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# Mercy OMENTS.

## *Mercy Partners*

*opening the  
door to a world  
where the  
**healing,**  
**liberating** and  
**life-giving**  
mercy of  
God is  
experienced*

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## Not Merely an Era of Change, but a Change of Era

**These recent words from Pope Francis are still begging humanity to recognise the seismic shift in consciousness that the Gospel is forever trying to bring about. But Pope Francis is also recognising that the planet is changing at an alarming speed, and the church had best stop fearing change – or we are ill prepared to announce our own message. Grace and mercy are, and always will be, a radical shift from normal consciousness. We truly are entering a change of era. Nowhere is this more evident than in our preference for punishment over mercy.**

“Mercy is the Lord’s most powerful message!” Pope Francis proclaimed at the beginning of his pontificate. A few days later, he said, “Dear brothers and sisters, let us be enveloped by the mercy of God. . . . We will feel [God’s] wonderful tenderness, we will feel [God’s] embrace, and we too will become more capable of mercy, patience, forgiveness, and love.”

I am so very grateful for Pope Francis, who I feel is himself a gift of God’s mercy to the Christian churches and to the world in this time of counting, weighing, and measuring everything for our own small advantage. If we truly understood (“stood under”) God’s mercy, we would see how we’ve

gotten everything “upside down and backward,” as Fr Thomas Keating loves to say. Most of us think and act as if God is a God of retribution and even eternal punishment. But the Bible, Jesus, and the mystics of all the world religions reveal that God is infinite love, which really changes everything.

The passion of Pope Francis is to again make merciful love the foundation, the centre, and the goal of Christianity. Love is not just the basis on which we build everything, but it’s also the energy with which we proceed, and it’s then the final goal toward which we tend. Love has two lovely daughters, twins called grace and mercy. Like identical twins, they are often indistinguishable: Grace is the inner freedom to be merciful. Mercy is grace in action. And both are the children of love.

To operate inside of this always new and open-ended field, is to live in a truly new era – where evil has no chance to fester, grow, or triumph – because if your only goal is to love, there is no such thing as failure. Really! Even, and most especially, failures are another occasion and opportunity to learn and practice love, even toward yourself. You deserve mercy too.

Source: Fr Richard Rohr, Daily Meditation, January 31st 2016; Pope Francis: January 31, 2016

### REFLECTION

**“Grace and mercy are, and always will be, a radical shift from normal consciousness.”**

- > Take a few moments to imagine a world fuelled by love.
- > What would be different?