

- **SPIRITUAL FORMATION FOR A ZEALOUS HEART**

- **MERCY**

- 1) WHAT IS MERCY?**

There is a word used in the Old Testament to describe God's heart for mankind. *Hesed* can be translated as loving kindness, tender-hearted compassion, affection, and there is difficulty translating it into English because it means so much.

- *Hesed* can be summarized by the word mercy because by mercy, we mean all of those things.
- We tend to understand justice – that a certain behaviour deserves a certain punishment. What is owed must be repaid. But mercy is another thing all-together. It doesn't follow strict logic. It's harder to grasp. We've sinned and deserved punishment.

But instead of punishment, God gave us mercy.

- By definition, mercy is completely undeserved

- **2) JESUS IS THE REVELATION OF GOD'S MERCY**

*According to St. Augustine, mercy means to give your heart to misery. (Etymology of the Latin word miseriscordare)*

- In John 3:16, it says, "So much did the Lord love the world that He gave His only Son."
- The Father's gift of the Son to the world is His expression of His mercy.

- **3) WHY MERCY?**

*Our sins pierced the Heart of Jesus, and from that open wound, caused by our sins, flows 'Hesed' – compassion, affection, tender-hearted concern, loving-kindness, mercy*

- Why does God offer us mercy instead of the punishment we so justly deserve?
  - Only one answer – love. He loves you and me – period.
  - In the work of evangelization, we become instruments of mercy as we reach out, and remind people of the unending mercy of God.

- **4) DIVINE MERCY**

- The late Pope John Paul II never tired of pointing all of humanity to go without fear to the merciful heart of Jesus.
    - It seems fitting that He finally passed from this life to the Lord on the vigil of the Feast of Divine Mercy 2005
        - This is the reflection Pope John Paul II had prepared for the Feast:
          - *"As a gift to humanity, which sometimes seems bewildered and overwhelmed by the power of evil, selfishness and fear, the Risen Lord offers his love that pardons, reconciles and reopens hearts to love. It is a love that converts hearts and gives peace. How much the world needs to understand and accept Divine Mercy! Lord, who reveal the Father's love by your death and Resurrection, we believe in you and confidently repeat to you today: Jesus, I trust in you, have mercy upon us and upon the whole world."* [John Paul II's Encyclical Rich in Mercy \(Dives in Misericordia\) \(link is external\)](#)  
[The Regina Caeli read the day after JPII died \(Divine Mercy Sunday\) \(link is external\)](#)  
**PRAYER:** Ask for the grace to extend mercy in crucifying situations.  
**ACTION:** Become familiar with the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and choose one to do today.

