

through the streets of Calcutta and through all the slum areas of the world, in search of Jesus in the poor, in the abandoned and in the dying.” And I would like to add: in orphans and those not wanted by their parents.

## “Mercy Is Love That Is Turned Into Service,” in *Avvenire*, Italy (November 20, 2016)

At the close of the Holy Year of Mercy, a strong sense of gratitude unites the whole Church. In first place, filial gratitude to the Blessed Trinity, whose abundant gifts have enabled us to experience God’s infinite love for each man and woman, for each of us. And also union with the intentions of Pope Francis, who has convoked this Jubilee to highlight more fully this fundamental aspect of the faith—that God is an immensely good Father—and to remind us that the path of our happiness passes through being dispensers of mercy.

For our gratitude to be fully sincere, it needs to be united to the deep desire to improve personally. A person who has experienced mercy—by having recourse to the sacrament of confession, spending time in prayer, passing through a holy door or accepting the help of a brother or sister—is called to com-

municate it to others through their own life.

This Jubilee should leave a deep imprint on our soul. And it will do so if we grow in our desire for holiness, if we have more frequent recourse to the sacraments, if we strive to improve our way of being. In short, it is an opportunity to help us embody more fully the image of Christ that others should be able to see in our life.

In the many places in today’s world where the echo of the Gospel is no longer heard, we Christians face the challenge of the “first evangelization.” “Where is your God,” these people might ask us. And they will discover him in our prayer for those who offended us, in our care for the destitute, in our sympathy for those who are trapped in their vices, in the consolation we offer those who live alone, in the forgiveness we extend where society only speaks about justice, in the Christian coherence of our daily lives, in our work and family... By acting in this way, we too will grow in our intimacy with God, because by acting in his name we will come to know him better and identify ourselves with him.

“If you wish to find God, seek him where he is hidden: in the needy, in the sick, in the hungry, in the imprisoned,” Pope Francis recently advised. We would impoverish our inner world if we were to refuse to deal with those who displease us, who are different,

who could cost us time... Each person is “Christ passing by” our side, as Saint Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei, liked to say.

Our daily life offers us many opportunities to be merciful: our home, our profession, and our friends, making our way through the city, dealing with strangers... Saint Josemaría never tired of advising us to pray also for the people we see on the street; thus we will always be ready to provide others with the care they need.

Mercy is Love that reaches out to the needs of the others. And it invites us to turn our eyes to our Lady, who will teach us to be merciful and to welcome the Father’s mercy into our own lives. Then we will experience more fully that we are brothers and sisters of all our fellow men and women.

## Monthly Meditations on the Works of Mercy

*July: Correcting those in error*

The history of salvation shows us the continuous interaction between God’s merciful love and mankind’s weakness. As a mother follows her youngest child closely to keep him from danger or harm, so God has guided mankind throughout the centuries. Each of us has experienced in our own lives

this close guidance, the hand of Divine Providence. And therefore, how many falls or mistakes on our daily path have become opportunities for an encounter with our Lord!

*Correcting those who err* [or “admonishing the sinner”] is a work of mercy that we see God carrying out constantly in the biblical narratives, whenever men have been determined (and we can also say, when we are determined) to choose the path of evil. The history of the Chosen People is a clear manifestation of this divine care. In many situations, Yahweh could have let go his guiding hand, but He always (sometimes also with punishments and other warnings from the prophets) leads his People back, putting them once again on the way to salvation.

With the Incarnation of the Word, God’s mercy takes on a human face: that of Jesus. God has become our Brother to look for us one by one: in our present circumstances, with our personal qualities, with the few or many talents that we have. In the Gospel, we see that Christ does not hold back from reprimanding, from correcting those he wants to lead by the straight path, not only the Pharisees who reject his message, but also his friends. He reprimands Peter, even sternly, when he suggests that our Lord should flee from the Passion; and Martha in Bethany, gently, for worrying excessively about her housework.