



Keywords

MERCY JUBILEE GRACE LIBERTY OPPRESSION
FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL
REPENTANT MANIFESTS
COMPASSION CONSECRATE ANOINTING

Introduction

Pope Francis called for an **Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy**, beginning on 8 December 2015 and ending on 20 November 2016, the Feast of Christ the King.

This year of celebration honours both the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the end of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Before we read the special prayer composed by Pope Francis for the Jubilee of Mercy, let us take a moment to watch the following video about the Jubilee of Mercy.



www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYv4BUwytAo

Having watched the video, brainstorm what we mean by the word 'mercy'.
Pope Francis has composed a special prayer to ask that the year might be full of grace.

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.
Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;
made Peter weep after his betrayal,
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.
Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:
'If you knew the gift of God!'
You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, 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 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.



Activity

Read the prayer composed by Pope Francis. Divide the class into eight groups. Each group takes fifteen minutes to complete their task and, at the end, each group gives a short presentation of their findings to the rest of the class.

Group 1: Having read the prayer composed by Pope Francis, focus on the line ‘Merciful like the heavenly Father’. Choose one of the following biblical passages:

Exodus 34:6-9 | Deuteronomy 4:29-31 | Psalm 103:3-14

Read the passage and explain how the Father is merciful.

Group 2: Having read the prayer text composed by Pope Francis, focus on the line ‘whoever sees you, sees him’. Choose one of the following biblical passages:

Matthew 5:1-12 | Ephesians 2:4-10 | Luke 7:11-17

Read the passage and explain how Jesus is merciful.

Group 3: Read the following story of Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:1-10

In your own words, explain the impact of Jesus’ mercy on the life of Zacchaeus.

Group 4: Read the following story of Matthew.

Matthew 6:24-25

In your own words, explain the impact of Jesus’ mercy on the life of Matthew.

Group 5: Read the following story of Mary Magdalene.

Luke 7:36-38, 44-50

In your own words, explain the impact of Jesus’ mercy on the life of Mary Magdalene.

Group 6: Read the following story of Peter’s betrayal of Jesus.

Matthew 26:69-75

In your own words, explain the impact of Jesus’ mercy on the life of Peter.

Group 7: Read the following story of the repentant thief.

Luke 23:39-43

In your own words, explain the impact of Jesus’ mercy on the life of the repentant thief.

Group 8: Read the following story of the Samaritan woman.

Matthew 4:1-26

In your own words, explain the impact of Jesus’ mercy of the life of the Samaritan woman.

After each group has given a short presentation on their findings, all students read the following biblical passage.



Luke 4:16-21

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written: **'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.'** He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening.'

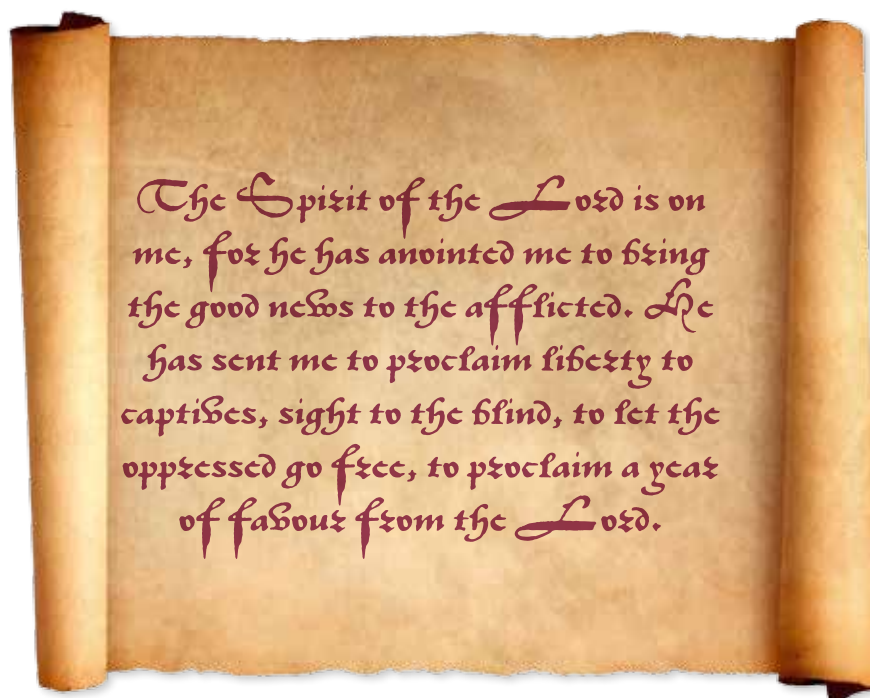
As a group discuss the meaning of this passage.

Then each student returns to their original group and each group explains how we could do the following in our Catholic school communities:

- 1) Bring good news to the poor

- 2) Proclaim liberty to captives/the oppressed

- 3) Restore sight to the blind





Reflective Exercise

As a class group, discuss the meaning of the following line from the prayer composed by Pope Francis:

Let the Church be your visible face in the world

Each student then reflects on what this line means to them and writes down three examples of how, we, as a Catholic school and members of the Church, can be God's face visible in the world.

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) _____



Additional Exercise

Listen to the Hymn for the Jubilee of Mercy. It is written in Latin. The first line is *Misericordes sicut Pater!* Which means 'Merciful like the Father'.





Keywords

PILGRIMAGE DEDICATION SACRIFICE JUDGE CONDEMN MEASURE STANDARD

Introduction

Pilgrimage is a very important part of our Irish history. The Irish have been described as ‘a pilgrim people’. In *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis highlights the importance of pilgrimage to the Christian people. Pilgrimage is about our journey through life, our journeying towards our destination. Mercy could be described as our destination – our pilgrimage leads us to this. But this pilgrimage requires ‘dedication and sacrifice’. Pilgrimage brings about conversion – a crossing over from one way of thinking to another. Here is an example of a very popular Irish pilgrimage.



www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ezj7R-IZISA&feature=youtu.be

In *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis lays out the steps of pilgrimage that Jesus shows in order to attain our goals.

- 1) Judge not and you will not be judged.
- 2) Condemn not and you will not be condemned.
- 3) Forgive and you will be forgiven.
- 4) Give and it will be given to you.
- 5) For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.



**Activity 1**

Give an example of a time when you judged someone else, even though you were guilty of something similar.

Give an example of a time when you condemned someone for doing something, even though you were guilty of something similar.

Give an example of a time when you found it difficult to forgive someone in your life.

Give an example of a time when you gave something to someone else when they did not have it themselves.

Another way of saying 'for the measure you give will be the measure you get back' is 'the standard you use will be the standard used for you'. Explain the meaning of this statement.



Activity 2

Create a pilgrimage within your classroom. Create four stations where the entire class group has to move from one station to the next.

Station 1: Create a dramatisation, using one or two students, to give an example of a time when you didn't judge someone based on what others were saying.

Station 2: Create a dramatisation, using one or two students, to give an example of someone not being condemned based on what others were saying.

Station 3: Create a dramatisation, using one or two students, to give an example of forgiving someone because you understand what it is like to be forgiven.

Station 4: Create a dramatisation, using one or two students, to give an example of giving to someone because you knew what it was like to be in need of something.



Reflective Exercise

In *Misericordiae Vultus*, we are asked not to become cynical but to care for those who are hurting. Give a modern-day example for each of the situations that was highlighted by Pope Francis:

1) An example that shows the misery in the world.

2) An example where the cry of those in need was listened to.

3) Read the following biblical reference

Surely Yahweh's mercies are not over, his deeds are faithful love not exhausted; every morning they are renewed; great is his faithfulness! (Lamentations 3:22-23)

As a class, discuss the meaning of this statement. Then reflect and record the hope that a person could get from reading this passage.



Keywords

PARDON RECONCILIATION BULL CORPORAL
SPIRITUAL ULTIMATE SUPREME COUNSEL
IGNORANT ADMONISH AFFLICTED WRONGS

Introduction



www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6vyoQmvYrM

The highlights from this video are ...

- This jubilee year is the thirtieth jubilee in the history of the Church.
- A jubilee year was considered a year of universal pardon and reconciliation.
- During the jubilee year, slaves and prisoners were freed, debts were cancelled and wrongs were forgiven.
- The Church must care for those who are hurting.



Activity 1

Pope Francis is described as a 'Pope of Mercy'. The image below is just one image in which we see Pope Francis being merciful.



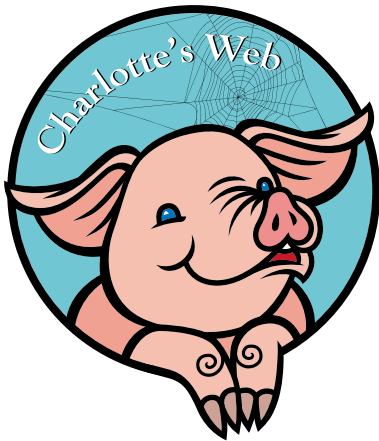
Using PicCollage, or a similar app, present a series of photos that portray why Pope Francis is described as a 'Pope of Mercy'.

In his Bull, *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis says, 'It is my burning desire that, during this jubilee, the Christian people might reflect on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.' It is very important that we read this statement in the light of the second paragraph of this document. One definition of mercy given by Pope Francis is 'the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us'.

Corporal Works of Mercy		Spiritual Works of Mercy	
1.	Feed the hungry	1.	Counsel the doubtful
2.	Give drink to the thirsty	2.	Instruct the ignorant
3.	Clothe the naked	3.	Admonish sinners
4.	Shelter the homeless	4.	Comfort the afflicted
5.	Visit the sick	5.	Forgive offences
6.	Visit the imprisoned	6.	Bear wrongs patiently
7.	Bury the dead	7.	Pray for the living and for the dead



Let us look at an example of a merciful act from the film *Charlotte's Web*.
www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/charlottes-web/saving-the-runt



Discussion points

- What did Charlotte mean when she said that to kill the piglet would be 'unfair and unjust'?
- How did Charlotte show mercy to Wilbur the runt?

**Activity 2**

Charities that address the Corporal Works of Mercy in Ireland today have been identified below. In pairs, discuss and record ways in which we, as a Catholic school, can address the Corporal Works of Mercy.

	Corporal Works of Mercy	Sample Charity	An example of how we can address this
1.	Feed the hungry	Crosscare	
2.	Give drink to the thirsty	Simon Community	
3.	Clothe the naked	St Vincent de Paul	
4.	Shelter the homeless	Focus Ireland	
5.	Visit the sick	St Vincent de Paul	
6.	Visit the imprisoned	Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas	
7.	Bury the dead		

Fact: Until recently, President Obama was the least merciful president of modern times in relation to granting clemency. His total now stands at eighty-nine sentence commutations and sixty-four pardons. (Source: www.nytimes.com/2015/10/01/opinion/president-obama-and-the-power-of-mercy.html)

**Activity 3**

The Spiritual Works of Mercy have been listed below. First, with the aid of a dictionary, rewrite them in your own words. Second, in pairs, discuss and record ways in which we, as a Catholic school, can address the Spiritual Works of Mercy.

	Spiritual Works of Mercy	Rewrite in your own words	An example of how we can address this
1.	Counsel the doubtful		
2.	Instruct the ignorant		
3.	Admonish sinners		
4.	Comfort the afflicted		
5.	Forgive offences		
6.	Bear wrongs patiently		
7.	Pray for the living and for the dead		

**Reflective Activity**

In *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis highlights that we are called to be ‘Instruments of Mercy’.

Personally, what does this mean to you? In what ways can you be an ‘Instrument of Mercy’?

In pairs, discuss and record ways in which we can be ‘Instruments of Mercy’ in our own schools.

Additional Activity

Create a display for your classroom wall. In the centre, use the title ‘Instruments of Mercy’. In the form of a spider diagram, each student in the class writes down one way in which they can become an ‘Instrument of Mercy’.

