

LENT 2016

Planning for The Year of Mercy



Bishop Patrick: *“In this coming year, I would like each parish and each school to reflect upon what they are already doing, but through the lens of mercy, and then undertake one further act of mercy.”*

Pope Francis: *“The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person.”*

Session Three – mercy & evangelisation

Aim: to reflect on the need to listen to the voice of the Lord & seek a way back to him when we or others stray.

Corporal works of mercy

To feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; welcome the stranger; heal the sick; visit the imprisoned; bury the dead.

Spiritual works of mercy

To counsel the doubtful; instruct the ignorant; admonish sinners; comfort the afflicted; forgive offences; bear patiently those who do us ill; pray for the living & the dead.

Session Three – mercy & evangelisation.

Aim: to reflect on the need to listen to the voice of the Lord & seek a way back to him when we or others stray.

** As with the previous Sessions, gather with a group of friends from the parish, or with family members, or with your parish group – for example: the three church core groups related to the PPC, the prayer group, the choir, ministers of the eucharist, altar servers, sowing group, the Café Team, the Tea & Natter Team, Coffee Morning Team, Children’s Liturgy Teams, the Church in the Home Cell Groups etc. etc.*

** Choose a leader who can guide the group through the Session following the outline below.*

**Appoint someone from the group to make a note of the main findings of the session & give it to Fr. Jonathan for the Parish Office & the PPC to consider. The two Sessions for Lent look at some of the parables of Jesus about mercy and apply their teaching to our works of mercy.*

1. Welcome – *make sure everyone knows everybody. Have a drink & biscuit as everyone arrives – or maybe do this at the end of the Session.*

2. Opening Prayer. – you might like to sing a Hymn or listen to one. Then say a prayer. For example, this week or next week’s Prayer of the Week in the Newsletter.

Prayer of the Week- Fourth Week of Lent:

God, our Father, Jesus, your Son, revealed to us how you celebrate and rejoice when those who have become lost on life’s journey, find their way back to you. Fill me with your Holy Spirit so that this Lent I will be instrumental in reconciling someone back to you. Amen.

3. Read the parable of the lost sheep. Luke 15: 1-7: - *try sharing the Reading out between the group, taking a paragraph each?*

The tax collectors and sinners, were all crowding round to listen to him, and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable:

'Which one of you with a hundred sheep, if he lost one, would fail to leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep that was lost."

In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine upright people who have no need of repentance.

4. Questions: Then, the group considers the following questions – The word “lost” really means “perish”. So the one lost sheep is to be ruined or destroyed. How does this affect the motivation of the shepherd to seek out just one sheep, when he had plenty of others? How can we as a parish, as a Church be more involved in showing love & mercy by searching for the lost one? How can we join heaven in rejoicing each time a “lost” parishioner returns to faith & participation in church life?

5. Personal Experience: Encourage members of the group to share their own personal experiences of being lost or losing something valuable.

6. Teaching: Listen to the recording of Fr. Jonathan’s Teaching on the theme of mercy & evangelisation. Then the group shares their responses to the questions raised in the Teaching. [The Teaching is available on the parish website.]

7. What can we do in the parish? As you review your practical suggestions during the course of the evening, make a note of them so you can see how you are progressing and report back on your progress next time you meet. Also, remember to give Fr. Jonathan a copy of your suggestions for the Parish Office & the PPC to consider.

8. Prayer Response: Have a time of shared prayer, praying about the issues you have looked at as a group. **Thank God** for guiding your decision making. *Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.* **Ask God** for the practical wisdom and other gifts /resources you will need to show mercy to the lost. *Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.*

9. Finish with the Year of Mercy Prayer.

YEAR OF MERCY PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have 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. You are the visible face of the invisible Father, let the Church be your visible face of forgiveness and mercy in the world. You willed that your ministers would feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel 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 of you, Lord Jesus, 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.