

## YEAR OF MERCY ONLINE RESOURCES



Year of Mercy Resources for children – all ideas, printables and links in one spot!

*Look to Him & Be Radiant*

[www.looktohimandberadiant.blogspot.com/2015/08/year-of-mercy-resources-all-ideas.html](http://www.looktohimandberadiant.blogspot.com/2015/08/year-of-mercy-resources-all-ideas.html)



Works of Mercy Prayers and Activities: free resource packet from *Catechist Journey*

<http://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/2015/06/works-of-mercy-prayers-and-activities-free-resource-packet/>



Faces of Mercy: an activity from the Diocese of Melbourne

<http://www.cam.org.au/Portals/52/Year%20of%20Mercy/Faces%20of%20Mercy%20resource.pdf>

## SUGGESTED TITLES

**Be sure to peruse the LIGHTHOUSE CATHOLIC MEDIA Kiosk in the Gathering Space for rotating titles that are in line with the Year of Mercy.**

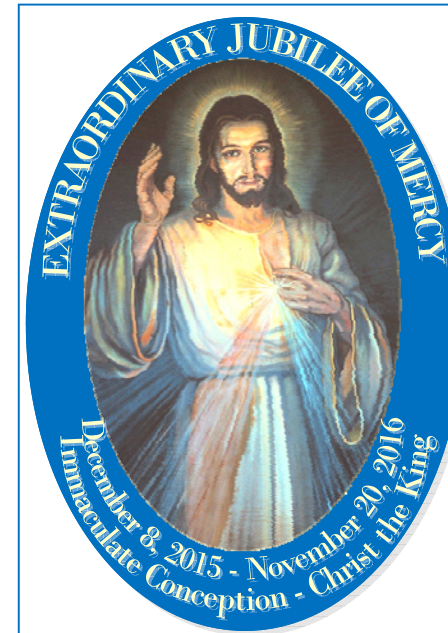
The Office of Catechesis can recommend the following books from the Our Sunday Visitor catalog or website ([www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)).

- *A Year of Mercy with Pope Francis: Daily Reflections*
- *Celebrating Mercy*
- *Confession: The Sacrament of Mercy*
- *The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy*
- *Mercy in the Fathers of the Church*
- *Mercy in the Teachings of the Popes*
- *The Parables of Mercy*
- *The Psalms of Mercy*
- *The Saints of Mercy*

## YEAR OF MERCY APP

Our Sunday Visitor, official publisher selected by the Vatican for the Year of Mercy, has a **FREE** app available from iTunes or Google Play.

It is meant "to accompany you on a spiritual journey during the Jubilee Year of Mercy." The official Year of Mercy is December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016, but the app will begin to have new information added daily starting November 20, 2015. Click here to go [osv.com](http://osv.com) for links to download the app + more information.



# “It will be a HOLY YEAR of MERCY”

Pope Francis

## Bishop's Reflection: God's Gift of Merciful Love and Forgiveness

by Bishop Michael Duca

On December 13, 2015, I will officially open the Door of Mercy at the Cathedral, thus beginning the Year of Mercy in our diocese. When Pope Francis proclaimed this Year of Mercy, he wrote:

“We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.”

There is no doubt that the pope's focus on the Mercy of God is a welcomed theme and one that resonates warmly in our hearts. However, when we seriously reflect on the deeper mystery of God's mercy instead of just the human virtue of mercy, we will discover a truth that will both comfort and challenge us at the core of our beings.

We should never be completely comfortable with our understanding of the ways of God. God will always be more than we can imagine. This is true of the mercy of God, which by human standards is scandalously generous. We should be thankful that God's love is so generous. As human beings we often profess to be forgiving and to believe that God is forgiving, but most of us have a limit, a moment when we say, “I can forgive most people. I believe God forgives everyone, but that person, what they did, I don't think even God can forgive them!” It is equally tragic when we convince ourselves that we committed a sin God cannot forgive.

Of course we should know God's love for us is not limited and we should appreciate that this wonderful mystery of God's love will both comfort and challenge us. Wonderfully, God does not move away from the sinner, but rather surprisingly pursues us to bring us back into a loving encounter. God moves close to us with eyes of love that see beyond our sin to the goodness within us. We are made in His image and God always sees His goodness within us and He wants us to see that goodness too. In God's mercifulness, He draws near with love and invites us to throw off the sin in our lives – our fear, shame, greed, lust, pain – and seek

His forgiveness so we might be free to love as God first loved us. His merciful love is what causes God to see the goodness in each one of us in spite of our sins. This is a life changing assurance because as we become aware of our own sinfulness, we are comforted that God's love is greater and forgives us, even if we feel unworthy. This knowledge opens us to the “hope of being loved despite our sinfulness.”

As we are comforted by the depth of God's love, at the same time we face the challenge of this love. As God's merciful love moves close to the sinner, we, as disciples, are to love others with the same merciful love. This is hard. Every time we judge someone without mercy, we put their perceived sins first before we look at them with eyes of love and respect. Every time we refuse to forgive we live without the merciful love that allows forgiveness and healing. In this Year of Mercy we must seek a deeper conversion of heart that will overcome our self-righteousness and fear so we can become agents of God's merciful love and others will come to know the mercy of God through us.

If this Year of Mercy is to make a difference in our lives, we should pray to be more aware of our need for mercy. I suggest this year we all make a serious examination of our consciences and make a good confession. This may be difficult since we can get out of the habit of even being aware of our sins, explaining them away as personality traits or by exempting ourselves from the demands of the Gospel or the demands of love. Pray for a deep spiritual awareness of your need of God's mercy and how generous the love of God is. The more we are aware of our own need of mercy, the more merciful we will be with others.

Next, consider your family and examine which relationships are determined by negative emotions like grudges, anger, judging and disappointment that affect the quality of your love. Remember, we are to be agents of mercy so we need to strive to make love the inspiration and foundation for all our relationships with others, from family to the stranger we encounter during the day.

In this Year of Mercy let us grow in the knowledge of God's love for us. May this knowledge and joy free us to love others as God first loved us.

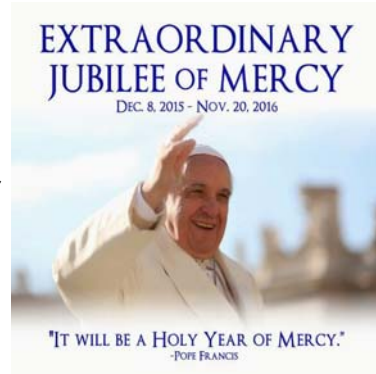


**PRAYER FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY**

written by Pope Francis

**Lord Jesus Christ,** You 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.**

The Church is celebrating an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy from Dec. 8, 2015, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, to Nov. 20, 2016, the feast of Christ the King. Pope Francis, who announced the year in March 2015, has said that it is his wish that "the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective."

**50 IDEAS FOR CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY**

**Feed the Hungry:**

- Make sandwiches and pass them out to the homeless
- Keep granola bars in your car to pass out to people in need at stop-lights
- Take a friend out to lunch, your treat
- Keep a list of local food banks and soup kitchens in your car, to pass out to those who could use such service
- Volunteer at a food bank or soup kitchen
- Organize a Catholic Relief Services Food Fast
- Prepare and take a meal to someone in your community who is seriously ill or welcoming home a newborn
- Give to or host a food drive

**Give Drink to the Thirsty:**

- Pass out water bottles to the homeless
- Pay for the coffee of the person behind you at the coffee shop
- Take a cold glass of water to a neighbor doing yard work
- Donate baby formula to the local pregnancy help center
- Work a drink station at a charity race

**Clothe the Naked**

- Go through your closet and give away what you haven't worn in a year
- Give away any clothes you do not need

- Host a clothing drive and donate the items
- Knit, crochet, or sew baby blankets for the local pregnancy center or for new babies in your parish
- Knit, crochet or sew blanket for the VA of homeless shelter
- Host a mensware only clothing drive and donate the items to Catholic Charities of NW Louisiana



**Shelter the Homeless:**

- Organize and help repair senior parishioners homes
- Keep a list of local homeless shelters on hand to pass out to those you meet on the street
- Become a mentor to a foster child
- Send a care package with special treats to an orphanage
- Help a working family towards adoption by hosting a fundraiser for them
- Sponsor a child through the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging

**Visit the Sick:**

- Volunteer at a hospital
- Volunteer at a nursing home
- Send flowers or a card to someone who know who is in the hospital
- Take the Eucharist to the home-bound in your community
- Visit the seriously or terminally ill members of your church
- Sponsor an elderly person through the Catholic Foundation for Children and Aging

**Visit the Imprisoned:**

- Lead a bible study at a local prison
- Help with a communion service or mass at a prison
- Donate bibles and/or spiritual reading materials to a prison
- Mentor a teen at a juvenile correction center

**Bury the Dead:**

- Attend wakes and/or funerals in your parish
- Volunteer at a hospice program
- Supply a dish for a funeral luncheon
- Help a widow or widower in need with yard work or errands.
- Visit the cemetery and pray for the dead
- Donate to ministries that offer free Catholic burials to those who are unable to afford one

The Diocese of Shreveport will be adding resources and more to its website throughout the year so be sure to check in periodically to see what they've added!

[www.dioshpt.org/news/year-of-mercy-resources/](http://www.dioshpt.org/news/year-of-mercy-resources/)