



In the context of the Royal Commission

- New Evangelisation – when we have never been more distrusted and held up to criticism
- Now because of our sins of deed and omission we are becoming a more vulnerable and much less powerful and respected church
- Yet there may be a special meaning & opportunity in this

Pope Francis' Basic Spirituality

- "I am a sinner upon whom the Lord has turned his gaze"
- Only those who have known mercy can show mercy
- Source of his spirituality, his vision, his mission and his effectiveness
- It was makes him.....



A redeemed and happy man



Called to be sinners with people

- The sexual abuse crisis may force us to be humble and respectful.
- We have been taken down from the pedestal and freed from perfection and power, to know shame, to feel powerlessness and to share the anxieties, struggles and "sins" of our brothers and sisters.
- We are called to live in humble solidarity with those to whom we are missioned.
- Having needed and received mercy we may be better able to show it

Called to compassion & silence

"The church must discover the power of silence, confronted with the sorrows, doubts and uncertainties of people, she cannot pretend to give easy solutions. In Jesus, silence becomes the way of attentive listening, compassion and prayer. It is the way to truth."
Cardinal Tagle, Manila

To be merciful

- Mission to be with > for or to
- This is what mercy looks like in action: It consoles, it liberates, it gives courage, it brings light, it offers help.
- It is the Church that is not afraid to eat and drink with prostitutes and publicans. The Church that has the doors wide open to receive the needy, the penitent, and not only the just or those who believe they are perfect!

Our image of God



A vulnerable God?

- We want God to be powerful
- A God who is in charge, fix our problems, give us clear directions, and rescue us from our crises
- But Jesus finds God's love in rejection, darkness, failure & death
- He proves he is God by not coming down from the cross. Kasper
- God's love is vulnerable & contrary to human power
- God is active in pain, suffering, confusion, uncertainty and ambiguity
- And in mercy

Year of Mercy



Pope Francis' call to mercy

"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 the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness." MV 2

Pope Francis' Theology of Mercy

- With "mercy" he has rescued for us the virtue which in the Old & New Testaments had defined God.
- In the Bible "mercy" is God's defining attribute versus the metaphysical understanding of God which stresses Being, Power, Knowledge and as "a-pathetic"

Mercy in the Old Testament

- "A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." Ex 34:6-7 similar Ps 103:8
- "He heals the broken hearted, and binds up their wounds... The Lord lifts up the downtrodden, he casts the wicked to the ground" (Ps 147:3, 6). "For his mercy endures forever" Ps 136
- Divine wrath always leads to another chance for forgiveness. "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you" Is. 54:7-8

Mercy in the New Testament

- Jesus is the face of the Father's mercy MV1
- Jesus has compassion for beggars, the sick, demoniacs, blind, homeless, those suffering cultural taboos, even in his interpretation of Sabbath laws.
- "Jesus, seeing the crowds of people who followed him, realised that they were tired and exhausted, lost without a guide, and felt compassion for them (Mt 9.36) MV 8
- Parables of the Good Samaritan Lk 10:25-37 and the prodigal son. Lk 15:11-32 define God

Mercy at Vatican II

- The Church sensed a responsibility to be a living sign of the Father's love in the world. MV 4
- "Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up arms of severity... show herself a loving mother to all; patient, kind, moved by compassion and goodness toward her separated children". John XXIII

Church's Mission [EG & MV]

- What "the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle."
- The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel. EG 114
- "The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love." MV 10

Church & Mercy II

- "It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope." MV 10
- The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open. One concrete sign of such openness is that our church doors should always be open, so that if someone, moved by the Spirit, comes there looking for God, he or she will not find a closed door. This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself "the door": baptism. The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. EG 47

Mercy in practice

- 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, and 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, and pray for the living and the dead. MV 15

Mercy is God's Justice

- Kasper, W. *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*.
- "For I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath." Hos 11:9
- *Mercy is God's inscrutable and sovereign otherness.*
- *Mercy Holiness, Justice and Fidelity of God*
- *Mercy is God's creative and fertile justice*

Without mercy God is not God

- "If God limited himself to only justice, he would cease to be God, and would instead be like human beings who ask merely that the law be respected. But mere justice is not enough." MV 21
- "God does not deny justice. He rather envelopes it and surpasses it with an even greater event in which we experience love as the foundation of true justice." MV 21

Personal Serenity

- Forgive or live in lonely bitterness
- "Two wolves fighting in my heart"
- "At times it seems hard to forgive, and yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully." MV 9

Thank you



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