

## October 2013 Staff meeting – Faith Formation

### Slide 1

#### **Reader:**

During this month of October we have been focusing on the theme of Worship through Thanksgiving and Reconciliation. We generally find it easy to pause and give thanks for our many blessings, but reconciliation is a more complicated concept which includes many elements such as relationship, humility, and forgiveness. Reconciliation also calls us to examine our human weaknesses, such as our desire for justice as deserved punishment, or the weakness that keeps us holding grudges.

Over the past few months, Pope Francis has been providing countless examples, and challenges to treat those around us with great love, as God loves us. We have heard the word “mercy” over and over, and indeed it has been said that “mercy” is the theme of his papacy. As difficult as it is, if we can come to an understanding of “mercy” we can come to a deeper understanding of reconciliation.

Mercy isn't strictly logical. In essence, for our sinfulness, we could expect severe punishment, and yet God shows us mercy. It is kindness beyond measure, it is receiving compassion when we have seldom shown compassion to another.

Over the years our theological understanding has grown, so that many priests today do not “give penances” so common in the confessional process years ago, because there is really nothing we can do to make up for our sins, forgiveness that has no price is the loving mercy of God.

We take a few moments to consider the words of Pope Francis on mercy...

### Slide 2

#### **Reader:**

“A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just. ...this merciful Father who is so patient. ... Let us remember the Prophet Isaiah who says that even if our sins were scarlet, God's love would make them white as snow. This mercy is beautiful. “

### Slide 3

#### **Reader:**

“God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones. Let us be renewed by God's mercy, ...and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish. “

### Slide 4

#### **Reader:**

“[We] must be merciful, like the good Samaritan, who washes, cleans and raises up his neighbor. This is pure Gospel. God is greater than sin.”

## **Slide 5**

### **Reader:**

“Jesus' attitude is striking: we do not hear the words of scorn, we do not hear words of condemnation, but only words of love, of mercy, which are an invitation to conversation. ... God's face is the face of a merciful father who is always patient. Have you thought about God's patience, the patience he has with each one of us? That is his mercy. He always has patience, ... he understands us, he waits for us, he does not tire of forgiving us if we are able to return to him with a contrite heart. "Great is God's mercy," says the Psalm.”

## **Slide 6**

### **Reader:**

“I also know that the Lord remembers me. I can forget about him, but I know that he never, ever forgets me. “

## **Slide 7**

### **Reader:**

So how can we bring this word “mercy” in our daily lives? Consider this thought from Kerry Weber, an editor at America magazine who had the privilege of editing the English text of the now famous interview for the Jesuit periodicals::

There is a “wonderfully invented word from Pope Francis: *mercy-ing*. In turning the noun into a verb, a sentiment into an action, Francis calls us not only to have mercy or to show mercy, but to *embody* mercy. The word emphasizes the active element of mercy, as a force that binds us, compels us, and enables us to love one another more fully.”

“This call for mercy-ing is at once a call for humility and a call to greatness. It pushes us to live out the extraordinary Gospel message, to acknowledge the dignity of our fellow travelers on this journey, and the reality of our own faults. It is a call to look toward Christ and then look inward before we respond to others. It is a call to allow ourselves to be moved, to proceed deliberately, with compassion alongside our corrections. In short, *mercy-ing* is a call to listen to one another with love. It allows us to realize the power of words, clearly and lovingly spoken. And of the Word, humbly lived.”

## **Slide 8**

May we always give profound thanks for God's great mercy, and may we worship by showing that mercy to others.

### Resources:

<http://www.thedivinemercy.org/news/story.php?NID=5380>

<http://www.americamagazine.org/pope-interview>

<http://www.americamagazine.org/working-mercy>