

Day of Spirituality 2015

I. Mary, Mother of Mercy

Prayer: (all together)

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears! Turn, then, O most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

(the original hymn Salve Regina was written sometime in around 1040-1050 by St. Hermann of Reichenau)

In a formal announcement called a “Bull of Indiction”, Pope Francis revealed to the world his calling for an “Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy”, a year dedicated to celebration, reflection, prayer and much more, for the mystery of God’s fathomless mercy- a year of mercy.

In paragraph 1 of the proclamation Pope Francis said this:

“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him.”

The paragraph continues:

“In the “fullness of time” (Gal 4:4), when everything had been arranged according to God the Father’s (his) plan of salvation, he sent his only Son into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to reveal his love for us in a definitive way. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. Jn 14:9). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person[1] reveals the mercy of God.”

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy!

What does greeting, this acclamation mean to you?

Listen to the words of Pope Francis in the 24th paragraph of his proclamation (almost the end):

“My thoughts now turn to the Mother of Mercy. May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God’s tenderness. No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh. The Mother of the Crucified and Risen One has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she participated intimately in the mystery of His love.”

And continuing a bit further:

“At the foot of the Cross, Mary, together with John, the disciple of love, witnessed the words of forgiveness spoken by Jesus. This supreme expression of mercy towards those who crucified him show us the point to which the mercy of God can reach. Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the Salve Regina, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus.”

Consider:

What was it like for Mary to see the cruel treatment of her son and hear the words of hatred from the crowds?

What must have it been like to hear him groan in pain as the torturers nailed her Jesus to the cross?

What were you thinking Mary when you heard Jesus cry out to his father, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”?.?

Reflection

Close your eyes. Place yourself at the foot of the cross with Mary and the others there. Imagine the stark and lonely rock in which the three crosses stand. Hear the sounds of the crowds as they witness the ugly scene.

Listen to the words of the Gospel of John

*Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.
So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate*

also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews." Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled [that says]:

"They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots."

This is what the soldiers did. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine.* So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.*

Question and share

Now, open your eyes. In just a moment, turn to two others at your table and share with them what you saw and felt.

And, what does "Mary, mother of mercy" mean to you right now?

Conclusion

This Year of Mercy is to open December 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The date the Pope has chosen is especially memorable and important to us as Vincentians since our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, in his great devotion to Mary declared Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception as the patroness of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

As we prepare for this Year of Mercy, let us continue to reflect on Mary, Mother of Mercy

Song (sing together the first 2 verses)

Hail, Holy Queen

Traditional Hymn

Hail, Holy Queen enthroned above, O Maria!
Hail, Mother of mercy and of love, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina!

Our life, our sweetness here below, O Maria!
Our hope in sorrow and in woe, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina!

To thee do we cry, poor sons of Eve, O Maria!
To thee we sigh, we mourn, we grieve, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina!

Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, O Maria!
Towards us thine eyes compassionate, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina! O Maria!

When this our exile is complete, O Maria!
Show us thy Son, our Jesus sweet, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina!

O clement, gracious Mother sweet, O Maria!
O virgin Mary we entreat, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina!

II. Mary, Model of Mercy; Model Listener

The Prayer of Mary (Luke 1:46-55) (all together)

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.**

**He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.**

**He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.**

**He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.**

Again in the words of Pope Francis (paragraph 24 of *Misericordiae Vultus*)

Chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, Mary, from the outset, was prepared by the love of God to be the Ark of the Covenant between God and man. She treasured divine mercy in her heart in perfect harmony with her Son Jesus. Her hymn of praise, sung at the threshold of the home of Elizabeth, was dedicated to the mercy of God which extends from “generation to generation” (Lk 1:50). We

too were included in those prophetic words of the Virgin Mary. This will be a source of comfort and strength to us as we cross the threshold of the Holy Year to experience the fruits of divine mercy.

Reflect

Take a moment to reflection on Magnificat (The Prayer of Mary) and the words of Pope Francis.

Circle words or phrases that speak to you of the mercy of God.

Questions to consider

What/who does God's mercy involve?

How does Mary fit in the mystery of God's mercy?

Does listening have anything to do with mercy? If so, how?

Share

Share your thoughts with 2-3 other people at your table. (try to choose different folks from the last sharing)A

A story: The mercy and love of mom.

“Servant Song” by Sister Donna Marie McGargill (sing together)

Verse 1

What do you want of me, Lord? Where do you want me to serve you? Where can I sing your praises. I am your song.

Chorus

Jesus, Jesus, you are the Lord. Jesus, Jesus, you are the way.

Verse 4

You are the light in my darkness. You are my strength when I'm weary. You give me sight when I'm blinded. Come see for me.

Chorus

Jesus, Jesus, you are my light. Jesus, Jesus, you are the way.

Verse 5

I am your song and servant, singing your praise like Mary. Surrendered to your Spirit, “Let it be done to me.”

Chorus

Jesus, Jesus, “Let it be done to me.” Jesus, Jesus, you are the way.

Mary in Vincentian Spirituality

(Taken from Serving in Hope, Module 2 “Vincentian Spirituality”, Session 2.6)

See attached pages

Song

Hail Mary, Gentle Woman (by Carey Landry)

HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU
BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN,
AND BLEST IS THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB, JESUS
HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US SINNERS
NOW AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH, AMEN

(REFRAIN:)

GENTLE WOMAN, QUIET LIGHT
MORNING STAR SO STRONG AND BRIGHT
GENTLE MOTHER, PEACEFUL DOVE
TEACH US WISDOM, TEACH US LOVE

YOU WERE CHOSEN BY THE FATHER
YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR THE SON
YOU WERE CHOSEN FROM ALL WOMEN
AND FOR WOMAN, A SHINING ONE

(REPEAT REFRAIN)

BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN
BLESS IN TURN ALL WOMEN TOO
BLESSED THEY WITH PEACEFUL SPIRITS
BLESSED THEY WITH GENTLE HEARTS

(REPEAT REFRAIN)

Other reading and resources:

Misericordiae Vultus

Bull of the Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy

By Pope Francis

Download or print from:

<http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls.index.html>

Serving in Hope (Modules 1-5)

A video-assisted resource for spiritual formation of members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

This is a great resource for Spiritual Advisors, Presidents or any Vincentian that wants to learn more about our heritage and the spirituality of Bl. Frederic Ozanam St. Vincent de Paul and all the other important figures along the way.

Praying with Frederic Ozanam

By Ronald Ramson, CM

St. Mary's Press

You may be able to order through Easters