

October 2, 2016

But Nobody Ever Told Me... XXX

Tradition is surprisingly fragile. Once a link of the chain is broken, it is extremely difficult to reattach—and if it effects a second link—almost impossible. What often happens in many disciplines is that an older generation assumes that the younger generation knows how and why certain things are done. We can see this in everything from sports practices to cooking recipes.

As I mentioned last week, there are now only 7 weeks left in this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Divine Mercy Sunday 2015, (April 11<sup>th</sup>) Pope Francis promulgated a document called *“The Face of Mercy”*. In it, he called for the Extraordinary Jubilee and gave it the theme: Be merciful like the Father.(Lk 6:36) As we draw the Year to a conclusion, I recommend that everyone (re)read it. You can find it on-line easily.

As I read it, there are three main themes:

1) the theological understanding of God’s mercy: explaining the role of mercy in the life of people and of the Church, who are both the beneficiaries and the witnesses to God’s mercy in the world. “The mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality through which he reveals his love as that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child,” (#6) “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life ... The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.” (#10) “Wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident ... Wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy.”(#12)

2) practical ways to observe the Holy Year: go on pilgrimage as an “impetus to conversion”; do not judge or condemn but forgive and give, avoid gossip, envy and jealousy; have a heart open to the fringes of society and bring consolation, mercy and solidarity to people who live in precarious situations; take up the corporal and spiritual acts of mercy with joy; and observe the “24 Hours for the Lord” initiative, which encourages prayer and the sacrament of reconciliation, in every diocese during Lent of 2016.(#’s 13 – 19)

3) thoughts on the integral relationship of Justice and Mercy: In particular he calls for conversion of heart and specifically singles out members of criminal organizations and those corruptly exercising offices of power.(#’s 20 – 21)

The pope concludes the bull with an invocation to our Blessed Mother, who was the ultimate witness to God’s mercy and the one who develops it in us. So, just like our parents growing up, she will (re)form in us the basic building blocks of relational maturity—saying “I’m sorry” and “thank you”. Next week: I’m Sorry, the Sacrament of Confession.

*Fr. Michael*