The first reading for the First Sunday of Advent we hear The Lord saying, “The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah.”

That promise is Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Pope Francis in “Misericordiae Vultus,” “The Face of Mercy,” tells us in the first sentence that Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. So I would say that if we are made in his image, we are also the face of His mercy.

As we enter into a new liturgical year, a year declared by Pope Francis to be 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, I ask you: Are you ready to be the face of His mercy?

My prayer for this new year of mercy is that we all will be able to join with the Church as she opens the Holy Doors, and that our hearts may be open to His unconditional love so that blood, water and love will flow from our hearts to those we minister to.

“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.” (Prayer of Mercy)

Thank you for all that you do.

Blessing on a new year of Mercy,

Jim
Listen

With the “Year of Mercy” almost upon us, this can be a time to prayerfully consider the Corporal Works of Mercy and how we incorporate them in our lives and in the lives of others.

Included in the Corporal Works of Mercy is the act of visiting those in prison. Have you considered the ministry of working with inmates? Here is a great reflection on discerning this call taken from the article, “Faith Behind Bars” by Gerald Korson from the Catholic Answers Magazine. Please visit http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/faith-behind-bars to view the entire article.

**Corporal Works of Mercy**

The Corporal Works of Mercy are these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs.

+ Feed the hungry
+ Give drink to the thirsty
+ Clothe the naked
+ Shelter the homeless
+ Visit the sick
+ **Visit the imprisoned**
+ Bury the dead

“Think You Feel Called to Work with Inmates?”

Prison apostolate is a vocation, perhaps the most demanding work in the Church, according to Russell Ford. It is a grimy, emotionally gut-wrenching initiative that is difficult both spiritually and physically, and not something to be undertaken lightly.

“My experience has been that most laymen get involved in prison apostolate for two reasons: One is a fascination with prisons and prisoners, and the other is that they want to feel good about having been involved in something important to Christ and his Church,” Ford explains. “These are not good reasons . . . Indeed, they are motivations that will cause more harm than good. We must always remember that souls hang in the balance.”

Here is Ford’s advice for those who are serious about entering a prison apostolate:

1. Start by making a few visits to a local prison with an established Catholic apostolate. Observe all that goes on. Ask questions. Get to know some of the inmates. Otherwise, make no comments.
2. After these initial visits, make several visits of another kind: To the tabernacle at your Catholic parish. Stay and pray before the presence of Christ for an hour each time. Talk to him about your interest in ministering to the incarcerated.
3. If you still have an interest, sit down and talk with the director of the Catholic prison apostolate. Ask questions and get feedback—the more information, the better. This is a discernment process.
4. Visit Jesus in the reserved Eucharist once again. Ask him to reveal to you whether you are called to this apostolate.
5. If you still feel called, find a good priest who can direct you through the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Have him hear your general confession and ask him to teach you about holy detachment and how to practice it. With this preparation, you are ready to begin.”
Paris, France suffered its worst experience of violence and terror since 1944 during the Second World War. Our social media with its worldwide connectedness broadcast images of immense sorrow which will always be in our lives. Caring and empathic responses have been issued by countries throughout the world.

This attack makes us as Americans recall and relive the events of 2001 attack we suffered in New York. Now our hearts and prayers are with the French people in their time of sadness and grief. The Vatican response given by Fr. Lombardi captures our innermost feelings of shock and numbness upon hearing the tragic news of terror.

“At the Vatican we are following the terrible news from Paris. We are shocked by this new manifestation of maddening terrorist violence and hatred which we condemn in the most radical way, together with the pope and all those who love peace. We pray for the victims and the wounded, and for all the French people. This is an attack on the peace of all mankind which requires a decisive and supportive response by all of us to counter the spread of homicidal hatred in all its forms. “

Community Expressions

The social media in the aftermath of the tragic events shows us many remembrances now adorning the tragic places of violence with flowers, scripts of prayerful wishes for the deceased, and other adornments made clearly visible for the world to see. Loved ones and friends gather in sorrow along with a world which experiences their pain through such tragic loss of life. They gather in deep sorrow for those victimized by what terrorists have done blaspheming in the name of God as they maim and kill the innocent.

The scriptures provide us with ways to express our hope that God’s intervention will change our feelings of emptiness, fear and sadness while we become even more aware of the events and how they occurred. We need to place our losses and the losses of the French people into the context and framework of faith.

Continued on next page
Listen

There is a need to come together for prayer. There is a need for people in trauma to overcome fear. There has to be a willingness to resume as best is possible a normal way of life.

Safety and stability is given when communities respond in prayerful ways. This is already evident by the many memorials and prayer services. Notre Dame Cathedral is a visible sign of the sacred in Paris which has down through the ages stood as witness to faith amid terrible events.

Sense of Vulnerability

Survivors of traumatic events may have a heightened sense of being vulnerable. This applies to people who witness the attack, both personally and via the media. It further may extend to people who experience traumatization from learning of relatives, friends, and acquaintances who were subject to violence.

Children & Trauma

Repeated media accounts have to be taken into consideration with small children. They mistakenly may think that as events are repeated on the screen that they are still occurring. We noted this at the time of the Twin Towers. The continuous coverage being constantly repeated did mislead some children. The same thing was evident with Hurricane Sandy and how children witnessed the repeated coverage. They even thought with the wind in the trees that the hurricane was there. It is more than important to show children that they are safe.

God Is Our Shelter And Strength

Shortly after our experience of the Twin Tower terrorism The American Bible Society published a small booklet with words of comfort and hope from the Bible. The introduction posed the following questions. “How could this happen?” “Are my friends and family safe?” “How could anyone commit such an evil act?” “Is the situation hopeless?”

The booklet relates how acts of political terrorism often strike without warning. It describes the shock, fear and a sense of outrage and how this overwhelms us. We may have feelings of helplessness and abandonment. What the booklet does is place our loss amidst devastation into the context that God does care and is “always ready to help in times of trouble.” Psalm 46.1

Continued on next page
Listen

Rebuilding Trust & Hope

When traumatic loss happens we immediately realize that our world is not and may never be the same. In many ways we revise the world we assumed would remain constant. We need to draw strength from our resources in faith. We know from the depth of our being that we are lamenting. The faith of the Psalmist’s too felt this in praising God by way of lamenting. The Psalms unlock our deepest emotions give our faith true expression in crying out to God.

In the scriptures there is considerable literature about lamenting. It is especially evident in the person of Jeremiah. The Rembrandt painting on the destruction of Jerusalem is a startling portrayal of the Prophets grief. It pictures him against the backdrop of the destruction of the Temple. At his feet are certain salvaged artifacts. So too for ourselves as we salvage, revise, and rebuild our lives amidst destruction. Jeremiah and the painting is a meditation for mourning.

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures there is a crying out to God. We can readily look to the Books of Job, Lamentations, and the Psalms of Lament. There is a conversing with God as remarkable expressions of our whole being responding in healthy and healing ways to traumatic suffering.

The laments are helpful for the purpose of indentifying with a crisis. While they are not actual descriptions of the situation they focus our feelings of helplessness such a crisis engenders for all who are in any way involved. We are given permission to cry and manage our conflicts by expressing them with a loving and compassionate God.

Continued on next page
Pastoral Ministry

Pastoral ministry relates ritual to life’s reality. Our rituals have to express ourselves in relationship to God and each other. The gathering together is a time of accepting the empowering prayer of the entire community. The believing community is in communion with other communities in the Body of Christ. This is so apparent with the empathic response we have for our French brothers and sisters. We are in prayer connected with those who are suffering. After all we recall the words of St. Paul: “If one member suffers in the body of Christ which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member.” (1 Corinthians 12:26) These words of Paul help us to maintain a good perspective. At the same time they cultivate our revising and rebuilding our lives.

Community Laments & Prayers

Our prayers are with the French People. Through the intercession of the saints from France we hope there is the experience of healing given to those who suffering so many traumatic losses. May the families of those victimized by the terror inflicted upon them live with hope and rebuild their lives with the hope for the heavenly reunion with those who have died. May they rest in Peace.

Father Terence Curley is a faculty member for the Theological Institute at St. John Seminary. His publications are about the Ministry of Consolation available on Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble. Com.

Continued on next page
Community Laments and Prayers for France

We gather together to pray for the peace which is beyond understanding to descend upon us and the People of France. We pray for the souls who suffered at the hand of evil acts. May they now enjoy the peace of the Kingdom of Heaven. We ask you our loving God to intervene and assist us in combating evil especially in the form of terrorism. We ask you and all of the Saints to hear our pleas for healing and hope. R. Amen

Litany to Special Saints from France:

Through the intercessions of these saints we make our prayer for these who died and are grieving in Paris and throughout France:

Saint Therese o Lisieux, Patron of France, Pray for them
Saint Joan of Arc, Patron of France, Pray for them
Saint Martin of Tours, Patron of France, Pray or them
Saint Remigius, Patron of France, Pray for them

Saint John Vianney… St. Louis…..
Saint Jean Jugan… St. Margaret Mary Alacoque
Saint Genevieve St. Madeline Sophie Barat
Saint Denis St. Catherine Labore
Saint Bernard of Clairvaux St. Vincent de Paul
Saint Germain Cousin St. Vincent de Paul
Saint Peter Julian Eymardt St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle

The Hail Mary (The Prayer to our Lady (Notre Dame) now and at the hour of our death...

Je vous salue, Marie pleine de grace; Le Seigneur est avec vous.

Vous etes benie entre toutes les femmes et Jesus, Le fruit de vos entrailles, est beni Sainte Marie, Mere de Dieu, priez pour nous pauvres pecheurs, maintenant et a l’heure de notre mort. Amen
Listen

Grief:

Building Blocks to Pastoral Care of Children and Adolescents

October 28, a Bereavement Workshop, “Grief: Building Blocks to Pastoral Care of Children and Adolescents,” was held at the Pastoral Center in Braintree.

For those of you could not be present, please visit http://www.bostoncatholic.org/Bereavement to view the PDF of the supplements/handouts for the day.
As we enter into the Year of Mercy, I’d like to take a few moments to reflect on the concepts of mercy and of nursing. Mercy is a “ready willingness to help anyone in need, particularly those in need of pardon or reconciliation”. Nursing, as defined by the American Nurses Association, “is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, facilitation of healing, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations”.

The words that jump out at me in those two definitions are “anyone in need”, “advocacy” and “care”.

Advocating and caring for anyone in need. That’s what nurses do. We live the corporal works of mercy every day: by visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, providing drink for the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, burying the dead. We literally bathe the dirty, we nurture those who are prisoners of their illnesses, we cleanse and clothe those who have left their earthy lives behind.

Faith Community Nursing is different from all other specialties in nursing, in that our primary focus is the Intentional care of the spirit, so our works of mercy are also different. Faith Community Nurses carry out the Spiritual Works of Mercy instead. We focus on God’s plan for Shalom- healing and wholeness of body mind spirit. We work with people in their brokenness. By our presence, which is the greatest gift we can offer one another, we are able to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowful, admonish (gently, with humility) the sinner.

Beginning in December, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website will offer monthly “Moments of Mercy”. I urge all of you to visit this website, and look at these monthly moments. Can you find something there you can use in your daily life, to show that ready willingness to help anyone in need? I have attached the link below. I would love to hear from you, particularly from Faith Community Nurses, if you found this website helpful, and if you are able to use any of the monthly moments. Please let me know.

I can be reached at wenger_k@rcab.org

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas to all!
Dr. Frank Hilferty, the former Dean of Graduate Studies at Bridgewater State University, was responsible for generating interest and funds to build the St. Basil Chapel and Catholic Center at Bridgewater State University.

Dr Hilferty first raised the issue of a new Chapel with Archbishop Richard Cushing in 1957. With Cardinal Cushing's encouragement, the project began and the St. Basil and Catholic Center at Bridgewater was finished in November 1965, making its 50th Anniversary this year.

Frank is now 95 years old and lives in his own apartment at The Village at Duxbury. He visits the fitness center there daily to exercise.

Photo: From left to right Monsignor William Fay; Dr Frank Hilferty; Marlene DeLeon, Campus Minister
Listen

Thanksgiving and Mercy

Msgr. Bill Fay, Director of Campus Ministry

When I was growing up, I must have been a “grab and run” kind of kid, because I can still hear my mother’s words ringing in my ears, “What do you say?” Of course, Mom was reminding me that I needed to say “thank you.” I am amused and delighted every time I am in the parking lot of the parish school where I live and hear parents today using the same expression with their own children, “What do you say?”

Did you ever notice that thanking is a learned habit? It’s not something we do instinctively, like shielding our eyes from the sun or looking for water when we are thirsty. Thanking takes work. And when we work at it and learn it well, we become virtuous. Don’t you just love people who are grateful? They stand out, don’t they?

As I prepared to celebrate Thanksgiving this past week, I thought a lot about what I’m most grateful for in life. And I discovered something. All the things that mean the most to me in life share a common trait. Each one of them was given to me with great sacrifice. That is true of the love my parents gave to me. I and my brother and sisters received our parents’ love through sacrifice. They gave completely of themselves to us; nothing was ever held back. It is true as well of the friendships I have. I see this again and again in the many sacrifices that good people have made for me out of friendship over the years. And it is certainly true of the most beautiful gift I have, the gift of my faith in Jesus Christ. You and I have the gift of faith, because of the great sacrifice of Jesus for us. At the will of the Father and out of perfect love, Jesus suffered and died for us on the cross; and thereby reconciled us to the Father. In his sacrifice Jesus shows us the fullness of the Father’s love and mercy for us.

Next Tuesday, on December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis will inaugurate an extraordinary year long Jubilee of Mercy. The purpose of this Jubilee, as the Holy Father stated when he announced the Jubilee Year, is “to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives” (MV 3). One way in which we can do that is to exercise the corporal and spiritual “works of mercy” that have a time-honored and privileged place in our Catholic tradition (CCC. 2447-2448).
Listen

Thanksgiving and Mercy

Msgr. Bill Fay, Director of Campus Ministry

God’s mercy is always healing and restorative. James Tissot represents this beautifully in his nineteenth century painting, “Return of the Prodigal Son.” A father wraps himself in mercy around his beloved son, enabling him to lift his arms in hope. Notice in Tissot’s painting how the world cannot help but take notice of the father’s goodness – from the streets, from the doorways, and from the windows. God the Father has shown us mercy. Let us perform the works of mercy “that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives.”

The Corporal Works of Mercy

To feed the hungry
To give drink to the thirsty
To clothe the naked
To shelter the homeless
To care for the sick
To visit the imprisoned
To bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

To share knowledge
To give advice to those who need it
To comfort the suffering
To be patient with others
To forgive those who hurt you
To give correction to those who need it
To pray for the living and the dead

Return of the Prodigal Son by James Tissot, c. 1890
Listen

Time of Prayer for Parish Pastoral Visitors and Ministers of Communion to the Sick

WALK WITH CHRIST

Mark 2:1-12 Jesus Heals a Paralytic

This day will focus on the growth in faith that happens as we follow Jesus and witness the healing power of his presence.

The Office of Worship and Spiritual Life and the Pastoral Visitor Project offers regional Mornings and Afternoons of Prayer for Pastoral Visitors and Eucharistic Ministers to the Sick. This year's schedule:

**January 31, 2016**
1:00-3:00 PM
St. Joseph, Wakefield

**February 27, 2016**
10:00 AM-12:00
St. Francis, Weymouth

**March 5, 2016**
10:00 AM – 12:00
St. John’s West Roxbury

**March 12, 2016**
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Our Lady’s, Newton

**April 9, 2016**
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
St. Francis, Dracut

You are welcome to attend any of them.

To register: Call the Office of Spiritual Life at 617-779-3640
Office of Spiritual Life — Archdiocese of Boston

MEETING CHRIST IN PRAYER can bring people to a new level of discipleship and a renewed sense of Christian mission.

MEETING CHRIST IN PRAYER is an 8 week guided prayer experience based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. It calls for a commitment of eight weeks of daily prayer and eight weekly meetings of faith sharing.

The Office of Spiritual Life is offering this program at The Pastoral Center, 66 Brooks Drive, Braintree on Tuesday morning, February 16 through April 5, 2016

10:30-11:45AM

For further information and to register call: Sister Anne D’Arcy 617-779-3648

Or e-mail: sdarcy@rcab.org

Sr. Kathleen Foley, SNDdeN, BCC, died peacefully on Saturday, November 21, 2105 at Notre Dame Long Term Care Center, Worcester, MA. For the past twenty years she offered a devoted and compassionate ministry as Chaplain at Campion Health Center, until her retirement this past October. She had long been involved in CPE education. Many of us had experienced CPE with her and David Boulton, SJ at Campion Center. Many others of us benefited from her wisdom and guidance in peer supervision, certification application and renewal and spiritual direction. She will be sorely missed. May God bless her with eternal peace. To read her obituary go to www.legacy.com/obituaries/bostonglobe/obituary.aspx?n=kathleen-foley&pid=176611065&eid=sp_shareobit.
MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE 24th WORLD DAY OF THE SICK 2016

Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary:
“Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The twenty-fourth World Day of the Sick offers me an opportunity to draw particularly close to you, dear friends who are ill, and to those who care for you.

This year, since the Day of the Sick will be solemnly celebrated in the Holy Land, I wish to propose a meditation on the Gospel account of the wedding feast of Cana (Jn 2: 1-11), where Jesus performed his first miracle through the intervention of his Mother. The theme chosen - Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5) is quite fitting in light of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The main Eucharistic celebration of the Day will take place on 11 February 2016, the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Nazareth itself, where “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:14). In Nazareth, Jesus began his salvific mission, applying to himself the words of the Prophet Isaiah, as we are told by the Evangelist Luke: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19).

Illness, above all grave illness, always places human existence in crisis and brings with it questions that dig deep. Our first response may at times be one of rebellion: Why has this happened to me? We can feel desperate, thinking that all is lost, that things no longer have meaning…

In these situations, faith in God is on the one hand tested, yet at the same time can reveal all of its positive resources. Not because faith makes illness, pain, or the questions which they raise, disappear, but because it offers a key by which we can discover the deepest meaning of what we are experiencing; a key that helps us to see how illness can be the way to draw nearer to Jesus who walks at our side, weighed down by the Cross. And this key is given to us by Mary, our Mother, who has known this way at first hand.

At the wedding feast of Cana, Mary is the thoughtful woman who sees a serious problem for the spouses: the wine, the symbol of the joy of the feast, has run out. Mary recognizes the difficulty, in some way makes it her own, and acts swiftly and discreetly. She does not simply look on, much less spend time in finding fault, but rather, she turns to Jesus and presents him with the concrete problem: “They have no wine” (Jn 2:3). And when Jesus tells her that it is not yet the time for him to reveal himself (cf. v. 4), she says to the servants: “Do whatever he tells you” (v. 5). Jesus then performs the miracle, turning water into wine, a wine that immediately appears to be the best of the whole celebration. What teaching can we draw from this mystery of the wedding feast of Cana for the World Day of the Sick?

Continued on next page
Listen

The wedding feast of Cana is an image of the Church: at the centre there is Jesus who in his mercy performs a sign; around him are the disciples, the first fruits of the new community; and beside Jesus and the disciples is Mary, the provident and prayerful Mother. Mary partakes of the joy of ordinary people and helps it to increase; she intercedes with her Son on behalf of the spouses and all the invited guests. Nor does Jesus refuse the request of his Mother. How much hope there is in that event for all of us! We have a Mother with benevolent and watchful eyes, like her Son; a heart that is maternal and full of mercy, like him; hands that want to help, like the hands of Jesus who broke bread for those who were hungry, touched the sick and healed them. All this fills us with trust and opens our hearts to the grace and mercy of Christ. Mary’s intercession makes us experience the consolation for which the apostle Paul blesses God: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ’s sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow” (2 Cor 1:3-5). Mary is the “comforted” Mother who comforts her children.

At Cana the distinctive features of Jesus and his mission are clearly seen: he comes to the help of those in difficulty and need. Indeed, in the course of his messianic ministry he would heal many people of illnesses, infirmities and evil spirits, give sight to the blind, make the lame walk, restore health and dignity to lepers, raise the dead, and proclaim the good news to the poor (cf. Lk 7:21-22). Mary’s request at the wedding feast, suggested by the Holy Spirit to her maternal heart, clearly shows not only Jesus’ messianic power but also his mercy.

In Mary’s concern we see reflected the tenderness of God. This same tenderness is present in the lives of all those persons who attend the sick and understand their needs, even the most imperceptible ones, because they look upon them with eyes full of love. How many times has a mother at the bedside of her sick child, or a child caring for an elderly parent, or a grandchild concerned for a grandparent, placed his or her prayer in the hands of Our Lady! For our loved ones who suffer because of illness we ask first for their health. Jesus himself showed the presence of the Kingdom of God specifically through his healings: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them” (Mt 11:4-5). But love animated by faith makes us ask for them something greater than physical health: we ask for peace, a serenity in life that comes from the heart and is God’s gift, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, a gift which the Father never denies to those who ask him for it with trust.

In the scene of Cana, in addition to Jesus and his Mother, there are the “servants”, whom she tells: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). Naturally, the miracle takes place as the work of Christ; however, he wants to employ human assistance in performing this miracle. He could have made the wine appear directly in the jars. But he wants to rely upon human cooperation, and so he asks the servants to fill them with water. How wonderful and pleasing to God it is to be servants of others! This more than anything else makes us like Jesus, who “did not come to be served but to serve” (Mk 10:45). These unnamed people in the Gospel teach us a great deal. Not only do they obey, but they obey generously: they fill the jars to the brim (cf. Jn 2:7). They trust the Mother and carry out immediately and well what they are asked to do, without complaining, without second thoughts.
On this World Day of the Sick let us ask Jesus in his mercy, through the intercession of Mary, his Mother and ours, to grant to all of us this same readiness to be serve those in need, and, in particular, our infirm brothers and sisters. At times this service can be tiring and burdensome, yet we are certain that the Lord will surely turn our human efforts into something divine. We too can be hands, arms and hearts which help God to perform his miracles, so often hidden. We too, whether healthy or sick, can offer up our toil and sufferings like the water which filled the jars at the wedding feast of Cana and was turned into the finest wine. By quietly helping those who suffer, as in illness itself, we take our daily cross upon our shoulders and follow the Master (cf. Lk 9:23). Even though the experience of suffering will always remain a mystery, Jesus helps us to reveal its meaning.

If we can learn to obey the words of Mary, who says: “Do whatever he tells you”, Jesus will always change the water of our lives into precious wine. Thus this World Day of the Sick, solemnly celebrated in the Holy Land, will help fulfil the hope which I expressed in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: ‘I trust that this Jubilee year celebrating the mercy of God will foster an encounter with [Judaism and Islam] and with other noble religious traditions; may it open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; may it eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination’ (Misericordiae Vultus, 23). Every hospital and nursing home can be a visible sign and setting in which to promote the culture of encounter and peace, where the experience of illness and suffering, along with professional and fraternal assistance, helps to overcome every limitation and division.

For this we are set an example by the two Religious Sisters who were canonized last May: Saint Marie-Alphonsine Danil Ghattas and Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified Baouardy, both daughters of the Holy Land. The first was a witness to meekness and unity, who bore clear witness to the importance of being responsible for one another other, living in service to one another. The second, a humble and illiterate woman, was docile to the Holy Spirit and became an instrument of encounter with the Muslim world.

To all those who assist the sick and the suffering I express my confident hope that they will draw inspiration from Mary, the Mother of Mercy. “May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God’s tenderness” (ibid., 24), allow it to dwell in our hearts and express it in our actions! Let us entrust to the Virgin Mary our trials and tribulations, together with our joys and consolations. Let us beg her to turn her eyes of mercy towards us, especially in times of pain, and make us worthy of beholding, today and always, the merciful face of her Son Jesus!

With this prayer for all of you, I send my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 15 September 2015
Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

FRANCIS

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A Message from

1060 Catholic Radio Boston

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Diocese's Health Care Workers Urged to Show Face of Mercy

By Jennifer Willems

Good medical practice has a place in Catholic health care, but treating the whole person requires love and compassion or it won’t be effective, according to speakers at the 10th annual Diocesan Health Care Day.

“It’s obvious that Catholic health care is uniquely situated to show the merciful face of God in Jesus Christ to all those you serve,” said Bishop Daniel R. Jenky, CSC, who offered opening remarks to the 100 mental health professionals, physicians, clinicians, pastoral care workers, nurses and social workers who gathered at the Spalding Pastoral Center in Peoria on Nov. 5.

“I don’t know if we’re ever more vulnerable than when we’re in the waiting room of a hospital or lying in bed or getting examined,” he said. “The people who interact with us at those moments have a gifted place to make Christ present by treating human beings as human beings, by intuitively knowing they’re hurting and scared.”

The theme for the conference, hosted by the Diocesan Health Care Commission, was “The Mercy of Christ and Mental Health: Clinical and Spiritual Care.” In addition to Bishop Jenky, participants heard from Dr. Steven Hamon, co-founder and president of The Antioch Group in Peoria, and learned more about Pope Francis’ decree on mercy, “Misericordiae Vultus,” from Msgr. Mark Merdian, episcopal vicar for health care for the Diocese of Peoria.

Msgr. Merdian called the conference “a practical day and a day of prayer as we consider how to treat those with behavioral and mental health issues and how to bring Christ’s compassion and mercy to them.”

LIFETIME OF MERCY

Bishop Jenky said the need for mercy, love and forgiveness is increasing in a society that doesn’t have the same sense of security or moral direction that existed when he was a boy.

“Catholic health care can and should play its part in healing, grounded in faith, grounded in Gospel values, committed especially to the dignity of the human person,” he said, even though there is hostility from American culture and “elements of government.”

Noting that the goal seems to be to “push the church back into its sacristy,” Bishop Jenky said, “We’re going to stay in there. It’s exactly what you bring to health care that our culture needs, so we aren’t going away.”

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Diocese's Health Care Workers Urged to Show Face of Mercy

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In the end, Catholic health care exists to make disciples, he told the medical professionals.

“It’s about a lifetime of mercy, day after day, year after year, healing, helping, loving and witnessing to the Great Physician, who is our savior, Jesus Christ,” Bishop Jenky said.

Dr. Hamon also encouraged them to look to the example of Jesus as they interact with patients every day.

Rather than keeping to a strict schedule, Jesus took time to visit with people and looked past what a cursory exam might reveal, said Dr. Hamon, who holds a master’s degree in counseling psychology and a doctorate in clinical psychology/behavioral medicine. He held up Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:5-42 as an example of what this kind of healing looked like.

“WALK THE WALK”

An object of ridicule and shame because of her lifestyle, the Samaritan woman asked Jesus for help and he obliged by stepping outside the usual course of care and finding out what was important to her, Dr. Hamon said.

“Years of shame fell away and she ran into town, transformed,” he explained. “When he spoke, you felt that his words were directed at you -- and we are called to do the same.”

Dr. Hamon asked them to move away from the “cognitive dissonance” of thinking they could let the chaplains and women religious take care of the spiritual while they took care of the physical and “do what’s expedient to keep the doors open.”

If the care isn’t integrated, if it doesn’t “walk the walk” of healing with love and compassion, “it’s just another gimmick,” he said.

With the Lord’s help, they can show the face of mercy to those they serve, Dr. Hamon said.

In his remarks, Msgr. Merdian said Pope Francis wants to “revolutionize” our approach to faith and Jesus and the church during the upcoming Holy Year of Mercy.

“He wants to challenge us all to grow in love, belief, trust and the mercy of God, especially as a church,” according to Msgr. Merdian, who is pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Rock Island. “We need to constantly contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends upon it.”
Listen

Remember:
World Day of the Sick
February 11, 2016

Many blessings and graces to you and your families in the approaching Holy Days.
A Blessed Advent
A Holy Jubilee of Mercy
Merry Christmas
Happy New Year

Please also check attachments for more events and information.

Boston Catholic
Witness to Life

January 22
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Winter 2015