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# Mercy MOMENTS.

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*opening the  
door to a world  
where the  
**healing,**  
**liberating** and  
**life-giving**  
mercy of  
God is  
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## Divine Mercy – the Audacity of Mercy

### Thomas Ann Hines, a divorced mother of an only child, learned mercy the hard way.

When her son, a freshman at college, lay murdered by a seventeen-year-old drifter who first solicited a ride from him and then, when he got in the car, turned a gun on the young driver, Thomas Ann descended into a pit of anger and vengeance. The murder was a random, groundless, indefensible act. And her son was not the only person who died that night – Thomas Ann was alone, distraught, full of the kind of pain and hate that paralyzes the heart and stops life in its tracks, even for the living.

Her son, a good boy, a successful student, the hope of her life was gone. She herself was completely alone now, without a future, without hope, without any reason, it seemed, to live.

But thirteen years later, Thomas Ann Hines visited her son's killer in prison, intent only on getting information about the night of the killing. But when, in the course of the conversation the young man put his face down on the small table at which they sat and began to sob, she touched the man. And she got to know him.

The story shocked the country. "How could she do such a thing?" people asked. Or, more to the point, perhaps, they asked themselves the question, "Could

I ever do such a thing? Could I possibly show mercy to someone who had done something so senseless, so heinous, so destructive to me?"

Thomas Ann's answer to the question was a simple one "If my son was sitting in this room," she said, "I'd want someone to reach out a hand and lift him up."

The story is not only a moving one, it is an enlightening one for all of us. It teaches us something very important about mercy.

Mercy is what God does for us. Mercy discounts the economic sense of love and faith and care for a person and lives out of a divine sense of love instead. Mercy gives a human being who does not "deserve" love, love. And why? Because, the Scriptures answer, God knows of what we are made.

The fact is that we are all made of the same thing: clay, the dust of the earth, the frail, fragile, shapeless thing from which we come and to which we will all return someday. We are all capable of the same things. Our only hope is that when we are all sitting somewhere bereft, exposed, outcast, humiliated and rejected by the rest of society, someone, somewhere will "reach out a hand and lift us up."

Mercy Moments No. 1. From Joan Chittister: *God's Tender Mercy - Reflections on Forgiveness*, pp 8-10

#### REFLECTION

- > What does mercy mean to you?
- > In what way is Chittister's understanding of divine mercy enacted in our world today?