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# Mercy MOMENTS

## ***Mercy Partners***

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

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## Message of Mercy

**When St John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council almost 54 years ago, he set the tone for that great gathering with these words: “Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up the arms of security ... The Catholic Church ... wants to show herself a loving mother to all; patient, kind, moved by compassion and goodness.”**

Blessed Paul VI spoke in a similar manner at the council's close: “Charity has been the principal religious feature of this Council ... A wave of affection and admiration flowed from the Council over the modern world of humanity.”

Instead of depressing diagnoses, we heard encouraging remedies; instead of direful predictions, messages of trust issued from the council to the world, whose values were not only respected, but honored. Its efforts were approved, its aspirations purified and blessed.

This same message of mercy, hope and solidarity with all of humankind has come alive again in Pope Francis, who bids us to look anew at God and at God's face of mercy as it is revealed in the biblical word, and ultimately in God's Word made flesh, in Jesus. From beginning to end, both the Hebrew and

Christian Scriptures form a litany of God's countless and undeserved acts of mercy for sinners.

“It is hardly an exaggeration,” Francis wrote as he announced the Jubilee of Mercy in April 2015, “to say that God's is a visceral love. It gushes forth from the depths naturally, full of tenderness and compassion, indulgence and mercy.”

In (John's) Gospel, we see the mercy of God incarnated in the words and actions of Jesus. While others were willing and even eager to stone the woman for adultery, Jesus asked them to look within themselves, to see themselves for who they were - sinners. He challenged them to look beyond the law, which legislated such an action, and to look to God. If they stood in truth before God, could they, in all honesty, condemn and execute a fellow sinner? How often had they known God's mercy? Shouldn't they allow the woman mercy, too?

Elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus would say, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:36-38).

### REFLECTION

With these challenges of Jesus in mind:

- > How will we tend to the poor who need and deserve our mercy?
- > How will Jesus' words affect the manner in which we forgive those who wrong us?
- > Can we, in mercy and justice, deny a welcome to the world's refugees and seekers of asylum?

If we dare to pray to “Our Father” and profess to belong to Christ, then there can be no other way for us than the way of mercy. Pope Francis wrote that this mercy of God is “the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person ... It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she live and testify to mercy.”

Be merciful as God is merciful.

Source: 'Be Merciful as God is Merciful' by Patricia Datchuck Sánchez, published in *The National Catholic Reporter*, Mar. 12, 2016.