

DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM
PREPARING FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY IN ADVENT



8 December 2015 - 20 November 2016

BE MERCIFUL



BE MERCIFUL

A resource pack for the Year of Mercy

A PARISH SUPPORT PACK - PREPARING IN ADVENT

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BE MERCIFUL

Introduction

Dear all,

As I'm sure you are all aware, the Year of Mercy will be officially starting on the 8th December. The Holy Father announced this in the Papal Bull 'Misericordiae Vultus' (The Face of Mercy). His intention is that the 'balm of mercy' should reach everyone and that this would be a sign that the kingdom of God is present in our midst!

Pope Francis said; "Let us not forget that God forgives and God forgives always, let us never tire of asking for forgiveness."

As well as an opportunity for our own spiritual growth it is also a time to reflect upon the corporal and spiritual works of mercy – our love in action.



Pope Francis also said: "The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person." He is calling us to proclaim the gift of God's mercy to all and asks us to listen to the cry of innocent people who are deprived of their property, their dignity, their feelings and even their lives.

In response to this we have set up a Diocesan website: www.bemerciful.co.uk, which will be a hub for events and activities during the year, it has ideas for what parishes, schools and individuals can as well as downloadable material, news and other helpful information. I also commend this booklet which will give you some ideas to start with. In this coming year I would like each parish and each school to reflect upon what they are already doing, but through the lens of mercy and then undertake one further act of mercy. In this way I hope there will be a legacy in every parish and school.

The opening Mass will be on the 8th December at St Barnabas Cathedral and invitations will be going out soon. I would also ask that you identify a door in your church that could be a focal point for raising awareness of the Year of Mercy.

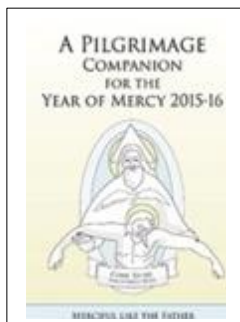
Yours in Christ,

+ Patrick

Bishop Patrick

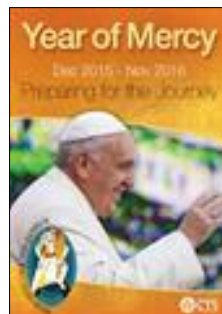
Resources for the Year of Mercy

Useful Publications



**A Pilgrimage Companion
for the Year of Mercy
2015-16**, by Cardinal
Vincent Nichols

Alive Publishing £1, See:
www.alivepublishing.co.uk



**Year of Mercy
Dec 2015- Nov 2016
Preparing for the
Journey**

CTS £9.50 for 50

The Catholic Truth Society (CTS) have a range of booklets on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. See: <http://www.ctsbooks.org>

Our Sunday Visitor have produced a Year of Mercy book package which is written on behalf of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelisation and includes a booklet on the 'Saints in Mercy' ; 'The Parables of Mercy' and 'Mercy in the Fathers of the Church'. Visit: www.osv.com.

Redemptorist Publications have several publications on the theme of mercy including daily reflections with Pope Francis for the year. See: www.rpbooks.co.uk.

For a more active planning process and formation in the parish for the Year of Mercy see 'Medicine of Mercy' which can be found at: PastoralPlanning.com.

Other Useful Websites

The Nottingham Diocese have their own Year of Mercy website which can be used for downloadable material/ resources and ideas for parishes and schools. See: www.bemerciful.co.uk

The Vatican's Holy Year of Mercy website is: <http://www.hollyearofmercy.com/>

The Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales has some news releases and items about the Jubilee of Mercy: <http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Featured/Holy-Year-Jubilee-of-Mercy>

Banners For Outside Churches/Schools

If you would like a banner to put outside your church promoting the Year of Mercy there are two designs available for churches or schools in the Nottingham Diocese. They measure 170 cm x 80 cm (with eyelets) and cost £65 per banner. These will be available to buy at the Year of Mercy opening Mass on the 8th December in the Cathedral Hall. If you would like your own design then email Shaun Wright at shaun.wright73@hotmail.co.uk. The designs are on the next page.

Banners For Outside



Banners For Inside



Pauline Books and Media have produced a pull-up inside banner which costs £120. This uses an image of the Prodigal Son parable with the phrase 'Rediscover the merciful face of the Father'. Some of these will be available to buy on the 8th December but they can also be ordered from Pauline Books & Media at customerservice@pauline-uk.org or telephone 0207 937 9591.



Using the image of the Prodigal Son the prayer cards will be available for collection on the 8th of December from Cathedral Hall.

Diocese of Nottingham Resources

The information from this booklet can be downloaded in PDF/Word Format from the website or alternatively it can be sent by email from formation@nrcdt.org.uk or as a hard copy through the post.

**IF YOUR PARISH WOULD LIKE ANY EVENT PUBLICISING
ON THE
'BE MERCIFUL'
WEBSITE, SEND DETAILS TO: formation@nrcdt.org.uk
IT WILL ALSO BE PUBLICISED ON FACEBOOK AND
TWITTER**

Be Merciful

Ideas for parishes on how to prepare

Introduction

The next few pages are aimed to help you plan for the Jubilee Year of Mercy in the parish. When Pope Francis announced this Jubilee he said: “Let us not forget that God forgives and God forgives always, let us never tire of asking for forgiveness.” This year is not only about receiving God’s mercy but also about sharing God’s mercy. He asks us to be a **Church of Mercy**. Mercy is not just a theological concept but ‘love put into action’.

1. Form a parish Year of Mercy planning group that could be responsible for:
 - a. Deciding what to do in this year
 - b. Looking at ways of collaborating with other parishes/the Diocese or events ecumenically eg. helping the homeless in a particular area
 - c. Advertising events/activities to parishioners/local press/radio etc.
 - d. Distributing any prayer cards/booklets/banners
 - e. Ensuring that there is a ‘legacy’ to this Year of Mercy, maybe a project that can carry on after the Year of Mercy.
2. The parish team ideally needs to include: parish priest, someone from the parish council and other members of the community, try to ensure a mix of old/young/parents/youth etc.
3. You may wish to do some formation with the group. If so, then see the two formation sessions on pages (9-12).
4. Look at the bemerciful website (www.bemerciful.co.uk) to see what other parishes are doing and be inspired.
5. Some ideas for parishes:
 - a. Plan a pilgrimage to one of the Holy Doors identified in the Diocese or to Rome. See page 13-15 for details.
 - b. Identify a door in your church that can be used as ‘A Door of Mercy’ throughout the year. E.g. A confessional or other door.
 - c. Have a display including stand-up banner/posters of what the year is about and maybe list the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

- d. Think about how you can promote the Year of Mercy in the local parish. Put up an outside banner. Organise an event that welcomes people that don't normally go to church.
 - e. Order booklets for the parish about the Year of Mercy. CTS produce a good one called 'Year of Mercy – preparing for the Journey'. See pages 4/5.
 - f. Have one or two parish meetings looking at the bull/spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
 - g. Encourage the parish to take part in the '24 Hours for the Lord' on 5th/6th March 2016 or plan a reconciliation service for Lent.
 - h. Distribute the diocesan prayer cards for the Year of Mercy and say this prayer at Mass.
 - i. Plan a Lent course for the parish. Possible themes: the Parables of Mercy or the Works of Mercy (resources will be available from the Diocese after Christmas).
6. Identify one or more of the corporal works of mercy to act as a focus for your parish during the Jubilee of Mercy. Here are some ideas ... you will find more on the justice and peace website and on the bemerciful website. [www.nottinghamjp.org and www.bemerciful.co.uk]



a. Feed the hungry:

Collect for your local foodbank, or volunteer to help; raise funds for a charity that offers food for overseas – 'Mary's Meals', for example; make sure that you offer Fair Trade tea and coffee after Mass and at parish events.



b. Give drink to the thirsty:

Raise funds for charities such as 'Water Aid' that provide clean water and sanitation; ask: where can homeless people and street sleepers in our parish get a drink of water, or use a toilet? Could we do something to help?



c. Clothe the naked:

Donate decent clothes that you don't need to 'Sharewear' (sharewearclothingscheme.org) or to a charity shop; support campaigns like the 'International Clean Clothes Campaign' that helps workers in the garment industry fight for better pay and working conditions – and let retailers know that you are concerned.

d. Visit the sick:



Is there a hospital or hospice in your parish? Do they need volunteers? Time can be just as valuable as money! Be aware of invisible forms of illness and disability, of the needs of people with depression, or families with a child with a disability, help them to be welcomed, included and supported by the parish.

e. Shelter the homeless:



Find out about homelessness in your parish. Day centres, night shelters, winter shelters, all need volunteers. Look for opportunities to work with others! Refugees and asylum seekers also need help with finding shelter. Could you support 'Host' or 'Night Stop' in your nearest city?



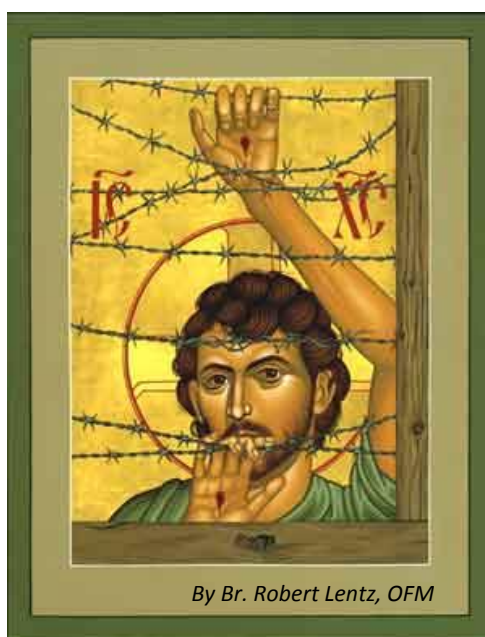
f. Visit the imprisoned:

If there is a prison in your area, contact the Chaplaincy to see what help is needed; learn more about people trafficking and other forms of modern slavery. Prisoners' families also need support, and so do men and women leaving prison. Remember Prisoners' Sunday.



g. Bury the dead

Campaign against assisted dying and press politicians to fund good palliative care for all who need it. Be aware of people in the parish who may be dying alone, and see what can be done to support them. How does your parish support the bereaved?



Be Merciful

Two formation sessions for parish groups

These sessions are aimed at assisting parish groups to plan for the Year of Mercy. The first meeting looks at the background to the Jubilee of Mercy. The second is more practical, reflecting on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and aims to encourage a parish group to discern what can be done to show mercy in the parish. Each session will last about one hour.

Session One – Reflecting on Mercy

1. After the welcome/opening prayer read the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37:

'And now a lawyer stood up and, to test him, asked, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?' He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' Jesus said to him, 'You have answered right, do this and life is yours.' But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' In answer Jesus said, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, "Look after him, and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have." Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?' He replied, 'The one who showed pity towards him.' Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

Then ask the group – what does this tell us about mercy? The points to bring out are: mercy is for everyone; mercy is costly; there is always a risk in offering mercy, you don't have to have a special role to show mercy to others; etc.

2. Get the group to share their experience of a time when they received mercy.
3. Give some background to the Year of Mercy explaining that Pope Francis announced this year in April, it starts on 8th December and runs until Christ the King in November 2016 and

will be celebrated across the world. It was announced by the Vatican in a Papal Bull called – Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy). It is composed of 25 numbered sections where the Pope reflects on different features of mercy but with a main focus on Christ being the face of mercy. The Bull begins by saying that ‘Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy’.

The themes that the Pope has emphasized during the year are: an emphasis on the Sacrament of Penance; on making a pilgrimage; to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. He writes: ‘Mercy is not an abstract word but rather a face to recognise, contemplate and serve. This is the opportune moment to change our lives. This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched. It is the time to listen to the cry of innocent people who are deprived of their property, their dignity, their feelings and even their lives.’

Have some quotes from the Bull and examine them together, suggested paragraphs are: 1, 2, 3, 15, 16, 17. (See be merciful website for download).

Then ask the question to the group: what does this tell us about the purpose of the Year of Mercy?

4. Mercy in our daily lives

Ask the group to look at the list below. Ask the question: How well do you offer mercy to these people? Is there any action you need to take?

- a) My parents who are growing older
- b) My ex-spouse who still has a role in the life of our children
- c) Neighbours whom I judge to be morally off base
- d) My child who hasn’t spoken to me in a long time
- e) People I just plain disagree with, especially about important things in life
- f) People I consider just plain stupid and who always need help to get out of trouble
- g) People whom I judge to be lazy and on benefits
- h) My husband or wife when he or she is tired, worried, or crabby
- i) My kids when they’re running wild through the house and I’m at the end of my nerves
- j) Neighbours who aren’t very polite in terms of where they park, how much noise they make, or other matters
- k) Those who criticize me or talk badly about me to others
- l) Siblings of mine with whom I’ve had a disagreement over the years
- m) People from other religious groups who may not hold the same beliefs as myself
- n) Others

5. Have a time of quiet for people to reflect on the area in their own lives where they need to show mercy.

6. Finish with the Year of Mercy Prayer.

Session Two – Getting Practical

1. After the opening prayer look at the parable of the sheep and the goats.

Mt 25:31-46

'When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink, I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or lacking clothes, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the upright to eternal life.'

Ask the question: what does this tell us about mercy?

What does it tell us about the responsibility of the parish?

Notes: - this is about taking action and this is part of the ministry of the Body of Christ.

Which leads on to the question:

What can we do in the parish?

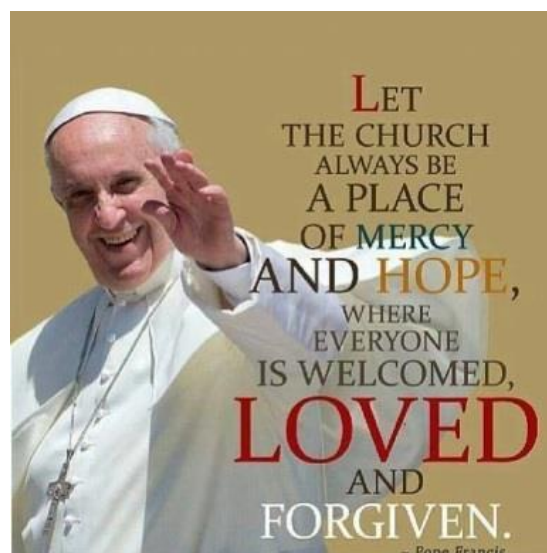
2. Go through the list of corporal and spiritual works and explore what they mean.

The corporal works are:

- to feed the hungry;
- give drink to the thirsty;
- clothe the naked;
- welcome the stranger;
- visit the sick;
- visit the imprisoned;
- bury the dead.

The spiritual works of mercy are:

- instruct the ignorant ;
- counsel the doubtful ;
- admonish sinners ;
- bear wrongs patiently;
- forgive offences;
- comfort the afflicted;
- pray for the living and the dead.



What is the group's response to these? (Refer to Catechism of Catholic Church, CCC 2447)

Reflect on ways the parish might give expression to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy during the year.

Go through ideas that emerge from the group or look at suggestions to address the corporal works of mercy found on pages 7 and 8 and pick one that could work in your parish.

Put a plan together involving other members of the community.

Finish with the Year of Mercy prayer.



HOLY DOORS

One of the features of the Jubilee of Mercy is the opening of a Holy Door. It is opened to evoke the concept of forgiveness and according to 'Mondo Vaticano', a mini-encyclopedia published by the Vatican, the designation of a Holy Door may trace back to the ancient Christian practice of public penitence, when sinners were given public penances to perform before receiving absolution. The penitents were not allowed to enter a church before completing the penance, but they were solemnly welcomed back in when their penance was fulfilled. The ritual for opening the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica goes back to 1499 when Pope Alexander VI opened the door on Christmas Eve to inaugurate the Holy Year 1500.



What does it mean to go through a Holy Door? Christ identified Himself as 'the door'. He said, 'I am the door' (Jn 10:7). Therefore to pass through a Holy Door is to pass from this world into the presence of God, just as in the old Temple of Jerusalem, the High Priest on the Feast of Yom Kippur passed through the door of the Holy of Holies to enter into the presence of God to offer the sacrifice of atonement. The Holy Year is a time when God pours forth abundant graces to quench the thirst of our souls. It is a time when the people seek to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis encourages us to make a pilgrimage to a Holy Door in this Jubilee year:

"The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a pilgrim travelling along the road, making their way to the desired destination. Similarly, to reach the Holy Door in Rome or in any other place in the world, everyone, each according to his or her ability, will have to make a pilgrimage. This will be a sign that mercy is also a goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice. May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God's mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us." (MV14).

In response to this the Diocese of Nottingham has four Holy doors.



The Diocese of Nottingham has **FOUR HOLY DOORS:**

✠ ST BARNABAS CATHEDRAL, NOTTINGHAM

Derby Road, Nottingham. NG1 5AE.
This will have a particular focus on Mary
Potter. Tours and visits will be held every week
– see next page for details



✠ HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH, LEICESTER



45 Wellington St, Leicester. LE1 6HW.

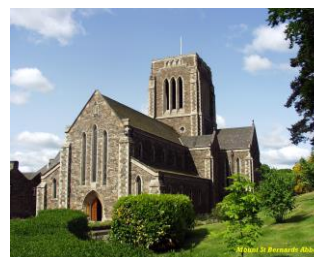
Telephone: 0116 2553856 Email:
leicester@english.op.org

Visit their website for more information:
www.holycrossleicester.org

✠ MOUNT ST BERNARD ABBEY, LEICESTERSHIRE

Oaks Road, Coalville, Leicestershire. LE67 5UL.
Telephone: 01530 832298 or 832022 Email:
monks@mountsaintbernard.org

Visit their website for more information:
www.mountsaintbernard.org



✠ THE BRIARS CATHOLIC YOUTH RETREAT CENTRE, CRICH, DERBYSHIRE

Crich Common, Crich, Matlock, Derbyshire. DE4 5BW Telephone: 01773 852 044.

This Holy Door of Mercy will be opened at our Advent Retreat's Vigil Mass on Saturday 12th



December at 7.30 pm. It will be available for all those who travel on pilgrimage to The Briars for Retreats. It is also open to anyone who wishes to join us in celebrating our open Saturday evening Mass at 7.30 pm where the Sacrament of Reconciliation is available upon request afterwards. For this term's schedule of weekend Masses visit: **www.ndcys.com**

Pilgrimage to the Holy Door at St Barnabas Cathedral and the Venerable Mary Potter Heritage Centre

The Clergy at St Barnabas Cathedral and the Sisters at the Mary Potter Heritage Centre invite school/parish groups to come to the Holy Door at St Barnabas Cathedral and to learn more about the Venerable Mary Potter during this Jubilee Year of Mercy.



The tours are aimed at groups of a maximum of 30-40 people. The tour includes;

A guided tour of our beautiful Pugin Cathedral which includes a visit to the crypt, the resting place of previous Bishops of Nottingham. During the Year of Mercy there will also be an exhibition on the life of Bishop Willson, including artefacts from Oscott College Museum.

A guided tour of the Mary Potter Heritage Centre which will give all visitors a better understanding of the life of Mary Potter and the spirituality and mission of the Little Company of Mary.

You will also have the chance to pray at the tomb of the Venerable Mary Potter in St Barnabas Cathedral.

Time of Tours 10am – 12noon or 2pm to 4pm (Mass Celebrated at 1pm)

NB. If Schools wish to bring a whole year group please contact Fr Neil Peoples and we will see if we can arrange a full day's activities, including a workshop on Mass.

Available dates: **(Maximum of two tours a day)**

January	–	7 th ,	14 th ,	21 st ,	28 th
February	–	4 th ,	11 th ,	18 th ,	25 th
March	–	10 th ,	17 th ,	31 st	
April	–	7 th ,	14 th ,	21 st ,	28 th
May	–	12 th ,	19 th ,	26 th	
June	–	2 nd ,	9 th ,	16 th ,	23 rd , 30 th
July	–	7 th ,	14 th ,	21 st	
August	–	4 th ,	11 th ,	18 th ,	25 th
September	–	1 st ,	8 th ,	15 th ,	22 nd , 29 th
October	–	6 th ,	13 th ,	20 th ,	27 th
November	–	3 rd ,	10 th		

To book a tour please email:
yearofmercytour@hotmail.com
 or call Fr Neil Peoples
 on 0115 9539839

Saturday tours are also available during the Year of Mercy by appointment only (Some Saturdays will not be available due to Weddings etc)

The next page gives more background to the Heritage Centre and the Venerable Mary Potter.

MARY POTTER

WELCOME

COME AND EXPERIENCE

.....a tour at the Heritage Centre which takes you on a journey and immerses you in the history, Charism, Spirituality and Mission of Venerable Mary Potter and the Little Company of Mary; from its humble beginnings in Hyson Green, Nottingham to its foundations throughout the world.



You will be guided on your reflective journey with the aid of technology, e.g. interactives, audio-visuals, touchscreens and a display of artefacts.

The Little Company of Mary Heritage Centre at 32 Regent Street, Nottingham, NG1 5BT was opened and blessed by Rt. Rev Malcolm McMahon OP on 10th February 2010.



Who was Venerable Mary Potter?

Mary Potter, a young English woman, came to Nottingham in 1877 and was called to dedicate her life to God and his people. With the blessing of Bishop Edward Bagshawe, she was invited to look for a small property in Hyson Green where he hoped to establish a mission.

Mary Potter and her companions began their work among the poor, suffering, sick and dying. They would do this in union with Our Blessed Lady, with Calvary as their model, standing with Jesus at the foot of the cross, interceding for God's mercy on the dying of the world. Bishop Bagshawe formally gave the habit of religion to Mary Potter and companions on 2nd July 1877. They became Little Company of Mary Sisters with Mary Potter as their Foundress.



Mary Potter died in Rome on 9th April 1913 and was buried in the cemetery of San Lorenzo. After four years she was brought to rest in the Little Company of Mary, Calvary Hospital, Rome. On 3rd December 1997 her remains were translated to Nottingham to her final resting place at St Barnabas Cathedral.

St. John Paul II declared Mary Potter Venerable on 8th February 1988.

The process for her canonisation continues.....

Visit: www.lcmsisters.org.uk

Opening of the Door of Mercy - Liturgy in the Parish

12/13 December 2015

On the third Sunday of Advent each parish is asked to appoint their own 'door of mercy' in the church. The following provides some background to this, a suggested liturgy to use on this Sunday with some homily notes and bidding prayers. A hardcopy of the liturgy booklet for the opening of the Jubilee of Mercy in parish churches is enclosed or it can be downloaded from the 'be merciful' website (www.bemerciful) and personalised with a picture of your own door of mercy on the front.

BIBLICAL + THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Cardinal Walter Kasper seems to have significantly influenced Pope Francis in his thinking about "mercy". In his Book "Mercy - the essence of the Gospel and the key to Christian Life" (2013 Paulist), Kasper points out that the Hebrews word "RACHAMIM" is used in the Old Testament to mean both "compassion" and "mercy". The word is derived from "RECHIM" which means "womb"; the term can also refer to the human intestines. In the New Testament intestines or guts also express the mercy that comes from the "heart". The most important expression for understanding mercy is "HESED", which means unmerited loving kindness, friendliness, favour and also divine grace and mercy. "HESED" goes beyond mere emotion and grief at human deprivation; it means God's free and gracious turning towards the human person with care. It suggests that God's grace exceeds all human expectations and bursts every human category. God, who is all-powerful and holy, concerns himself with the distressing and self-caused situation of human beings; God sees the wretchedness of poor and miserable people, he hears their lament, he bends down in condescension and descends to persons in their need and, despite every human infidelity, concerns himself again and again, even though they had deserved just punishment. It is in the message of God's "RACHAMIN" and "HESED" - his love - that the mystery of God is revealed. See Exodus 3:7-8; 34:6 "The Lord is a merciful (rachum) and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (hesed) and faithfulness."

Kasper's book continues in picturing Jesus as the fullest expression of God's mercy and sees his Church as being measured by mercy. He has sections on "Mercy as God's Defining Attribute", on "Mercy as the Mirror of the Trinity" and "Mercy as the Expression of God's Universal Salvific Will". He finishes the book with a teasing but challenging question - "Is Mercy central in Canon Law?"

HOW TO PLAN THIS LITURGY (Refer to enclosed liturgy sheet)

Not by yourself! See if you can include parishioners who normally help plan parish liturgies, your music group, your decoration group and perhaps the headteacher and/or religious education coordinator from your parish school if you have one. Maybe you could invite the children, parents and staff from the school to come and join the parish for this special occasion. Maybe they could be involved in other parts of the Mass too.

(For any further queries contact Fr Gerry Murphy at Our Lady's, Bulwell, 0115 9278403 or Julia Palmer.)

This Liturgy is composed of 5 parts:

The Gathering

Either in the church or in the parish hall or other appropriate place.

- (A) A Greeting and exhortation
- (B) Proclamation of a Gospel passage
- (C) Recitation of the opening section of the Bull of Introduction

The Procession

Representing the church's pilgrimage - "mercy is a goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice" (Bull, 14).

Psalms 86 + 25 and the Litany of Saints are all suitable to be recited.

The Book of the Gospels should be prominent, accompanied by a processional cross and acolytes.

Opening the Door of Mercy

The Procession should proceed through the main door of the church which serves as the Door of Mercy. (Jesus is the Door of the Sheepfold, John 10:7). The entrance should be made solemn by;

- decorating the door with leafy branches, (holly, ivy, berries then change to other seasons' flowers) with a logo: "Be merciful like the Father" or "Blessed are the merciful for they shall have mercy shown them" or anything else appropriate.
- emphasizing the actual opening of the Door and walking through it. The Celebrant should PAUSE with the whole procession before entering through the now opened Door while a suitable hymn is sung.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

The Sacrament of Baptism is the Door through which we enter the community of the Church. Once the celebrant has passed through the Door and the congregation has taken

their places, the celebrant processes to the sanctuary where he blesses the Holy Water and then sprinkles the assembly.

The Eucharist

In the Eucharist, the Father rushes with mercy to meet everyone who seeks God “with a sincere heart”, continually offering his covenant to humankind where we pray “with the whole of creation, freed from the corruption of sin and death that we may glorify the Father forever” (Eucharistic Prayer IV).

HOMILY NOTES FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

John has proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. This echoes the suggestion of the Jubilee’s logo “be merciful like the father.”

Because the tax collectors, the soldiers and the crowds of people had experienced a glimpse of God’s mercy in the Baptist’s preaching, witness and baptism so now they feel the need to change their lives and show that mercy especially in the way they do their work and live their lives. John the Baptist then points towards the experience of the fullness of God’s mercy they will receive in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He will grant mercy through the gift of the fiery Holy Spirit. You might find the following introduction from the Bull of Mercy (1-3) helpful in getting an overview of the Year.

“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 Father, “rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4), after having revealed his name to Moses as “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex 34:6), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature. In the “fullness of time” (Gal 4:4), when everything had been arranged according to 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 reveals the mercy of God.

We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective.”

Year of Mercy Bidding Prayers

Priest:

The Lord is full of love and mercy, he is well aware of our sufferings and the sufferings of the world, but let us make known our needs to him and ask for his mercy.

Reader:

For the guidance upon the Church, as she seeks to guide people to a deeper awareness of God's mercy and love.

Lord, in your mercy. **R/. Hear our prayer**

For our world, and particularly for an end to war and oppression: that nations may live in peace and harmony with their neighbours.

Lord, in your mercy. **R/. Hear our prayer**

For those in our world who are homeless, without food or water, for the orphaned, the refugees, for those in prison and those in modern day slavery.

Lord in your mercy. **R/. Hear our prayer**

For our parish community, that we may find ways of showing the mercy of God to those around us. Bless all of our activities in this Year of Mercy.

Lord in your mercy. **R/. Hear our prayer**

For those who are sick, for those experiencing depression or stress and for the bereaved, we pray for your grace and mercy to fill their hearts.

Lord, in your mercy. **R/. Hear our prayer**

For the faithful departed: (especially N.), that they will be shown mercy, freed from their sins and welcomed into the company of the saints.

Lord, in your mercy. **R/. Hear our prayer**

Let us ask Mary, Our Mother, Mother of Mercy, to support us with her prayers as we say:
Hail Mary.

Now we pray for our own intentions, in the silence of our hearts.

Priest: Heavenly Father, listen to the prayer of your people, and grant us the mercy we need. Stay close to us as we journey together. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

All: Amen.

Christmas through the Eyes of Mercy

The following are some reflections on the theme of mercy and the links with Christmas, the Holy Family, and the Epiphany. The idea is that they could be used in homilies.

Mary and Mercy

Mary's great hymn of praise, the Magnificat, rejoices in the mercy of God: 'His mercy is from age to age on those who fear him....He protects Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, the mercy promised to our fathers, to Abraham and to his children for ever' (Luke 1: 46-55). This great hymn of praise is a reminder to us of our call to be heralds of a joyful message of God's undying care and protection for his people. Our Year of Mercy is under the particular patronage of Mary. We will see her mercy in the tender love of mother and child at Christmas. In Holy Week we will see her courageous mercy at the foot of the cross. At Pentecost Mary is present as the Church begins her joyful proclamation of God's merciful love to all people. Mercy will ask us to imitate Mary's tender, courageous and joyful embodiment of faith, hope and love.



Christmas and Mercy

The story of the birth of Christ at Bethlehem places him at the heart of a society that seems to have lost sight of mercy. From the proud and powerful leaders of the time ordering people back to their home towns, to the local townspeople who have little regard for an expectant mother and only afford her the shelter of a stable. How easy it is that societies across the ages have lost sight of mercy and have been blinded by pride, greed and fear. Christmas asks us to look afresh at our own society, our own lives and journey with the shepherds to see with fresh eyes God's mercy made flesh in the vulnerable child, Jesus. The stable at Bethlehem invites us to spend time with the new-born Christ child and like the shepherds be transformed by what we see there, to be renewed in mercy.

Holy Family and Mercy



Sadly we know statistically that Christmas can be one of the most stressful times for families. The home that should be a model of mercy so easily becomes a place of resentment, mistrust and disappointment. Mercy calls us to live out in our homes that unmerited act of loving kindness, *Hesed*, that characterizes the God of the Old Testament. How difficult it is for us to live for what we give, not for what we receive. How hard it is to give and expect nothing in return, to try to understand rather than judge! And yet our homes are the places where we try to make this the case, and when we strive for this our families can be transformed. It's a good time to challenge ourselves to think more mercifully, speak more mercifully, behave more mercifully especially to those closest to us whom we so easily take for granted.

Epiphany and Mercy

How long the Magi had scoured the skies seeking out the star that would guide them we simply do not know. We can, though, presume that their quest required patience and perseverance and their search for Truth went on long after their encounter with the newly-born Christ child. To understand the God of mercy is to set out on that life-long journey of the Magi. Pope Francis has asked that pilgrimage be a great part of our Year of Mercy and the feast of the Epiphany reminds us of these pilgrims from the East who sought after the new born King. Mercy requires us to be like them: humble in our seeking the Truth, patient with ourselves and our fellow pilgrims on the long journey of life and persevering in all that leads us to Christ. Along that road the Corporal and Spiritual works of mercy are guiding lights that lead us sure-footedly to Christ.



Diary Dates

8th December 2015

Opening the Holy Door of Mercy: St Barnabas Cathedral, Nottingham
11.30 am

12th/13th December 2015

Opening of the Local Church Year of Mercy Door

January 2016

Preparing for the Year of Mercy in Lent

Resource Booklet in be sent to parishes in January to include:

- Lent Bible Study: Parables of Mercy
- Lent Formation Session: Works of Mercy
- Holy Hour Service by Bishop Patrick McKinney
- Reconciliation Service

10th February 2016

Ash Wednesday

4th/5th March 2016

‘24 hours for the Lord’: parish churches

Sundays when the bidding prayers for the Jubilee of Mercy might be particular appropriate:

Peace Sunday: 17th January 2016
Homeless Sunday: 24th January 2016
Holocaust Memorial Day: 27th January 2016
Poverty Sunday: 7th February 2016
CAFOD Lent and Harvest Fast Days: 19th February 2016/7th October 2016
World Water Day: 23rd March 2016
Feast of St Joseph the Worker: 1st May 2016
Refugee Week: 20th - 26th June 2016
Creation Day/ Feast of St Francis: 4th October 2016
Prisoners Sunday/Prisons Week: 9th October 2016

Visit the ‘Be Merciful’ website for other dates of events happening in parishes.

YEAR OF MERCY PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
Show us your face and we will be saved.

You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
let the Church be your visible face of forgiveness and mercy in the world.
You willed that your ministers would feel compassion for those in ignorance
and error:

let everyone who approaches them feel loved, and forgiven by God.

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,
through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy;
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.
Amen.



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