



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

MARCH 3, 2017 — FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

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Celebrating and Living Mercy This Lent

This past November 20, 2016, Pope Francis concluded the Jubilee Year of Mercy with the apostolic letter *Misericordia et Misera*. In the opening, he says:

“. . . we have celebrated during the Holy Year, a time rich in mercy, which must continue to be *celebrated* and *lived out* in our communities. Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the Church; it constitutes her very existence, through which the profound truths of the Gospel are made manifest and tangible. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father.”

At the Convocation of the Eymardian Family, *Celebrating the Gift of Self in the Year of Mercy*, Father John Thomas Lane, SSS, offered a workshop on “Liturgy and the Year of Mercy.” In this piece, we highlight suggestions he made for finding the theme of mercy in the Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, and other eucharistic devotions. May we continue to be attentive to our merciful God, especially in the liturgies we celebrate this Lent!
Jim Brown

Liturgy and the Year of Mercy

Pope Francis is calling us to show the loving side of the Church and of God. We are to be faithful to our call to serve the God whose name is mercy.

In the celebration of the Eucharist, we are reminded often of and experience the mercy of the Father.

• At the Penitential Act, we call to mind our sins and ask for God’s mercy. “Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.”

• In the different Eucharistic Prayers, we hear: “hope in your abundant mercies” (I); “all who have died in your mercy” (II); “in your compassion, O merciful Father” (III);

“grant, O merciful Father, that we may enter into a heavenly inheritance” (IV).

• In the Masses of Reconciliation, we hear: “Being rich in mercy, you constantly offer pardon and call on sinners”; “whom we humbly commend to your mercy” (I). “You change our hearts . . . you move human hearts . . . hatred is overcome by love, revenge gives way to forgiveness, and discord is changed to mutual respect” (II).

• In the consecration, our lives are united with Jesus in the new and everlasting covenant, “so that sins may be forgiven,” and we “become one body, one spirit in Christ.”

• In preparation for Holy Communion, we pray together as children of one Father, “forgive us as we forgive those. . . .”

• All are invited to share the one bread and one cup in a gesture of being reconciled by the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,” happy are we to be called to his supper.

• In Holy Communion, we eat his body and drink his blood. We become the food we eat, one in Jesus who loves us and who died so that we may live a new life.

• We are missioned in the Dismissal Rite to be Christ
(Continued on reverse side)

LENT 2017



“In God’s service,
we need fidelity
and generosity,
but not strength.
God is the strength!”

Saint Peter Julian Eymard



*Please pray for
Isabel Sanchez,
Houston Associate
of the
Blessed Sacrament,
who died
earlier this week.
Requiescat in pace!*



CONNECTIONS

Liturgy and the Year of Mercy (*Continued*)

for one another, merciful and loving.

Liturgy of the Hours

• In Morning Prayer, we praise God for the day and ask his blessing on our work. "Every Friday we pray Psalm 51, "O God, have mercy on me."

• Each day, we pray the Canticule from Luke 1:68-79:

"He promised to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant. In the tender compassion of our

God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace."

• In Evening Prayer, we give thanks for our day, our work. We ask God to have mercy on the deceased. Each day we pray the Gospel Canticule from Luke 1:46-55:

"He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation." ". . . He has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers."

Other Suggestions

• Participate in your parish's Holy Hours and/or Taizé Prayer services;

• Pick a Corporal or Spiritual Work of Mercy to focus on;

• Participate in an anointing of the sick service, a true sacrament of healing and mercy;

• Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation;

• Become an Extraordinary

Minister of Communion to the sick;

• Practice Pope Francis' favorite image of the Church as a "field hospital." Attend to those in your life who are wounded, hurting, or injured in any way.

Conclusion

Be merciful to those who need our mercy.

*Father John Thomas Lane,
SSS*

Practicing Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading) during Lent

Pope Francis states in *Misericordia et Misera*: "The Bible is the great story of the marvels of God's mercy. Every one of its pages is steeped in the love of the Father who from the moment of creation wished to impress the signs of his love on the universe. (7) Each Sunday, God's word is proclaimed in the Christian community so that the Lord's Day may be illuminated by the paschal mystery. In the biblical readings, we retrace the history of our salvation through the proclamation of God's tireless work of mercy." (6)

Pope Francis encourages "every Christian community (to) renew its efforts to make the Sacred Scriptures better known and more widely diffused." He also suggests "the practice of *lectio divina*, so that the prayerful reading of the sacred text will help support and strengthen the spiritual life."

For those who now practice or wish to try the practice of lectio divina, I offer some suggestions, borrowing from the *Examen* method of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and the *Way of Eucharistic Prayer* by Saint Peter Julian Eymard. Whether you are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, in your favorite prayer chair, or sitting on your bench in the back yard, begin with a deep breath or two and become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy. God is ready for a conversation and loves you as you are.

1. Read the Gospel of the day. (If your parish doesn't publish the daily gospel reading, Google "USCCB Daily Readings").
2. Notice what word or phrase catches your attention. Or simply pay attention to what you begin thinking about.
3. Pray with the belief that the good Lord wants to hear:
 - Which wonders in my world do I wish to praise God for?
 - What blessings in this present moment am I thankful for?
 - Where have I fallen short in loving others? For what am I especially sorry?
 - For whom and what do I want to pray this day?
4. Your response: What is God asking me to do or be today? For or to whom?
5. End your prayer time with the Our Father or the Prayer in Honor of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

In a Meditation penned in February 1865, Father Eymard wrote: "I was busy about many things like Martha, whereas this good Master wanted me at his feet; he kept telling me, 'Talk to me about yourself, speak your heart out to me, your wishes, your sorrows.'"

Remember, as number 7 of the *Rule of Life for Associates* underscores, "We nourish our faith at the table of the word of God, especially through the daily liturgical readings."

Jim Brown