



CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF MERCY

PRAYING THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

VISIT THE IMPRISONED

OPENING PRAYER

Merciful God, to whom the secrets of the heart lie open, who recognize the just and make righteous the guilty, hear our prayers for our brothers and sisters held in prison; grant that through patience and hope they may find relief in their affliction and soon return unhindered to their families. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

READ LUKE 23:33-43

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 25:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7, 10-11

R./ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul, my God, in you I trust.

No one is disgraced who waits for you,
but only those who are treacherous without cause.

Make known to me your ways, Lord;
teach me your paths. **R./**

Guide me by your fidelity and teach me,
for you are God my savior.

Remember your compassion and your mercy, O Lord,
for they are ages old. **R./**

Remember no more the sins of my youth;
remember me according to your mercy,
because of your goodness, Lord. **R./**

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth
toward those who honor his covenant and decrees.

For the sake of your name, Lord,
pardon my guilt, though it is great.

INTERCESSIONS

For all who have influence and authority over criminal justice systems, that they use their power to establish effective rehabilitation programs for inmates, we pray: **R./ Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the families of incarcerated people, especially children, that they receive the assistance they need to maintain a healthy and dignified life, we pray: **R./ Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all those guilty of crime, that they may be given the grace to admit every wrongdoing and the strength to follow the path of conversion, we pray: **R./ Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who have been victims of crime, that they are able to forgive like Jesus and to labor for a world of justice and mercy, we pray: **R./ Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the entire human race, that we make the effort to rid our personal lives of evil and injustice in order to sow peace in every relationship and every encounter we have, we pray: **R./ Lord, hear our prayer.**

Our Father...

CLOSING PRAYER

Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy (excerpt)

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen

REFLECTION BY ED LIS

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Christopher was a good student who grew up in a single parent household. Despite his mom's best efforts to raise him right, Christopher had a brief but fateful run in with the law at age 16. His mother, Christine, remembers the phone call – Christopher had been arrested right before Mother's Day and right after learning that his girlfriend was pregnant. He was a straight-A student, active in sports, and someone people enjoyed being around. But he got caught up in doing "crazy, stupid things" with his friends. The result: a stint at the youth detention center, where Christine had to speak with him through thick glass: "I couldn't even hug him."

Christopher knew that he could not run from responsibility; he had to manage his life, even as things went from bad to worse. First, he was charged as an adult. Then, still detained, he heard from his mom that his older brother had been killed as an innocent bystander of neighborhood gun violence. Christine was heartbroken again. She remembers that Christopher came to the funeral in shackles.

Life got more hopeful when Christopher was sent by Juvenile Court to St. Gabriel's Hall, a program started by the De LaSalle Christian Brothers in 1898. St. Gabriel's Hall is a residential treatment and educational facility in suburban Philadelphia which offers young men like Christopher a second chance and an opportunity to earn a high school diploma, a GED, or vocational training.

At the Hall, Christopher met caring staff, including a few men of whom he says: "They were like fathers to me. If I needed help or just to talk, they were there for me. They helped me turn it around, and taught me to be patient, humble, and strong." While at the Hall, his daughter was born. When his mom brought the child for a visit, the little girl rested peacefully on his chest. Christopher was at the Hall for 18 months and graduated with honors, receiving the leadership award.

Upon discharge, Christopher began meeting weekly with Michael, his Reintegration caseworker. The visits lasted for 6 months and were meant to ensure a positive and permanent return to home and community, assisting Christopher with employment and educational goals, while fulfilling conditions of probation such as counseling.

Michael was impressed with the progress Christopher made, due in large part to the ongoing support and guidance of his mother. As Michael observed, "reintegration takes the structure, discipline, and life lessons learned at the Hall and incorporates them into the young man's life. As in this case, the results prove that it works." Christopher now holds a full-time job, is supporting his infant daughter, and is enrolled to attend college. His story is a concrete witness to the transformative power of mercy for those who have made a mistake and are willing to learn.

SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY

"Bear wrongs patiently" doesn't mean being a doormat or standing idle as injustice spreads. Consider how Jesus practiced this work of mercy: when mistreated he pressed forward in fulfilling God's will, but he also named – and challenged people to reject – evil. Instead of demanding a tooth for a tooth, Jesus "conquered evil with good" (Rom 12:21). The key is to not take slights personally. To "bear wrongs patiently" is a virtue that every disciple of Christ can develop with grace and practice.

QUOTE OF MERCY

This time in your life can only have one purpose: to give you a hand in getting back on the right road, to give you a hand to help you rejoin society. All of us are part of that effort, all of us are invited to encourage, help and enable your rehabilitation. A rehabilitation which everyone seeks and desires: inmates and their families, correctional authorities, social and educational programs. A rehabilitation which benefits and elevates the morale of the entire community. Pope Francis, from his remarks to the detainees at Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia, which he visited on September 27, 2015.



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