to be instruments of mercy.
Inspire us to be a true Church – inclusive and welcoming to all.
Amen.

Reference: *Mercy Partners
Theological Framework*,
Chapter 2 – The Experience of
God’s Mercy.

READ MORE

You can read more on the call to be a Church of mercy from the scriptures:
Luke 24:13-28 – The Road to Emmaus,
Luke 10:1-16 – Jesus sent out the Disciples,
Psalm 27 – The Lord is my light and my salvation.

yearning when he was talking to us on the road and explaining the scriptures?”



The Path of God's Mercy

A journey in scripture, church and human experience



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