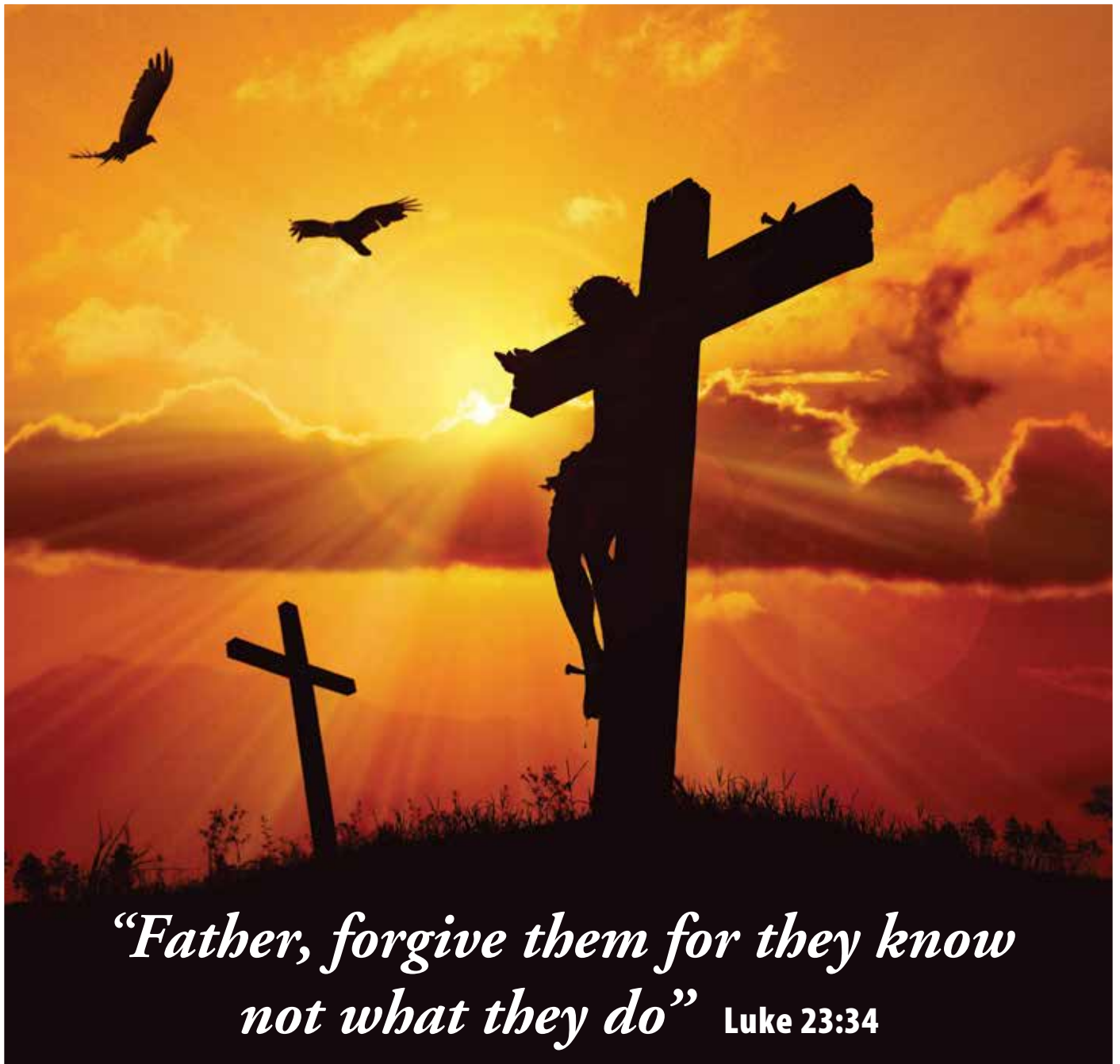




Priestly People

WE ALL ARE THE PRIESTLY PEOPLE OF GOD. TOGETHER, WE ARE LEADERS IN RESPONDING TO THE EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS.

March 2016 - Vol. 32 No. 3



“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” Luke 23:34

Year of Mercy... Hammer versus Hand



Pope Francis has initiated the Year of Mercy. Interestingly enough mercy is an expression of our God who is love. Mercy and Love are inseparable descriptors of God. Their application has some of the most profound implications in the care for those who are locked in poverty.

Poverty is not necessarily limited to not having material resources and opportunities in a social/economic system.

Poverty can be described as any lack of what every human being has a right. The work of the Servants of the Paraclete has as its primary purpose the addressing of poverty in the loss of dignity.

The loss of dignity is connected with loss of occupation due to undesirable or even criminal behavior as is found in the case of the abuse of the vulnerable by professionals. The issue of the abuse of minors by clergy and religious is one of the greatest tragedies throughout the populations of the world.

The Servants of the Paraclete and Vianney Renewal Center have their origins in the inspiration of St. Francis of Assisi who recognized the dignity of an offending priest in the words "I do not judge sin, I respect him for him and the power he has each day in bringing the Body and Blood of Christ into the world". Fr. Gerald Fitzgerald sP, Founder of the Servants of the Paraclete, recognized the same thing in the 1940s, nearly 70 years ago, in his effort to assist his brother priests who had fallen victim to addictions.

The expression of these two founders is an expression of MERCY/LOVE and the recognition of the dignity of each and every one who has offended.

The challenge to the population of the world in this Year of Mercy is to honor and respect the dignity of every human being and it becomes even more important among those who care for those who have broken trust. Society in many dimensions is focused on the punitive approach to deal with those who have offended. In most instances the punitive is an explicit expression of the lack of mercy.

The example professed by St. Francis of Assisi, Father Gerald Fitzgerald, sP and the unceasing practices of Pope Francis throughout his history as a priest make real the witness of MERCY/LOVE. The world has seen a radical exemplification of mercy in the face of the broken and the offenders as he visits them in prison and his visits with the street people wherever he goes. The example of Pope Francis' embrace of those from whom many in the population recoil, again demonstrates the extent to which mercy must go.

As we all penetrate God's meaning of MERCY/LOVE, in particular in the relationship we have with those who have broken trust, we are prompted to reflect on how we perceive and how we treat them. In a broad social climate in which punishment and segregation from the population has become the practice, it is easy to keep personal distance and withhold any type of attachment to the offending population even though we may be assigned to care for them.

Each of us has cause to treat offenders from a disciplinary point of view. But in so dealing with them we have a profound opportunity to treat them with dignity. We might ask ourselves if our role is a hammer of discipline or a hand of love. MERCY/LOVE dispenses with a hammer of punishment. MERCY/LOVE reaches out with a hand to touch in forgiveness and an affirmation and recognition of the dignity of that person.

The ministry of the Servants of the Paraclete is to exemplify what Scripture describes as the way the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, reached out to all even those that swung a hammer to pierce His hands and feet or thrust the sword piercing his side. His words were "Father forgives them for they know not what they do." And again to the good thief He said "you will be with me in paradise." Scripture again makes it clear that "what you have done to the least of my brethren, you have done to me."

Our ministry of service to clergy and religious removed from ministry is a profoundly grace filled opportunity to exemplify MERCY/LOVE. Each day we have an opportunity to extend our hands, our hearts to heal, respect and honor the gift of God we find in each one of those we serve.

May God bless each and every one of the staff members who reach out to touch and heal and to all of those at a distance who hold the sacredness of each of our clients in their hearts. We too are honored by the community of those who see MERCY/LOVE in this ministry professing the dignity and value of everyone who God has called to be here and now. In so doing we will hear these words at our entrance in to the Kingdom prepared for those who love, "Come my beloved for what you have done to the least of my brethren, you have done unto Me."

Fr. Bert Miller OFM
Founder, RECON

Pope Francis reflects on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

Pope Francis says a Christian's style of life should be founded on a commitment to express the Father's mercy, such that "my life, my attitude, my way of living life must be, in fact, a concrete sign of the fact that God is close to us."

The Pope said this when he held his second "Jubilee Audience." The jubilee audiences are open to the public and scheduled to be held one Saturday a month during the Year of Mercy.

The Holy Father reflected during his address on commitment, and specifically the way that the faithful should be committed to mirroring God's own commitment to us.

"What is a commitment? What does it mean to be committed?" the Pope asked. "When I am committed, it means that I assume a responsibility — a task towards someone, and it also means the style, the attitude of fidelity and dedication, of the particular care with which I carry out this task. Every day we are asked to put commitment in the things we do: in prayer, in work, in study, but also in sport, in free time. In sum, to be committed means to put our good will and our strengths to improve life."

God is first committed to us, the Pontiff affirmed. He created the world and sustains it "despite our attempts to ruin it." And his great commitment was giving us Jesus.

"Jesus was the living expression of the Father's mercy," Francis explained.

Thus, he said, "we also can and must correspond to His love with our commitment."

And this commitment should be shown above all in situations of greatest need, the Pope stressed. "We must always bring God's caress, because God has caressed us with His mercy — we must bring it to others, to those who are in need, to those who have a suffering in the heart or are sad: We must come close with God's caress, which is the same as that which He gave us."



Servants of the Paraclete
 PO Box 9
 Cedar Hill, MO 63016

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

March
 Newsletter

NON PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 ST. LOUIS, MO
 PERMIT NO. 3252



MASS STIPENDS

We appreciate the many mass stipends that we receive. We thank you for supporting that part of our ministry. The Servants of the Paraclete receive mass stipends from our donors and they look forward to celebrating liturgy with those who offer masses for loved ones, friends and family members.

Thank you for supporting our Mass Stipend Ministry!

Name of the person to be remembered in a mass celebrated by a Servant of the Paraclete

living deceased

Please send an acknowledgement card on my behalf to:

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

You will receive acknowledgement of the mass stipend donation in your donor thank you letter. No need to send an acknowledgement card to yourself if you are the donor.

Please complete the mass stipend form and return to the Servants of the Paraclete Development Office.

Servants of the Paraclete • PO Box 9 • Cedar Hill, MO 63016

**DEVELOPMENT
 OFFICE**

**Marian Wolaver • 636-274-5226 x303 • mwolaver@theservants.org
 PO Box 9 • Cedar Hill, MO 63016**