Jubilee of Mercy
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Editorial Foreword

A Slow Beginning

When Pope Francis issued the Bull of Indiction proclaiming the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, an announcement was made in the parish telling the congregation of the same. The pastor provided us with an evening of reflection on the theme of mercy. Early in the Jubilee Year, my parish was invited to our local Seminary of the Immaculate Conception to celebrate a liturgy and pass through the Holy Doors there. Even though I participated in all of the above, I was not connected to the jubilee celebration. Somehow I felt I wasn’t ready. I wanted to be, but I wasn’t.

When and how did the turnabout happen? My community (Locust Valley CLC) began a study and reflection of Misericordiae Vultus, the Bull of Indiction. Each of us relished the words and felt the urge to recognize how they applied in our lives and within the community around us. Each session helped us appreciate more God’s love and mercy for us and our genuine response to that love. Hardly a day went by without the message of the liturgy calling out to us to be faithful to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

A second source of inspiration and prompting came from Pope Francis himself by way of ZENIT, a news service that published the Holy Father’s daily homilies and talks. I relished Francis’ words that were so inclusive of people in all walks and stations in life who were in such need of our love, compassion and care. Pope Francis called out to us to tend those who were sick, who were imprisoned, who were forgotten, especially the elderly and the lonely. He reminded us of those in war torn countries, of those fleeing their homes, of those rejected because of race, religious preferences or even sexual orientation. The face of mercy, Jesus himself, reaches the poor, the dirty, the disfigured - all outcasts in society. I am called to reflect that face. We are called, even when it is uncomfortable, to transform at least a little bit of the world around us.

Within This Issue

President Ed Plocha in “Holy Doors,” tells the significance of passing through Holy Doors - an action that symbolizes internal renewal of peace and reconciliation. He shares a particular favorite, the experience of his pilgrimage to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré where there was evidence of physical healings and a conviction of inner healings. Ed reminds us that the end of the Jubilee Year continues to call us to be merciful - “with intention and attention.”

Each of us is called to respond to the demands of the Jubilee Year in a different way. In “May We Be the Face of Mercy,” Sister Eileen Schulemburg SC tells of her personal call to minister to women in Rikers Island Jail. Her presence with the incarcerated and their intentions are linked to the elders of her congregation resulting in greater confidence and hope in the power of prayer and “a powerful connection of mercy.”

Patrick Cleary-Burns writes that the Corporal Works of Mercy are ‘fairly straightforward’ and we as CLCers are pretty good at carrying them out. In “The Call of the Spiritual Works of Mercy,” Patrick relates that the Spiritual Works are more difficult to tackle and perhaps less practiced. He cites two books that offer suggestions/reflections in this area. He also writes of the ‘apostolate of the ear’ as helping us to reach out spiritually to those in need.

Alicia Bugallo in “Aspects of Mercy” (Algunos Aspectos De La Misericordia) points out scriptural passages from the Old and New Testaments related to the theme of mercy. She reminds us that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is itself an act of mercy. Alicia ends by suggesting we examine our consciences in light of our merciful actions.

Mary Ann Cassidy shares her personal reflection on Luke 18:35-43, the curing of the blind man. In her article, “The Year of Mercy” she includes an Examen based on her meditation. Perhaps it will be useful to you, as well.

In “God’s Merciful Love for Me: My Week One Experience,” Cathy Dante describes her difficulty in getting to pray and her reluctance to get into the First Week of the Exercises, namely sin. She tells of her desire to avoid this part of the retreat. Her persistence in prayer and the guidance of her spiritual director led her through the rough spots to a consolation and freedom fed by God’s merciful love.

How are we to be perfect (merciful) as the Father is perfect in a world that pulls us in a different direction?
Patricia Carter Anderson in “Be Perfect as Your Heavenly Father Is Perfect” points us to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke for some answers. She also refers to meditations from The Spiritual Exercises to guide us in recognizing the Father’s unconditional love and mercy towards us. Pat goes on to challenge us to go beyond the works of mercy and work to change the sinful structures of society.

Marian Love, in “Beyond the Year of Mercy: Keeping It Real,” reminds us that “Mercy is the completion of love…” (Pope Francis) She describes several virtues that help her recognize where mercy is needed and expressed. Marian urges us to keep mercy in our consciousness using the Examen prayer.

Enjoy Rosanna Vales’ poem, “When Mercy Comes to Life.” Her words can be a source of prayerful praise reminding us of the joy and fulfillment that accompanies our acts of mercy.

‘Walking through the Door of Mercy was the conclusion of a spirit-filled journey from Madrid to Compostela…’ writes Terri Mierswa. In her article, she describes not only experiences of the pilgrimage, but also the fact that we need to be merciful to ourselves and we need to recognize God’s mercy to us. In “Walking Through the Door of Mercy” Terri shares reflection questions we can use to respond generously to the call for mercy from those we encounter.

Showing mercy to a refugee family from Aleppo, Syria is the challenge of Gilles Michaud to all CLCers in his article, “A Syrian CLC Family Journey: Seeking a New Home in Canada.” Read about the Charabati Family’s plight and respond to the request for help.

Included in this issue is “A Guided Prayer on the Corporal Works of Mercy” by Cathy Dante. It is adapted from a guided prayer given at Inspirio Retreat House in August of 2016.

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. (Misericordiae Vultus #24)

My mantra during the Jubilee Year of Mercy was, “Be merciful as the Lord is merciful.” It is one that I continue using into the new year, accompanied (I hope) by actions that make it a living prayer.

With love and gratitude to our merciful God,

Dorothy M. Zambito

IN MEMORIAM

Robert Q. (Bob) Kelly of Siloam CLC in Omaha.

Dr. Robert (Bob) Townley of Noah’s Ark CLC in Omaha.

Dr. Paul J. Sullivan of Companions CLC in Detroit on October 27, 2016. He and his wife, Dorothy, have been active in the Rieman Great Lakes Region for over thirty years.

Michael Sullivan, husband of Eileen Burke-Sullivan, on December 18, 2016. Eileen has been involved in CLC-USA for many years, most recently with formation.

Antonio Celestino Velo, father of Luis Velo of San Lorenzo Ruiz CLC, New York on December 31, 2016.

Emily Rauschenbach, daughter of Cheryl Rauschenbach of Peter Faber CLC in St. Louis on September 17, 2016.

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., 29th Superior General of the Society of Jesus, passed away on November 26, 2016. Fr. Kolvenbach was the World CLC Ecclesiastical Assistant (EA) from 1984 to 2008. Throughout his 24 years as our EA, he continuously reminded us of our deep heritage within the Church and the Ignatian tradition. He reminded the Society of Jesus and CLC that working with each other enriches our mission. He believed that our being one world body was a manifestation of our communion with the Church. In this, we are united with him in prayer and in gratitude for the life with which he has gifted us.
**Holy Doors**

“Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life.” *(Misericordiae Vultus [MV] 10)*

On Sunday, November 20, the Solemnity of Christ the King, Pope Francis formally ended the Holy Year of Mercy with a symbolic closing of the Holy Door to St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

In his homily to the tens of thousands gathered in St. Peter’s Square that day he said, “Let us ask for the grace of never closing the doors of reconciliation and pardon, but rather of knowing how to go beyond evil and differences opening every pathway of hope. For we are called to instill hope and provide opportunities to others.” *(video Rome Report http://www.romereports.com/2016/11/22/pope-closes-jubilee-we-are-called-to-instill-hope-and-give-opportunity-to-others)*

Historically, the Holy Door has been “a symbol of internal renewal, which begins with the willing desire to make peace with God, reconcile with your neighbors, restore in yourself everything that has been damaged in the past, and reshape your heart through conversion.” Holy Year pilgrims to Rome would make a ritual passing over the threshold of the Holy Door “to symbolize the passing into the presence of God and into a ‘holy space.’” *(Wikipedia)*

The Holy Door became a “Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instils hope.” *(MV 3)*

A unique thing about this Jubilee Year is that the Holy Doors were not limited to Rome. They were located in over 10,000 locations in 40 countries around the world. The Vatican reported that upwards of a billion people passed through Holy Doors around the world including twenty million in Rome. *(Religion News Service 11/20/16)*

These doors, as the *America* editors noted in a recent issue, are “a reminder that this is a privileged time for reconciliation, for setting things right, for entering a sacred space.” *(America 11/21/16)*

“‘They are symbols of God’s mercy, open to welcome everyone into the compassion of God’s love that Christ proclaimed.’ *(MV 3)*

This issue of *Harvest* is dedicated to a reflection on the Jubilee Year of Mercy that just ended. The editors invited us to send in a picture of a Holy Door that proved especially meaningful to us, to include a brief reflection on how we felt and what, if any, action occurred as a result of the Holy Door experience. I have done this and also included a few quotes from *MV*, the Papal Bull of Indiction (April 11, 2015) that served as a guide and road map to the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy to provide an incentive for all of us to continue with good practices and habits formed during the Holy Year.

My wife, Helen, and I walked through a number of Holy Doors over this past year, but the most memorable of these were the Holy Doors at the Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, about a 20-minute drive from Quebec City. My mother had a special devotion to St. Anne, and we as a family visited when I was a little boy. This past summer was the first time I had returned to the shrine. Together with Helen, we brought new petitions for St. Anne’s consideration and intercession.
The holy portal that we walked through had one door closed, drawing our interest. The open door, invited us into a dark space [see photo]. This door brought us through the vestibule into the magnificent large expansive nave of the basilica. Walking down the aisle awash with warm light that came through the blue stained-glass, we approached the main altar and came to the transept where, to our left, was a lovely larger-than-life-size statue of St. Anne holding the infant Mary. Around the base of the statue were pilgrims praying. Behind the statue there was the transept chapel, where people were taking in the silence before the altar with the relic of St. Anne. While we saw discarded crutches, canes and prostheses – evidence of physical healing and cures – the thought that came to mind was what Helen and I had experienced in Lourdes, France. There are undoubtedly physical cures that occur at such a shrine. However, most of the healing that takes place is internal. For the most part it is emotional and spiritual. These healings, no doubt, are the most numerous of the miracles that people describe.

What Helen and I felt at the shrine was the holiness of the space and the noumenal quality of being out of the realm of chronological time, a great sense of being totally in the moment. We felt the sense of communion, the bond that was there. We couldn’t help but feel that there were many “pilgrims.” That was the miracle which we will carry with us. We also had the sense of wellbeing expressed by the apostles who witnessed Jesus’ transfiguration: “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” (Mt 17: 4)

This was the contemplative side of the visit. As always, day-to-day reality awaits and cannot be avoided. (I like to say that all spirituality needs to be firmly rooted in reality.) There is the active life that needs to be revisited. What was awakened in us was the feeling that we are all called to be healers – recognizing with Henri Nouwen that we are, all of us “wounded” healers. Certainly in our current post-election environment we see that healing needs to take place.

Sometimes we fear opening doors because we don’t know what’s on the other side. At other times the door may be open but it leads into darkness. We are confronted with such doors – real and metaphorical – on a regular basis. Our personal spiritual journey requires us to open and pass through many doors.

Pope Francis brings attention again to the foundational theme of mercy by inviting each of us to “become an ever more effective sign of the Father’s actions in how we live our lives.” (MV 3) In fact, the Pope goes on to say that, “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life.” (MV 10)

While the Year of Mercy has ended, certainly the need for practicing mercy has not. Our challenge now that the Year of Mercy is over is to continue to live our lives with intention and attention to our call to practice mercy in new circumstances and situations. As the Pope says, “It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee [and, beyond] Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull.” (MV 15)

“…Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.” (MV 15) These works provide a framework for us to use in specific situations that unfold in our lives.

Let me paraphrase questions that the Harvest editors posed to potential writers for this issue. I ask you to reflect on them. How will your life continue to be impacted by this Jubilee Year? Will your thoughts, words and actions be more visible to those persons on the fringes - the poor, the homeless, the lonely, the imprisoned, the sick, the accused, the unforgiving, etc.? How, in your day-to-day life will you strive to be “the face of the Father’s mercy?”

There are many doors before us and we must never be afraid to open them. As the America editorial says, “Other doors can open us to mercy – those that close off refugee camps or prisons, those we might open to visit a nursing home or a hospital. And the sacred space we enter does not have to be physical. It includes relationship with those we love. It includes encounters with those we may have closed off. It includes looking into the eyes of those we usually do not see.” (America, 11/21/16)

Let us take the Pope’s closing paragraph in the bull as an invitation to continue our course. May we “echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love.” May we “never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort.” May we, together, “become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: ‘Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.’” (Ps 25:6) (MV 25)

“God never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us.” (MV 25) Our challenge is to share this love by continuing to extend mercy, offer compassion and comfort to all, as we together build the Kingdom of God.
“God secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. Our God sets prisoners free, opens the eyes of the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down. The Holy One watches over sojourners. God heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds, lifts up the downtrodden.” (Ps 146)

Beginning on December 8, 2015 Pope Francis called the Church to proclaim a Jubilee Year of Mercy. “This extraordinary Holy Year is itself a gift of grace,” Francis said during the homily at Mass that day. “To enter into this time means to rediscover the deepness of the Mercy of God who welcomes all and goes out to meet everyone personally.” (NCR Dec. 18, 2015) And so this year has been an extraordinary year of grace! We have been called to respond more deeply to the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. Pope Francis called us to a deeper interfaith dialogue that through a shared understanding of mercy we might better understand each other and eliminate closed-mindedness, disrespect, violence and discrimination. How have our hearts and lives been changed?

This call to mercy has personally touched my heart and invited me through the life of a woman with whom I journey and who has been incarcerated for several years. She writes, “I have never felt so alone in my life. It is like nobody cares about me and it hurts. My family is not able to respond and I am all alone. Am I that bad a person that nobody is there for me? Does God leave me to do this on my own? The pain I feel inside can only be described as being spiritually dead and forgotten.” I have always seen the face of God in this woman. She has always been faith-filled and caring about others, never being a problem in the jail, hopeful about the future. Her sentence has been without mercy and she is experiencing her life as never before. Being transferred away makes it even more difficult. For me this is a personal on-going call to mercy and an invitation to respond in new ways in the life of this woman. I carry her in my heart!

At Rikers Island Jail when the women share their concerns – for the determination of their cases, for their court hearings, for their children, for God's forgiveness, for each other in the jail community, I have them write their intentions to the elders of my congregation, the Sisters of Charity of Halifax at Mount Saint Vincent, Wellesley, Massachusetts. We have been doing this for years now. The women's confidence in the prayers and concern of the sisters is strong, and the response and care of the sisters are evident to me. This is a powerful connection of mercy!

As this Year of Mercy comes to an end, how are we transformed in our hearts and spirits to carry this grace as it unfolds in the days ahead? The call has been deepened as it continues in new ways. Filled with God’s deep desire in each of us, in the name of Jesus, we are missioned to go forth to welcome the stranger, the poor, the prisoner, the immigrant, the sick, the fearful, the children, the elderly. May our hearts of mercy embrace our world, our earth, each other.

“From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it. Every time someone is in need, he or she can approach it, because the mercy of God never ends.” (Pope Francis)

May we be the face of mercy!
The Call of the Spiritual Works of Mercy

By Patrick Cleary-Burns

When Pope Francis announced a Holy Year of Mercy it seemed pretty simple and straightforward. I agreed to co-lead a three-weekend series of retreats on mercy with Sr. Joetta Huelsmann, PHJC at the John XXIII Retreat Center in Hartford City, Indiana. The first two weekends focused on the scriptural roots of mercy and heroes of mercy. Then came the third retreat in early November. It was billed as a chance to pray more deeply into the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Who knew how challenging they would be!

The Corporal Works are fairly straightforward. Those of us in CLC are pretty good at feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked and visiting the imprisoned. But the Spirit does not call us to look at the Corporal Works of Mercy and become self-satisfied. Nor does the Spirit desire us to judge harshly our inadequacies. Rather, these Works of Mercy are presented to call us to reflect and listen for God’s call to love. That is why we do DSSE (Discern-Send-Support-Evaluate) for each other in CLC. The Corporal Works of Mercy call us to love God’s people more and more and more – the Magis.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are another matter. I must admit, I had never given them much attention. Well, they grabbed my attention as I prepared for the retreat. Just the titles alone shocked me – admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, bear wrongs patiently. We had all agreed to read two texts in preparation for the weekend: Pope Francis’ The Name of God Is Mercy and Beautiful Mercy, a collection of essays on mercy published by DynamicCatholic.com. Each book contributed a key concept that helped start to unlock some of the lessons the Spiritual Works have to teach us.

Early in The Name of God Is Mercy, Pope Francis describes the ‘Apostolate of the Ear’ as the practice of all of us who are in ministry, “listening with patience, and above all telling people that God loves them.” (page 17) Toward the end of the book, he applies this notion specifically to the Spiritual Works of Mercy,

“After the Corporal Works of Mercy come the Spiritual Works of Mercy: advise those in doubt, teach the ignorant, admonish the sinners, console the afflicted, forgive offenses, be patient with annoying people, pray to God for the living and the dead. Don’t they have to do with what we have already described as ‘apostolate of the ear’? Reach out, know how to listen, and teach through our own experience. By welcoming a marginalized person whose body is wounded and by welcoming the sinner whose soul is wounded, we put our credibility as Christians on the line.” (page 99)

What a wonderful idea, that in this time of rampant judgmentalism, he is inviting us to ‘admonish the sinner’ by listening compassionately!

The second gift came from Beautiful Mercy. In the essay, “Faithful Mercy,” Daniel Burke describes our call to be ‘a bridge of love.’ In describing the challenge we experience when we are called to ‘admonish the sinner,’ he says, “Love builds a bridge over which truth can pass. If you build that bridge of love in the way you give yourself to others and the way you communicate the truth, you will find profound and consistent success in leading hearts to God.” (page 144)

These two images opened my eyes to the beauty and the call of the Spiritual Works of Mercy. How do we admonish the sinner or comfort the sorrowful or bear wrongs patiently? We are invited to listen apostolically, that is we listen with love and with the help and
guidance of the Holy Spirit, as we seek to build a bridge to love. There is no sense of judgment or superiority here; there is no sense that I know more or better than the person I am with. This is a truly counter-cultural way to relate to people. These insights helped me see that the Spiritual Works of Mercy are a lifelong call to love people the way Jesus did, to listen deeply and build a bridge to love. It made the Spiritual Works more accessible, more inviting and more daunting. It is so clear that I can live in the Spiritual Works of Mercy only with the help and guidance of the Spirit and with the support and love of the other members of our Magis CLC.

At the end of the retreat in Indiana, one of the participants said she felt that the Holy Year of Mercy should last another year because there is so much to learn and to absorb. I think that would make Pope Francis’ day! It also feels like a great suggestion for CLC. We seem to specialize in trying to go more deeply into spirituality and its apostolic applications. The Spiritual Works of Mercy will be a challenging topic for us to take on in our communities and to discern how we can grow ever more deeply in the graces of the ‘apostolate of the ear.’ How rich a question is it for our individual and communal examen if we ask the Spirit to show us how we were bridges to love today and what opportunities we missed?

The Spiritual Works of Mercy provide a rich opportunity to grow more and more deeply into humble self-giving to our loving God and to God’s needy, hurting people. They are opportunities that can touch us as individuals and call us forward as CLC to live ever more fully as companions of Jesus.

On October 14, 2016, the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus elected Father Arturo Sosa Abascal of the Venezuelan Province, as Superior General of the order. Christian Life Community - USA sends prayers and best wishes on the occasion of his election.
“Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other.” (John 13:34)

If we meditate deeply on this commandment, we come to understand that all the works of mercy are found within it. Mercy manifests itself in helping the needy. It is practicing selflessness, more than feeling empathy, in both the material and the spiritual senses. It is looking at others with the same love and tenderness that Christ did: it is sharing bread with those who have less; it is visiting the sick and the imprisoned; it is showing kindness when judging; it is words of encouragement and hope when there seems to be no hope left.

In the Old Testament Isaiah already preached: “This rather is the fasting that I wish... sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless... not turning your back on your own.” (Isaiah 58:6-7)

God’s mercy is everlasting. It is made present though his Son Jesus Christ in the healing of the sick, in consolation and in the sharing of the bread. The Last Supper is God the Father’s act of mercy through his Son, so that we are not left alone after the Resurrection. In the sacrament of Reconciliation we renew friendship with God and with our brothers and sisters, an act of mercy.

The Holy Scriptures are rich on the theme of mercy in both the Old and New Testaments:

- In Genesis 18:9-10, we read how God, in his great mercy, promises a son to Abraham and Sarah.
- In 1 Samuel 1:10, Hannah asks for God’s mercy in making her fruitful.
- In Daniel 3:52-90, we find a beautiful song of praise to God’s divine love and mercy.

The psalms reflect in abundance God’s mercy:

- Psalm 63:3-4, praises God’s mercy: “Your kindness is a greater good than life.”
- Psalm 86:15, in supplication, asks for God’s mercy: “But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious… turn toward me, and have pity on me…”
- Psalm 51:3, begs for mercy as forgiveness: “Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatest of your compassion wipe out my offense.”

Some examples of Christ’s mercy from the New Testament are:

- Mark 10:46-52, the healing of the blind man in Jericho
- John 11:40-43, the raising of Lazarus
- Luke 10:30-37, praising the good Samaritan’s mercy

How much mercy was found in this man’s heart! He gave of his time, love, effort and money to help. With his actions he invited the innkeeper to also perform an act of mercy.

“‘You will know them by their deeds.” (Matthew 7:20) Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs.” (Matthew 5:7)

St. Maximilian Kolbe’s actions in 1939 are a more recent example of mercy. He was a Franciscan priest imprisoned in a concentration camp by the Gestapo. He replaced a condemned man, a husband and father, who was about to be killed. St. Maximilian gave his life for him, with peace, spiritual joy and forgiveness as an act of a redeeming and merciful love.

Let us be merciful by conviction, as authentic Christians, in happiness and joy. Let us offer and share with our sisters and brothers the special graces that are ours through Christ, and serve as witnesses to God’s grace. Let us walk together striving for a better world where love, peace and mercy rein, so we can keep on building the Kingdom that we already enjoy.

Let us examine our consciences and ask ourselves how merciful we are as we recite with the psalmist:

> Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
> For his mercy endures forever.
> Let the house of Israel say,
> His mercy endures forever…
> Let those who respect the Lord say,
> His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 118)

Amen.
“Amaos los unos a los otros como yo los he amado” (Juan 13,34)

Si meditamos con profundidad este mandamiento, comprenderemos que todas las obras de misericordia se encierran aquí. La misericordia se manifiesta con asistencia al necesitado. Más que un sentimiento de simpatía es una práctica y entrega tanto en lo material como lo espiritual. Es mirar al otro con el amor y la dulzura como lo hizo Cristo; es compartir el pan con aquellos que menos tienen, es visitar al enfermo, al que guarda prisión, es ser benevolente al juzgar; dar una palabra de aliento y esperanza contra toda esperanza.

La misericordia de Dios es permanente. Se hace presente por medio de su Hijo Jesucristo sanando a los enfermos, consolando, compartiendo el pan con los demás.

Desde el Antiguo Testamento ya Isaías predicaba:
• “El ayuno que yo quiero de ti, dice el Señor, es que compartas tu pan con el hambriento, ayudes al pobre sin techo, que visites al enfermo, que no des la espalda a tu hermano” (Isaías 58,6-7).

• La “Última Cena” es un acto de misericordia de Dios Padre en su Hijo para no dejarnos solos.

• En el sacramento de la confesión nos reconciliamos con Dios y con nuestros hermanos (acto de misericordia).

• Las Sagradas Escrituras son ricas en el tema tanto en el Antiguo como en el Nuevo Testamento:

**En el Nuevo Testamento voy a citar solo algunos:**
• Marcos 10, 46-52 (El ciego de Jericó)
• Juan 11, 40-43 (La resurrección de Lázaro)
• San Lucas 10, 30-37 (El buen samaritano)

¡Cuánta misericordia desbordó el corazón de este hombre! No le importó nada, entregó su tiempo, amor, esfuerzo y dinero para ayudarlo. Con su acción invitó al posadero a hacer una obra de misericordia. “Por sus obras los conoceréis” (Mateo 7,20) Jesús dijo en el “Sermón de la Montaña” (Mateo 5,7): “Felices son los misericordiosos, porque ellos obtendrán misericordia”.

Un ejemplo de nuestro tiempo fue el sacerdote franciscano hoy santo, Maximiliano Kolbe. Apresado por la Gestapo en el año 1939, entregó su vida a cambio de otro hombre esposo y padre de familia que se encontraba en la celda de muerte. La misericordia de este sacerdote de corazón compasivo, paz y gozo espiritual, de perdón al que ofende, se convirtió en amor redentor, amor misericordioso.

Seamos misericordiosos por convicción. Con autenticidad cristiana, alegría y gozo. Brindémosle a nuestros hermanos la gracia especial que hemos recibido: “Ser testigos de Dios”. Caminemos juntos luchando por un mundo mejor, donde reine el amor, la paz y la misericordia para seguir construyendo el Reino que desde ya gozamos.

Analicemos nuestras conciencias preguntándonos cuán misericordiosos somos y recitemos con el salmista (118) “Demos gracias al Señor porque es bueno, porque es eterna su misericordia”.

Que lo diga Israel: es eterna su misericordia.

Que lo digan todos por doquier:
eterna es su misericordia.

Amén.
Dean Brackley writes in *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*, “…to share the hope of the poor we must let their suffering move us.”

Pope Francis’ call for the Year of Mercy was taking God and God’s agenda seriously. Of the many accounts of Jesus’ mercy in Luke’s Gospel, I found myself attracted to 18:35-43: Jesus and friends are on their way to Jericho when he encounters a blind man.

As I placed myself in this Gospel, I was this woman or man ‘sitting at the side of the road’ on the fringes of society, without status and dependent on others. I didn’t like the feeling of dependency and the waiting for someone to come with food, to take me to the road to beg and bring me to my sleeping place at night. It was humbling. I tasted the dust from the road that the blind man breathed in each day. I heard people coming. They ignored me as usual. As I sat begging, I heard many voices. This crowd seemed to have a different energy; they were louder. “What’s happening?” I asked. They replied, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” I’m determined but desperate as I called out to Jesus—“Jesus, Son of David have pity on me!” I didn’t care if I appeared foolish—I wanted to see! I called out a second time. Then, I felt the rough hands of the woman who brought me to Jesus. I heard the words of Jesus, “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, please let me see.” I could hardly believe the words of Jesus to me, “Have sight: your faith has saved you.” I felt the gentle hands of Jesus touching my eyes and my face. I felt his warm embrace. Those in the crowd saw only my blindness. They thought I was a daily nuisance. Jesus heard my plea, saw me, called me and restored my sight. I was overwhelmed when I saw the vibrant blue of the sky, the shades of green in the trees, the loving eyes of Jesus and his smile and the stunned faces of those who couldn’t believe I was healed. Filled with joy, I joined Jesus’ followers that very day.

The meditation on this Gospel led me to a mini *examen* that evening. I invited the Holy Spirit to show me the opportunities for mercy I was given in the past 24 hours and the graces to respond.

- Who is on the fringe in my family or community asking for my help or healing?
- How have I extended mercy to the natural resources at my fingertips: water, energy, food?
- How does my way of life, CLC, point me to mercy?
- Have I withheld forgiveness from someone?
- Has my awareness of your mercy led me to gratitude?
- As I consider my relationships at home, work and in the local community, have they been compassionate and merciful?
- When was I touched by Jesus’ mercy today?
- How can I bring mercy into my activities tomorrow?

While the Year of Mercy ended with the Feast of Christ the King, I continue to beg for the graces to be merciful to myself, and to bring Christ’s mercy to others.
This fall I discerned to do Annotation 19. I have been feeling a restlessness since my pilgrimage to Poland, and I want to pray with it. I am able to do the Exercises as a benefit of my work at Marquette, and I decided to take advantage of it this year.

Our merciful God paired me with a director I have known since I was in school for ministry. She supervised me through a ministry experience and my spiritual direction internship. In our first conversation for the Exercises, I felt deep consolation. God had surely paired me with the right person.

Despite the intimacy and rapport – and despite my experiences directing the Exercises, when Week One came, I did not want to pray. Sin? Yes, I know it is important. But all those weeks on just sin? That seems like a lot of prayer on a touchy subject. Yes, the Year of Mercy and my pilgrimage to Poland had taught me much about God’s mercy, about how God’s mercy is present to all of us, regardless of what we had done. I knew I had not committed any major crimes, but I was still hesitant to pray about sin. I brought my resistance to my spiritual director after praying with a passage on call, when I felt deeply Jesus’ call to me to follow him.

“Perhaps God is calling me to skip Week One and go back to it,” I said to my director. “I read about that in a book, how some women skip Week One. Do you think the Spirit might be working with me like that?” My director paused, then looked me in the eye. “No,” she said. “I think you need to do Week One first. Don’t skip it.” Rats. I had to look at sin, in my own life and in the life of the world. I was not looking forward to it.

The first days of praying with sin were difficult. I had to face emotions that I had not realized were there, emotions that were obstacles to my relationship with God. There were disappointments that I thought I had dealt with, dreams that never came true, calls that I thought were from God that did not turn out the way I expected. God and I had a lot to talk about.

As I persisted in prayer, I was surprised to find consolation in reflecting on my own sin. I knew it would come, and I thought I knew how. But our God is the God of surprises, and the consolation came in unexpected ways, helping me to remember God’s love for me even in my unfreedoms and attachments. Somehow, that leaves me feeling freer than I felt before I began these weeks of prayer.

I felt that freedom deeply when I was visiting my parents this Thanksgiving. I borrowed one of their cars and backed it into the garage, bumping into a wall along the way. My father saw me do it. I got out of the car, checked the back bumper, and checked the wall. Everything looked OK, so I went inside.

A few hours later, my father came in the house. “Please don’t ever back the car into the garage again. You broke the wall!” I broke the wall? I felt like I was 16 again, desperately wanting to use the car but feeling terribly guilty for breaking something. I mumbled an apology and turned back to what I was doing. This had not worked out the way I planned. I muttered a prayer under my breath that God make this right. In that moment, I realized I had to make it right.

I returned to my father, looked him in the eye, and apologized again. Then I asked him how I could make it right. He paused, looking surprised. “Well, do you want to see the wall?” he offered. Yes, I did. So we went out together and looked at it. I nudged it a little, then he did the same. Together, we put it back into place. The wall was no longer broken. I asked for mercy, and received it, not only from God, but from my father, too.

As I write this, I am reaching the end of Week One. I am convinced again of God’s love, not only for me, but for all of us, in our patterns, our behaviors, in the wounds that hold us back and lead us to sin. God loves us, and that love changes us. It changes me by strengthening me, even in my weakness, helping me to do what is right even when I do something wrong. I am glad I listened to my spiritual director and followed the course of the retreat. In doing so, I have experienced God’s merciful love for me, offering me a strong foundation from which to respond to God’s call to me, wherever and however it may come.

Cathy Dante, a member of Gesu Companions CLC in Milwaukee, is a spiritual director in private practice and a part-time residence hall minister at Marquette University. She loves Ignatian spirituality and how it can help young adults develop a more reflective way of life. After 11 years away from the Catholic Church, she returned in 2001, quickly discerning a call to ministry. She returned to school, where she met Michael. They married in 2008. During her 30 day retreat, she discerned a call to writing, healing and mothering.
The above quote has often perplexed me. How can we be perfect as God is? Only God can be perfect!

Often this quote has been used to exhort Christians to follow rules, obey the commandments, root out every evil thought and desire, go to Mass on Sunday and participate in rituals. But is that what Jesus was really talking about? If we put this verse in context, it comes at the end of Chapter 5. The previous text (Matthew 5:43-47) speaks of loving your enemy, praying for those who persecute you. It continues with God’s sun shining on the good and bad and the rains falling on the just and the unjust. So being loving and merciful is what Jesus meant by being perfect! In fact the parallel text in Luke 6:36 presents this as, “Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.” The story of the rich young man in Luke 18:18-23 brings out this same point. He has followed the commandments and laws all his life, but to be “perfect” he must be merciful.

Mercy seems to have gone out of fashion in a world in which revenge, exclusion, marginalization, building walls, and carrying a concealed gun are the norm. Some feel justified in these actions because they feel a need to protect themselves from “the other.” I invite you to meditate on Matthew 5 and the parallel text in Luke 6:17-38.

If we apply our current social situation and these Gospel texts to the meditation on the Two Standards of the Spiritual Exercises we can see how forces in our society are pulling us, as individuals and as a people, away from the way of life that Jesus lived and taught — away from mercy.

Richard Rohr has pointed out that, “When you do not know you need mercy and forgiveness yourself, you invariably become stingy in sharing it with others.” Ignatius must have had this same insight in developing the The First Week of the Exercises. This week is often misnamed “Sin Week.” It is really “Mercy Week.” It is only when we face our own failures in love and become aware of our complicity in the evil in the world, and then compare that to God’s unconditional love and mercy that we can open ourselves to that love and share it with others.

But it is difficult for us to believe and trust in this mercy. It is difficult for us to believe that God sees his own divine reflection in us. But until we can allow ourselves to fall into God’s love, we will not be able to show this same love and mercy to others. When we acknowledge the spark of divinity within us, we also begin to see that spark in others and in all creation. Ignatius’ Contemplation on Divine Love is a wonderful way to grow into this realization.

If we understand mercy as God’s overflowing love pouring out and inviting us to the fullness of God’s life even when, and perhaps especially when, we are at our worst, then we can begin to understand that we need to do the same for others and all creation. We need to call forth that same fullness of participation in the divine.

“How blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” (Matthew 5:7) There is a flow to mercy. When we open ourselves to God’s mercy, we become vulnerable. We let go of all the facades that we put up and allow the divine spark within us to shine. We are able to allow God’s mercy to flow through us and touch others. This opens us even more to God’s grace filling us. Isn’t this what we ask for each time we say the Our Father: “Forgive us our...”
trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?” It seems we are asking God to continue and deepen the flow that has begun.

How do we show mercy? Matthew 5 gives us the attitudes for showing mercy and Matthew 25 gives us practical ways to show mercy: “Whatever you do to the least…” Our Christian tradition calls us to the seven Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Pope Francis states in his message on 2016’s World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation that, “…if we look at the works of mercy as a whole, we see that the object of mercy is human life itself and everything it embraces.” So he is challenging us to look beyond works of mercy to social justice, beyond direct service to the marginalized to challenging social structures that cause the marginalization. Pope Francis continues, “…may the works of mercy also include care for our common home.” It is an acknowledgement that God’s mercy extends to all of creation.

When we begin to look at the world through eyes of mercy rather than fear, we see more clearly how the social structures we have in place do more to dehumanize than to help people develop into more complete images of God. In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus speaks of a new way of responding to the evil others do. Instead of retaliation, he urges us to respond in a way that is still respectful of the other, even when they are not respectful of us. That does not mean that there are no consequences to violent behavior. But it does mean that the consequences still acknowledge the divine spark in the other. The move towards restorative justice rather than the retributive justice of our current justice system is one sign of this. Greg Boyle, S.J., in his work with the gangs in Los Angeles is one example. Another is the action of those who refuse to hate even after violent attacks in various cities around the world.

Mercy is sometimes seen as being very passive, but it is really very challenging. It means allowing God to transform us more fully into God’s image. It means becoming vulnerable when we would rather build walls. It means leaving our comfort zone to engage someone who is different from us. It means developing simpler life styles that respect others and the earth. It means exposing ourselves to the pain of another. It means being willing to suffer as Jesus did rather than inflict suffering on others.

Perhaps it would be easier to just follow rules and say prayers in order to be perfect.

“...may the works of mercy also include care for our common home.”
— Pope Francis
We have seen and heard the word Mercy in a myriad of ways this past year; it has become our Catholic buzz word. Now that the books have been written and discussed, pilgrimages made, homilies preached and prayers offered, the doorways of Mercy we once visited stand unadorned and seemingly ordinary. The Year of Mercy promulgated by Pope Francis has come to an end, but what of Mercy itself?

In his Bull of Indiction to the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis encouraged us to understand more fully Mercy. He provided us with tangible examples of God’s mercy in his actions of tenderness and love toward the disabled, to prisoners, the suffering. His preaching opened the scriptures pointing to where Mercy was most needed and where Mercy was shown, and the impact it made. Through his efforts and our active participation in a Year of Mercy, Francis hoped Mercy would become more real and meaningful for us today, and more attainable. He envisioned that through this year of exploration we would become miserere cordiae: hearts of Mercy, authentic ‘doorways’ of God’s Mercy for the world. Will his hope be realized?

“Mercy is the completion of love,” Francis tells us, “to bring to all people and creation the love of God who saves.” For those immersed in Ignatian spirituality, this clearly points to the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love. Love shows itself in action (in encounter with others) - more than words. Love wants to give something of itself to the other. This something of ourselves is the Mercy God has first given to us in his self-gift of Jesus. This completion of love can bring about the flourishing of all things in God.

The expression of Divine Mercy involves an ENCOUNTER with another in which a connection is made, a relationship begins or deepens. In such an encounter something new happens for both the giver and the receiver of Mercy. Both are changed and transformed by the encounter of Mercy; the completion of love grows.

The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy invite us to these types of encounters, but may not always be conveyed with the true spirit of God’s Mercy. They can sometimes seem like an ideal, an obligation, merely ‘something good to do for others.’ However, the quality of God’s Mercy “is not strain’d.” It is something free-flowing, offered in ways that convey to others that they matter, they are valued, and that they have something of value to offer in return.

During this Year of Mercy I have come to realize its many facets. Expressed as qualities or virtues that we can aspire to each day of our lives, they invite us to the ‘completion of love’ – to become miserere cordiae. While not exhaustive, these virtues continue to prompt me to notice more each day where Mercy is needed, where it is expressed, and the difference it makes. I share them here for your own reflection on Mercy.

**Mercy is:**

**Generous** – This generosity sees as God sees and loves as God loves. Everyone is seen as equal before God. The unconditional love of God desires that all flourish. Mercy as generosity goes beyond justice, taking into account the individuals’ situations, desiring to help them flourish despite choices and circumstances.

**Compassionate** - This aspect of Mercy is a deep visceral reaction to the injustice and suffering of others accompanied by a great desire to relieve the suffering, to make the situation better. Compassionate Mercy is tenderness in action, desiring to do no further harm.

**Vulnerable** – Vulnerable Mercy is willingness to accept one’s own brokenness and need of Mercy as well as willingness to accept and embrace the brokenness of the other. This type of Mercy is risky: it invites us to ‘see’ others, to look into their eyes and really recognize their need for Mercy. It can call us to dangerous or compromised situations far beyond our comfort zones.
This Mercy also invites us to consider God as vulnerable, bending down to be present in our brokenness and need.

**Forgiving and Freeing** – In God’s eyes, we are pure possibility. St. Irenaeus wrote, “The Glory of God is the human person fully alive.” To be fully alive as a human being means to have the spiritual freedom to be in an intimate relationship with Jesus – to be open to receive the Mercy that we need first. In this way we are more free to extend Mercy to others, and to encounter Christ in them.

**Healing and Restoring** – In so many of the Gospel stories we see Jesus healing those on the margins, removing barriers that would isolate them from community. Restorative Mercy conveys that everyone belongs, everyone matters.

**Empowering** – When we encounter Mercy, both giver and receiver become more than they were before. Our identity and gifts take on greater clarity, and we realize the need for everyone to contribute his/her gifts for the well-being of all.

**Reconciling and Unifying** - God’s greatest desire is that we be one family united in the Trinity. Only God’s Mercy makes this possible; it is greater than any human mercy, forgiveness or compassion. Becoming one is not only God’s plan – it is God’s promise- and our greatest hope

**Grateful** – Gratitude is the key to becoming miserere cordiae. Being grateful opens us to generosity of heart, to share what we have been given, to complete love.

As we move beyond this official Year of Mercy, will we keep it in our consciousness, really live it? This would require that we regularly take time in quiet and stillness to hear the voice of Mercy within. What I have found helpful is to pray with the Thanksgiving Examen from Louis Savary’s *The New Spiritual Exercises According to the Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin*, (pp49-50). This Examen invites us to focus on what went right instead of what went wrong: to look back over the day to see where and when we were open to God, and how we allowed God to work in and through us as Mercy. Focusing on giving and receiving love changes our thinking for the better; our hearts grow more loving. Over time we become more grateful for the opportunities we have to make a difference in the world, to be miserere cordiae.

I close with an excerpt from *The Merchant of Venice*, by William Shakespeare:

> The quality of mercy is not strain’d.  
> It droppeth as the gentle rain  
> from heaven  
> Upon the place beneath.  
> It is twice blessed:  
> It blesseth him that gives  
> and him that takes…  
> Justice won’t save our souls.  
> We pray for mercy,  
> And this same prayer teaches us  
> to show mercy to others as well.
When mercy comes to life,
Love begins and compassion becomes our basic instinct.

When mercy comes to life,
There will be no war, no poverty, no migration crisis.

When mercy comes to life,
We care for humanity, our environment, and our world.

When mercy comes to life,
We open our hearts to share, to listen,
to accept and welcome diversity.

When mercy comes to life,
Hope blossoms, worries are abated, and faith is ignited.

When mercy comes to life,
Desolation turns into consolation
and Darkness turns into light.

When mercy comes to life,
There will be peace on earth…
Walking Through the Door of Mercy

By Terri Mierswa

It is symbolic, but walking through the Door of Mercy at the Catedral de Santiago de Compostela ritualizes the invitation that Pope Francis has offered to us in this Year of Mercy. For me walking through the Door of Mercy was the conclusion of a spirit-filled journey from Madrid to Compostela during the spring of 2016 that had been filled with many opportunities for mercy. I was accompanied by Cora Custodio from the San Lorenzo CLC and our pilgrim sisters and brothers who were part of a tour organized by Angie Cruz, PhD.

During the journey we all were called to be merciful to ourselves! For some it was the realization that walking the distances that were planned by our tour guide was more difficult than we had anticipated. On the days when we climbed upward we discovered that our sore legs asked us for mercy! No pain, no gain. And then there was the day that several of us took the wrong route and had to find our way back, mercifully reaching the end point with stories of what we had seen. Like the poor goat whose hoof was caught in the fence, we were filled with feelings of mercy but unable to free him.

The Camino was not only about our progress towards Santiago de Compostela and the situations and sites we experienced. The walk was an opportunity to spend time considering the daily reflections from the Spiritual Exercises that Fr. Joe Costantino, S.J., presented to us. In one talk Fr. Joe posed the question relevant to this Year of Mercy. How do we respond to issues and events that come our way? Do we respond to the God of love who shows us mercy?

What exactly does it mean to respond to God’s mercy? For each of us the call to mercy is different and the answer only can be discovered through our examen and ultimate discernment. As we would in the Exercises, we first might want to review our lives. Where has God’s mercy been present to us through the years: When we have been needy? When we have been sick? When we have been hurting? When we have been disappointed? When we have made mistakes? When we have realized our desires?

In gratitude for God’s loving mercy to us during our key moments, we are moved to respond when we see others in pain, in need, in poor health, struggling to make the grade. Can we identify how that response to God’s loving mercy has been evidenced? Are we consciously aware that “what one does for the least of my brothers and sisters, one does for me?” Where do we need to strengthen our merciful self?

Often I find myself forgetting that I have been the beneficiary of God’s mercy. I become impatient with those who do not think like I do. Or, I put my needs before others. This Year of Mercy gives me pause to consider how I can be more merciful.

Like the Camino de Santiago de Compostela pilgrims who walk through the Door of Mercy during this Year of Mercy, we are invited to seek the graces that come from being merciful. Grace will keep us on a merciful path. And perhaps, by our example we will lead others whom we encounter to seek their expression of mercy, as well.

Terri is a geriatric and palliative and end of life care social worker. She has been a member of the Northern New Jersey CLC since the late 1990’s. Currently, she is assisting a small Ignatian faith community in Metuchen, New Jersey to discern its calling and vocation to be CLC.
Syria’s civil war is the worst humanitarian crisis of our time. Half the country’s pre-war population, more than 11 million people, has been killed or forced to flee their homes. Families are struggling to survive inside Syria, to make a new home in neighboring countries. Others are risking their lives on the way to Europe, hoping to find acceptance and opportunity.

In December 2015, I was informed by a CLC friend in Lebanon, Rita El Rami, that a CLC Syrian family were refugees in Lebanon. They had expressed a desire to come to Canada and Rita asked if we could help. I brought this request to the attention of Ann Marie Brennan, CLC World ExCo link for North America. Ann Marie suggested that I first contact the World ExCo member from Lebanon, Najat Sayegh, to ask her if she knew this family and would she know how best to deal with the request. Najat answered by telling me that she knew the family. She sent me their email address so that I could contact them personally. After contacting Aboud Charabati (the father), he sent me the following email explaining why the family had to leave Syria.

“We left Aleppo, Syria more than three years ago, because we lost everything. I lost my job which is a private store of small commerce located in the old part of Aleppo where the area was taken by the rebels and burned down since the 23rd of July. Also my wife had lost her engineering office in Sheikh Maksood. Our house in Jalaa Street is not safe because it is located on the border line. A big bomb fragment entered our house and we were victims of two armed attacks from terrorist Islamists in our street during the day. So we decided we should leave. We hope to have the chance to come to Canada, because there is no more possibility to live in Aleppo for now. It has become very dangerous for our lives and it is a chaos and there are no more rules. We refuse violence and racism. Our values and education are completely different from the current situation. So we are looking forward to re-establishing a new peaceful life in Canada.”

Sincerely in Christ: Lina, Aboud, Christa and Joanna Charabati family

The above information was given to the CLC North American Continental Regional Team as we prepared for our March 2016 teleconference meeting. The team members addressed this issue by discussing what possible way that we, as a community, could support the Charabati family. It was suggested that we begin by sending the family photo and information to as many National CLC members asking this question: “HOW CAN CLC HELP THIS FAMILY?”

Since that time, I would say that we have progressed significantly in obtaining relevant information on sponsoring refugees, thanks to several persons that have been directly involved in the sponsoring of Syrian refugees. Also, several web sites with important information have been passed on, one of which is particularly important because of the Charabati family wanting to come to Montreal PQ. It’s very encouraging to know that many CLC members have immediately responded in tangible ways in assisting the Charabati family.

Several CLC members have made financial pledges. To this date, we have a total of $4,500 pledged that will be deposited in the refugee account. What has been extremely helpful was the establishment of a core group ready to receive and provide...
lodging and furnishings for the family on its arrival in Montreal. Antoine and Remi Taoutel are part of this welcoming group. They are CLC members living in Montreal, Canada. They personally know the Charabati family since they are both formally from Aleppo and both have been CLC members. Antoine was the past president of CLC Syria. He has informed me that there were 180 active CLC members before the onset of the civil war. Many of them are now living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

Antoine and Remi have continued to communicate directly with the Charabati family in Lebanon. They feel that with their professional skills and also their fluency in French and English, once in Montreal, they will find work and soon be able to sustain themselves.

The following is our latest report on the CLC Syrian Family Mission Project. To date we have received the total sum $4,500 from individual CLC members. The remaining sum that we were counting on would come from the Charabati family personal funds ($27,000). Unfortunately, refugee families while in Lebanon are not covered under the state health care system. Therefore the Lebanese government is holding the families’ personal savings in a bank as insurance. If needed, it could be used to cover their health or hospital expenses. Up to now that has not happened. Therefore the $20,000 will be released after a period of months after their arrival in Montreal.

CONCLUSION:

We agreed that with the assistance of the CVX group in Montreal, all logistic needs of the Charabati family will be adequately met on their arrival in Canada.

We have estimated that approximately $35,000 CDN would be the financial amount needed to support the family during their first year of adjustment. The $27,000 held by the Lebanese government, when released, will be used as part of that sum. It is anticipated that this will happen on their arrival in Canada. Therefore we would need a further sum of $3,500 to address the estimated shortfall.

We recognize that many CLC members have generously supported other refugee projects in their area and we are grateful for that. The CLC NA Continental Team has agreed to circulate this report throughout our four CLCs in North America to offer an update on this project and ask for your prayers for the success of this unique CLC mission project.

For those CLC members that feel that they would like to contribute, your generosity will provide us with the extra amount needed to support financially the Charabati CLC family as they arrive in their new home.

For any questions please direct them to: leagil@pei.sympatico.ca

Please make out cheque to: CLC CANADA IN TRUST SYRIAN REFUGEE PROJECT

Mail to: Gilles Michaud 4533 Millvale RD RR2 Breadalbane, PEI, Canada C0A1E0.
Guided prayer on Corporal Works of Mercy

Adapted from guided prayer given at Inspirio Retreat House,
August 25, 2016 by Cathy Dante

Feed the hungry.

Do a body scan. Am I hungry now? When did I last eat?
Do I need to eat something?
For what else do I hunger, beyond the physical? Do I hunger for righteousness? For truth? For peace? For love?
For relationship? For what else do I hunger?
Where has my hunger been satisfied?
Ask Jesus to be with you here.

Give drink to the thirsty.

Do a body scan. Am I thirsty? Do I need to drink something?
For what else do I thirst? For faith? For knowledge? For trust?
Do I thirst for justice? For what else do I thirst?
Where has my thirst been quenched?
Ask Jesus to be with you here.

Shelter the homeless.

What is my home like? Do a scan.
Do I feel at home in my home?
Do I feel at home in my body? In my thoughts and feelings?
In myself? Are there parts of me that are homeless?
That I struggle to shelter?
With whom do I feel at home? Where do I feel at home?
Are there places in my life that need more shelter?
That need a home?
Ask Jesus to be with you here.

Visit the sick.

Do a body scan. How is my health?
How am I taking care of myself?
Do I need medical attention for anything? A cough drop?
Some vitamins?
How is my emotional health? My mental health? Who are the people I can confide in? Whom I trust? Who trusts me?
How is my spiritual health? How is my prayer?
My relationship with God?
Are there parts of me that are sick? That I need to pay more attention to?
Are there parts of my life that are sick? That I need help with?
Where am I healthy?
Ask Jesus to be with you here.

Visit those in prison.

Do a body scan. Is there tension in my body that restricts me?
Are there parts of me that feel imprisoned? Confined?
Restricted? What about my life? Am I confined in any part of my life?
Are there parts of me that feel free?
Where do I feel the most free?
Ask Jesus to be with you here.

Bury the dead.

Is there anything in my life that I need to let go of?
What about my past? Are there memories or experiences that I want to turn over to God?
Are there parts of my life that seem dead?
That are in need of resurrection?
Where do I experience life?
Ask Jesus to be with you here.

Give alms to the poor.

How are my finances? My checkbook?
Do they need attention anywhere?
Are there places in my life where I feel poor?
Like I don’t have enough?
Are there parts of me that I see as not enough? Good enough?
Strong enough? Attractive enough?
What about abundance? Are there places in my life that are abundant? Overflowing? Full?
Ask Jesus to be with you here.
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Calendar

NCC Meeting
St. Louis, Missouri
October 12-15, 2017

Next Issue

Celebrating a Golden Jubilee

- Approval of the General Principles
- Adoption of name - Christian Life Community