



A CATHOLIC MINISTRY  
TO PRISONERS

# Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES

PO BOX 29121 ♦ WASHINGTON, DC 20017

Vol. 23, No. 4 – October/November/December 2016



## Mother Teresa declared "Saint"

**M**other Teresa of Calcutta was canonized a Saint by Pope Francis at a Mass in Rome on September 4. It was a great day of celebration for the 120,000 gathered in Rome and for the millions who watched or listened to the ceremony around the world.

*"The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread."*

Mother Teresa

Recognizing St. Teresa as a "dispenser of divine mercy," the Pope said that she made herself "available for everyone through her welcome and defense of human life, those unborn and those abandoned and discarded."

He also said that while she is officially called "St. Teresa . . . her holiness is so near to us, so tender and so fruitful that we continue to spontaneously call her 'Mother Teresa'."

**Carry her smile in your heart.** This woman who barely reached five feet tall was born in 1910 in Albania, but she spent her adult life working in India as a Catholic nun among the poorest of the poor. Even among the dying, her presence brought joy.

Pope Francis urged that we "carry her smile in our hearts and give it to those whom we meet along our journey, especially those who suffer." "In this way," he said, "we will open up opportunities of joy and hope for our many brothers and sisters who are discouraged and who stand in need of understanding and tenderness."

**Ministering God's mercy.** Many reading this may be too young to remember Mother Teresa. In 1949, she was given permission to found the Missionaries of Charity, an order of Sisters which work with the poor and abandoned. The order is now located in 130

countries around the world, ministering God's mercy to the suffering and afflicted.

Mother Teresa had a special concern for the unborn child and was known for defending the cause of life even on the world stage before presidents and prime ministers. She was often not appreciated for her stand in defense of the unborn.

She died in 1997. People called her a saint even while she lived. After she died, her cause for sainthood moved quickly through the formal Vatican process.

**"What is God's will in my life?"** Pope Francis urged those gathered to think about our own lives. "Our task is to perceive the call of God and then to do his will. But in order to do his will, we must ask ourselves, 'What is God's will in my life?'"

To understand God's will, we must understand what pleases God. Pope Francis said, "God is pleased with every act of mercy." He urged all to turn what they pray for and profess in faith into acts of kindness and mercy.

In this way, we too will be instruments of God's mercy and keep alive the hope and joy which Mother Teresa brought among us.



*"Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies."*

Mother Teresa

### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In late July this year, 1.2 million young people gathered in Poland for World Youth Day. Pope Francis challenged them—and us too—"Don't be afraid to say 'yes' to Jesus with all your heart, to respond generously and to follow him! Don't let your soul grow numb, but aim for the goal of a beautiful love which also demands sacrifice."

That's what it's all about! Saying "Yes" to Jesus. Responding. And Following.

You can do that even now. This issue of *Let's Talk!* is filled with thoughts and ideas on how you can do that. All it takes is a decision, responding and following Jesus . . . no matter how many times we falter and fail. Pick yourself up and start again. You will be surprised what you will find at the end of a day, a week, a month, a year!

Let us pray for one another. Receive God's mercy and give it to others.

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP  
President, Paulist Evangelization Ministries

## We gotta have mercy

**T**he Year of Mercy ends on November 20, 2016. But this is not the end. **For most of us, it is still the beginning!**

If we have learned anything during this Jubilee Year of Mercy, it should be "we gotta have mercy!" If we don't have mercy and show mercy to those around us, we've failed to grasp the message of this year. And we miss the message of Jesus and living out our Christian faith.

**Mercy is the mission.** As Deacon Dolan writes in his article on page 3 of this issue, "If you ain't got mercy you ain't really got the mission of Jesus." We can be praying, reading the Bible, and doing "religious things," but if we don't show compassion and mercy to those around us on a daily basis all through the day, we are just spinning the wheels. We won't make true progress in the spiritual life.

If we don't show mercy, any good we try to do with those around us—including family members and those in jail or prison with us—will really not make much difference. Our words must be backed up with our actions. And our actions need to be merciful.

*continued on page 2*

## CHURCH CALENDAR

### OCTOBER 2016

- 1 St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin, doctor
- 2 **Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi, religious
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary
- 9 **Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 15 St. Teresa of Avila, virgin, doctor
- 16 **Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 17 St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, martyr
- 18 **St. Luke, evangelist**
- 19 Sts. John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, priests and martyrs, and companions, martyrs
- 23 **Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 28 Sts. Simon and Jude, apostles
- 30 **Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### NOVEMBER 2016

- 1 All Saints
- 2 All Souls
- 4 St. Charles Borromeo, bishop
- 6 **Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 9 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
- 10 St. Leo the Great, pope, doctor
- 11 St. Martin of Tours, bishop
- 12 St. Josaphat, doctor, martyr
- 13 **Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 17 St. Elizabeth of Hungary, religious
- 20 **Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**
- 21 Presentation of Mary
- 22 St. Cecelia, virgin, martyr
- 24 Thanksgiving Day in U.S.
- 24 St. Andrew Dung-Lac, priest, and companions, martyrs
- 27 **First Sunday of Advent**
- 30 St. Andrew, apostle

### DECEMBER 2016

- 3 St. Francis Xavier, priest
- 4 **Second Sunday of Advent**
- 7 St. Ambrose, bishop
- 8 **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
- 11 **Third Sunday of Advent**
- 12 **Our Lady of Guadalupe**
- 14 St. John of the Cross, priest
- 18 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- 25 **Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**
- 26 St. Stephen, first martyr
- 27 St. John, evangelist
- 28 Holy Innocents, martyrs
- 30 **Holy Family**

## Let's Talk!

PEM President: **Rev. Frank DeSiano, CSP**

Editor: **Mr. Anthony Bosnick**

Layout Editor: **Mrs. Joann Sullivan**

Art: **Steve Erspamer, SM**

**Visit us at [www.pemdc.org](http://www.pemdc.org)**

©Paulist Evangelization Ministries

All Scripture quotations are taken from the *New American Bible*. Used with permission.

**Change of Address:** Please help us keep our mailing list accurate. Send all changes in your name and/or address to: Paulist Prison Ministries; PO Box 29121; Washington, DC 20017; or by email to: [info@pemdc.org](mailto:info@pemdc.org).

Thank you for your help.

PLMTH1604

## We gotta have mercy

(continued from page 1)

**Sure it's hard in prison.** That's because there are plenty of people who don't buy into the message of Jesus. They live for themselves. Same way with plenty of people on the outside. It's "all about me," and we don't see how our lives connect with others. We don't see how our lives can make life better for others too. What a difference this makes with spouses, children, brothers and sisters, parents . . . with everyone.



Living mercifully takes work. But we have to remember that God is working in us, changing us when we are open to him and his grace. This is God's work, and when we want it and are open to it, *we will see change*. You might think it is hopeless, but yield to God and see the gradual changes that take place in your life. It is often in what we see as "small things." God's tender mercies abound (see Luke 1:78); our call is to be open and aware of them.

continued on page 4

## The Year of Mercy is ending. What do we do now?

**T**he Year of Mercy officially ends on November 20, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. What do we do now?

At the beginning of this year, Pope Francis urged: "Let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of throwing open the doors of his heart and repeats that he loves us and wants to share his love with us" (*The Face of Mercy*, n. 25).

So this adventure of finding God's continual surprises in our lives has just begin. It should continue throughout our lives and come to a great explosion of surprise and joy when we meet him face to face.

So let us turn our hearts to God and be open to the gift he gives and wants us to accept. This means *both* receiving the gift of mercy and being merciful to others. If you are open to God and make a path for him, you will surely be surprised by God. Be open to the surprise he has for you.

Here are ten "New Year's Resolutions" Pope Francis has given us to help us continue the surprise of mercy. You can begin

them now and carry them into the new year . . . and the rest of your life. Some apply more than others.

1. **Be happy. Following Christ is a daily choice; there is no greater joy!**
2. **Make it a habit to "Ask the Lord."**
3. **Make commitments and keep them.**
4. **Befriend those who disagree with you.**
5. **Stop judging others.**
6. **Meet the poor eye-to-eye, face-to-face.**
7. **Choose the "more humble" purchase.**
8. **Make time for others.**
9. **Finish your meals; millions go hungry while millions waste food.**
10. **Don't gossip.**

A prison chaplain or volunteer may be able to print out these resolutions with more explanation by going here: <http://www.iccparish.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/01/New-Years-Resolutions-by-Pope-Francis.pdf>

## Prisoner Saints

**You (your date of birth goes here) + Yes, you!** For you are called to be a saint. . . We all are. This is how it happened. While in prison, you invited God into your life. You asked God for the strength to change. You began to pray and talk with God and to find ways to care for others in prison. Your life began to change in a quiet and mysterious way. You were often not aware that anything was happening, but then began to see change. Others did too! The love of God moved you to seek God's will more each day. You responded to the grace of the Year of Mercy. Without realizing it, you became a saint!

**Feast Day: Make it a daily celebration!**

## Pope Francis' Prayer Requests

for October/November/December 2016 in the Year of Mercy

### OCTOBER

#### Universal. Journalists:

That journalists, in carrying out their work, may always be motivated by respect for truth and a strong sense of ethics.

#### Evangelization.

##### World Mission Day:

That World Mission Day may renew within all Christian communities the joy of the Gospel and the responsibility to announce it.

### NOVEMBER

#### Universal. Countries

*Receiving Refugees:* That the countries which take in a great number of displaced persons and refugees may find support for their efforts which show solidarity.

#### Evangelization.

##### Collaboration of Priests and Laity:

That within parishes, priests and lay people may collaborate in service to the community without giving in to the temptation of discouragement.

### DECEMBER

#### Universal. End to Child-

*Soldiers:* That the scandal of child-soldiers may be eliminated the world over.

#### Evangelization. Europe:

That the peoples of Europe may rediscover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Gospel which gives joy and hope to life.

*Pope Francis invites you to join him in praying for these intentions.*

## Year of Mercy, Part 5

# Mercy is the Mission

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

**Peaches:** So, Deke, Pope Francis has refocused us this year on the virtue of mercy.

**Me:** Yup. More precisely, I would say on the "mission of mercy."

**Peaches:** Well, I know that Francis is always talking about mission too.

**Me:** They are closely connected. Jesus had a mission for the Reign of God. He passed that mission on to us. That mission has many different parts and tasks within it but mercy is *how* he did each of those parts and tasks! It is how we are to follow Jesus—mercifully!

**Peaches:** Oh, I get it! Whether Jesus was teaching, preaching, healing or whatever—it was done in a merciful way!

**Me:** Or he was preaching and teaching about mercy directly.

**Peaches:** Or Jesus was *demonstrating* mercy by doing things like healing, forgiveness and feeding the five thousand people!

**Me:** Correct. That's the *big idea* of the Year of Mercy: Mercy is the *key* ingredient to understanding Jesus and to our carrying out his mission for the Reign of God. Mercy is the big idea of Jesus.

**Peaches:** So even if you've got the Bible, the Sacraments, the Church and you're taking care of orphans and running hospitals and stuff if you ain't got mercy, you ain't really got the mission of Jesus.

**Me:** And that, in a nutshell, is why so much of the good we do does not bring people into the Reign of God because we fail to do it mercifully.

**Peaches:** Why don't we just do the mission mercifully?

**Me:** Because you have to be evangelized to be consistently merciful. You can't "fake" it. You can't decide to just do it like you can just decide to teach Bible study or work at the soup kitchen. Any task of the mission can be done by just deciding, "I'm going to do that." But mercy is not a decision.

**Peaches:** Then what is it?

**Me:** Mercy comes from receiving mercy from God. It's a by-product of evangelization. It comes from meeting God.

**Peaches:** OK. Walk me through that.

**Me:** First, you have to *know* that, as far as God goes, you're "busted"!

**Peaches:** A sinner!

**Me:** Yes. And it's not just a churchy thing we all say like, "Oh, yes. We are all sinners." It's about

*me* personally knowing that I stand before God without excuse.

**Peaches:** So, no saying, "At least I'm not as bad as her!"

**Me:** Right. That would be an excuse. Besides, if you actually meet God, all those "little sins" of yours look huge!

**Peaches:** So, it doesn't really matter that someone else's are even worse.

**Me:** Right! The experience is "I am busted! Period!" And then, instead of dropping the hammer—which I deserve—God gives me a break!

**Peaches:** Mercy!

**Me:** Correct! Now that I have gotten Mercy, I naturally give mercy to others! It's practically automatic.

**Peaches:** That's repentance!

**Me:** Yes. That's "getting" the Good News that we had God all wrong! He's on our side and the only thing He really asks of us is that we be on each other's side too!

**Peaches:** Mercy.

**Me:** Yes. And a person can be well educated in the faith but isn't any more merciful than anyone else. You can get an "A" studying Buddhism and never become a Buddhist!

**Peaches:** So you can't just read about mercy. You have to receive it to give it.

**Me:** Exactly because the mercy you are giving to others is not your mercy—it's God's mercy!

**Peaches:** And you can't give what you don't have.

**Me:** True! Also, you are in deep trouble if you're relying on *my* mercy! I don't have enough mercy for myself, never mind you!

**Peaches:** So, mercy is the mission and the mission is mercy!

**Me:** That's a bumper sticker, Peaches!

**Peaches:** I know, right!? "Crazy Lucy" says I should go into Marketing.

**Me:** The woman refers to herself as "Crazy" Lucy!

**Peaches:** Yeah, but she's a shoplifter. She knows quality!

**Me:** OK. Gotta go say my Office now!

*Deacon Dennis Dolan is a retired prison chaplain from York Correctional Institution in Connecticut. He continues his ministry with and for prisoners through his writing as he discerns where God is calling him in service.*

## The Works of Mercy, Part 3

# Be a reconciler and pray

A wonderful spiritual work of mercy is to be a reconciler. That is, we help people forgive one another and be made one again. The next three spiritual works of mercy concern reconciliation: comfort the afflicted, forgive offenses, and bear wrongs patiently. These all have to do with being an instrument of peace. (The seventh and last spiritual work is to pray for the living and the dead, which we will also reflect on in this article.)

Think for a moment how much of the anger and violence in our lives and in the world stems from the fact that we hold grudges, nurture anger, and refuse to forgive. If we are thinking with the mind and heart of Christ, we know how true this is and what a work of mercy it is to help bring reconciliation to suffering people and this suffering world.

**Comfort the afflicted.** If you think back to the time before you were in jail or prison, you can probably remember many people who were suffering (afflicted) by grief, anxiety, sadness and sorrow, anger, etc. And now when you look around you in jail or prison, you see the same thing. Yes, there is much suffering in this world.

This is not what God wants for his people. He is “the Father of mercies and God of all consolation” (2 Corinthians 1:3). Those who mourn will be comforted by God (see Matthew 5:4). We are instruments of God’s mercy who comfort the suffering and afflicted. Yes, that is your calling too. Pray and ask God to give you a heart of love that reaches out to the suffering and brings them comfort through a kind word, a kind deed, a word of encouragement. This is what it means to walk with Jesus.

**Forgive offenses willingly.** We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (see Romans 3:23). We all have offended, just as others have offended us. Jesus teaches us the way of love and forgiveness . . . in a radical way: “Offer no resistance to injury. When a person strikes you on the right cheek, turn and offer him the other” (Matthew 5:39). Wow. Think about that for a minute. Ask the Holy Spirit what it means . . . especially what it means for you.

Know that this is what the fifth spiritual work of mercy calls us to: to willingly forgive others for the offenses against us. And there are plenty. No one is saying that everything is our fault, that we bring everything on ourselves. (Certainly, there is some of that in

### Spiritual Works of Mercy

**Counsel the doubtful**  
**Instruct the ignorant**  
**Admonish sinners**  
**Comfort the afflicted**  
**Forgive offenses**  
**Bear wrongs patiently**  
**Pray for the living and the dead**

### Corporal Works of Mercy

**Feed the hungry**  
**Give drink to the thirsty**  
**Clothe the naked**  
**Shelter the homeless**  
**Visit the sick**  
**Visit the imprisoned**  
**Bury the dead**

all of us.) But no matter the circumstances, we are called to forgive willingly and generously. It is a challenge for all of us.

**Bear wrongs patiently.** Probably the greatest example of bearing wrongs patiently was Jesus in his passion, in his suffering on the way of the cross, in his crucifixion. He did not lash out, but suffered patiently, bearing the wrong done to him. “Father forgive them; they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). This is the example we are called to follow. Nothing done to us can come close to the betrayal that Jesus faced.

And so, once again, we are challenged by a way of life that is most likely beyond what we can imagine of ourselves. This is the way of Jesus and of the Saints, his most faithful followers. It is our call as well. As we bear wrongs patiently, we grow in holiness and walk more faithfully with Jesus.

**Pray for the living and the dead.** In this final spiritual work of mercy, we are called to remember that we are all one united together in covenant with God. When we pray for the living and the dead, we express our thirst that we and they encounter God’s love and mercy. Let us remember “God’s tender mercy” toward us (see Luke 1:78). And let us know that as we pray for others, we became instruments of God’s tender mercy to others.

We enter into a relationship with God where we pray and ask God to shed his mercy on his people. This is God’s plan, and as we pray we begin to know that we are part of that plan, that we are instruments of his mercy. Our prayer helps us to be instruments of all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

*In our next issue, we will consider the first four corporal works of mercy.*

~ Anthony Bosnick

## We gotta have mercy *(continued from page 2)*

**Give me the Holy Spirit.** Earlier this year, Pope Francis urged us to pray every day “Father, give me the Holy Spirit.” Pray that the Holy Spirit comes to you so that you can see your life more clearly and understand what it means to show mercy to others. The Holy Spirit will show us!

We have quoted this from Pope Francis a number of times during this past year, and it is worth saying it again: “Let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of throwing open the doors of his heart and repeats that he loves us and wants to share his love with us” (*The Face of Mercy*, n. 25).

Be open to the surprise he has in store for you wherever you are in the coming months and years.

## Mother Teresa’s Words of Love

*We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.*

*Words which do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness.*

*Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty.*

Read more at: [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/mother\\_teresa.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/mother_teresa.html)

**Pray for our benefactors** *Let’s Talk!* and its Spanish translation *¡Hablemos!* are supported by donations. They are given free of charge to prison chaplains for distribution to inmates by Paulist Prison Ministries. Please pray for our benefactors. To help support this ministry, please send your donation to the address on page 2 of this newsletter.