



## ***Lent 2016 – incorporating Year of Mercy***

*“The season of Lent during the Jubilee Year should be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God’s mercy.” Pope Francis - Misericordiae Vultus paragraph 17*

At the heart of our Lenten activities each year is a desire to grow closer to God, to become a true follower and disciple of Jesus, and to reflect God’s love more radiantly in our world. This year, as we celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy, there is an opportunity for us to spend Lent looking at who the God of Mercy, the God of Jesus is, and the response that draws from us. This year, you are invited to commit to a journey, a journey of discovery of what mercy is and who the God of Mercy is who seeks us out.

### **Ash Wednesday    Creating Space to encounter God                      Wed Feb 10th**

#### ***Sacred Space***

Clear the place you will use for this purpose....leaving it bare and cold....in the centre of the space, place a poster, Clearing the space for God.....perhaps in one area, there could be rocks/stones.....in another, an unlit candle...Remember it will only be like this for a few days so it is to create a sense of contrast with Week 1. In this space, you could leave some of the parish leaflets enclosed, which invite people to journey with the God of mercy this Lent.

### **Week 1                      What is Mercy?                      Sun Feb 14th**

#### ***Sacred Space***

Fashion a space that is rich and warm in colours, indicating mercy, compassion, welcome of God....place a large candle in the centre of the space....

Make a large poster with the word *Mercy* on it....and then in smaller print, place a few other words that come to your liturgy group as you brainstorm what mercy means....Don’t put too many alternative words or there will be no alternatives for people to add more

Place a sign near the sacred space and invite people to write what they think mercy is on small bits of card or paper and to place them in the space....

### ***At Sunday Mass***

#### **Homily**

Reflection on what mercy might mean – unpacking the meaning of the word, Mercy...*Misericordiae Vultus Paragraphs 6ff, 21*

#### **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The priest introduces the prayer and a member of the congregation, e.g. minister of the Word, leads the petitions.*

Priest: O God you call us to live life to the full.

At the beginning of this season of Lent,  
may we embrace the fullness of our life in Christ Jesus.

Reader: For our leaders of Church and State, that they may be led by Christ's  
example of mercy....*Lord hear us*

Reader: For all Christians, may we work to banish injustice during these Lenten days, and be  
instruments of your mercy... *Lord hear us*

Reader: For all who are hungering for meaning and hope.....*Lord hear us*

Reader: For all who need to experience God's mercy .....*Lord hear us*

Reader: For all who are sick.....*Lord hear us*

Priest: Lord, with arms outstretched we call on your name:

You are our God; there is no other.  
Help us reflect your mercy to a world in need.  
We make this prayer in your abiding love,  
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

#### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

*The gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar by members of the congregation*

### **Week 2 When have we experienced mercy?**

**Sun Feb 21st**

#### ***Sacred Space***

Gather all the different words that people have used to describe mercy and put them together on the large poster with the alternative words for mercy that the liturgy group had already suggested....

Place a notebook in the sacred space and invite people to write their stories of mercy...when they experienced mercy in their own lives.....*the book could be some A4 sheets of paper bound together....at the top of each page, put the line 'I experienced mercy when.....*

### ***At Sunday Mass***

#### **Homily**

Reflection on how mercy touches our lives....when you have experienced mercy...what the experience of mercy does for someone, the importance of experiencing mercy...what response it can evoke from someone. *Misericordiae Vultus Paragraphs 17,19,21,22*

## **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The priest introduces the prayer and a member of the congregation, e.g. minister of the Word, leads the petitions.*

Priest: O God, aware of the challenges we face,  
we look to you for guidance and support.  
Hear the prayers we bring before you:

Reader: For all leaders, that they be hearers of God's word of mercy.....*Lord, hear us*

Reader: For all people, that they may know themselves as God's beloved. *Lord, hear us*

Reader: For all who seek to hear God's mercy. *Lord, hear us*

Reader: For all who are anxious or fearful, that they may know Christ's presence with them.....*Lord, hear us*

Reader: For all who are sick.....*Lord hear us*

Priest: Lord, with arms outstretched we call on your name:  
You are our God; there is no other.  
Help us reflect your mercy to a world in need.  
We make this prayer in your abiding love,  
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

## **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

*The gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar by members of the congregation*

### **Week 3 Where do we see mercy happening in our world?**

**Sun Feb 28<sup>th</sup>**

#### ***Sacred Space***

Leaving the poster with Mercy and other words in the sacred space...and leaving the book of people's stories of mercy, now this week you add pictures of where mercy is happening in the world, in our country, in your own locality....Again, put a certain number of images into the space and invite people to add their own....you could also invite the local schools to add their pictures of where mercy is alive and happening, of what mercy looks like in action....

#### ***At Sunday Mass***

##### **Homily**

Reflection on the Church as an agent of mercy and compassion in society... agencies of mercy in our community and in the world – look at the work of Trócaire...

Also remind people that the Celebration of the 24 hours with Jesus which Pope Francis has called for Friday and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> of March is taking place in Cahersiveen and Listowel this year.

*Jesus reveals the nature of God as that of a Father who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy.'*

**Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*. Paragraph 9**

## **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The priest introduces the prayer and a member of the congregation, e.g. minister of the Word, leads the petitions.*

Priest: O God of mercy and compassion, aware of the challenges we face,  
we look to you for guidance and support.

We present to you our needs:

Reader: For all Church leaders, that mercy and compassion may be the mark of their leadership...*Lord hear us*

Reader: For all the baptised, that they may live out their baptismal commitment with sincerity of heart. *Lord hear us.*

Reader: For all political leaders ... That the example of Jesus' leadership may act as a guide for them - May they be sensitive to the needs of people, and ease their burdens. *Lord hear us*

Reader: For those forced to flee their homes as a result of war, poverty or oppression. May they find strong hope in God, who shows compassion to those who are lowly and weak. *Lord hear us*

Reader: For all whom we will meet this week...that we may treat them with Christ's love and mercy...*Lord hear us*

Priest: Lord, with arms outstretched we call on your name:

You are our God; there is no other.

Help us reflect your mercy to a world in need.

We make this prayer in your abiding love,

Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

## **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

*The gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar by members of the congregation*

### **Week 4 Encountering the God of mercy**

**Sun Mar 6th**

#### ***Sacred Space***

At this stage the Sacred Space could get cluttered...be wise...keep the central space around the candle for the particular focus of the week and then move last week's focus further out around the space...

The Gospel this Sunday is the story of the Prodigal Son...many parishes have pictures of Rembrandt's prodigal son since the Jubilee Year...it is also easy to print a poster of it from the web....Allow this image to take centre stage with the large candle this week....place copies of the Gospel story in the space that people might take with them...*there is a shortened version plus a reflection at the end of this resource that might be helpful*

Place the notebook with stories of people's experience of mercy to one side and invite people to add their stories of experiences of God's mercy in their lives..... *at the top of each page, you could put the line 'I experienced God's mercy when.....'*

### **At Sunday Mass**

#### **Homily**

Reflection on God's way of mercy, God's persistent seeking of us, God's unconditional love...  
*Misericordiae Vultus Paragraphs 1,9*

#### **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The priest introduces the prayer and a member of the congregation, e.g. minister of the Word, leads the petitions.*

- Priest: O God of mercy and compassion, aware of the challenges we face,  
we look to you for guidance and support.  
We present to you our needs:
- Reader: For our leaders of Church and State, that they may be led by Christ's example of mercy  
and compassion....*Lord hear us*
- Reader: For all of our brothers and sisters in the developing world – that we may respond to  
their needs through our Lenten commitments...*Lord hear us*
- Reader: For all who are preparing for baptism .....*Lord hear us*
- Reader: For each one of us here today, that we may realise how the Holy Spirit within us is  
our life, and inspires us to become agents of mercy and peace.... *Lord hear us*
- Reader: For all who are sick.....*Lord hear us*
- Reader: For all who have died.....*Lord, hear us*
- Priest: Lord, with arms outstretched we call on your name:  
You are our God; there is no other.  
Help us reflect your mercy to a world in need.  
We make this prayer in your abiding love,  
Through Christ our Lord.
- All: Amen

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

*The gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar by members of the congregation*

## **Week 5      Drawing close to Jesus, the face of God's mercy      Sun Mar 13th**

### **Sacred Space**

Leaving the picture of the Prodigal Son or something similar centre stage, this week, you might place phrases from the Gospels of how Jesus reflects God's mercy e.g. *Go, your faith has saved you, Of course I want to heal you, Jesus, moved with pity ...* think of times he encountered people and touched their lives with his mercy....you might leave copies of these phrases that people can take with them....

## *At Sunday Mass*

### **Homily**

Jesus' compassion for the woman caught in adultery...his respect for her dignity...his focus on her as a person, rather than his focus on her sin.... *Misericordiae Vultus Paragraphs 8, 9*

### **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The priest introduces the prayer and a member of the congregation, e.g. minister of the Word, leads the petitions.*

Priest: O God of mercy and compassion, aware of the challenges we face,  
we look to you for guidance and support.

Reader: The response is *A Thiarna, bí ceansa and eist linn.*

For all Christian leaders, that they make the commandment to love God and our neighbour a priority in their decision-making— *A Thiarna, éist linn*

Reader: For all women and children who suffer as a result of their gender. May their oppressors' eyes be opened and the true potential of each be realised *A Thiarna, éist linn*

Reader: For the grace of humility: that all may be open to the guidance of the Spirit in following the way of Christ – *A Thiarna, éist linn*

Reader: for ourselves – that we may be so moved when we see injustice, dishonesty and poverty that we are spurred into action. – *A Thiarna, éist linn*

Reader: For all who have died..... *A Thiarna, éist linn*

Priest: Lord, with arms outstretched we call on your name:

You are our God; there is no other.

Help us reflect your mercy to a world in need.

We make this prayer in your abiding love,

Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

*The gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar by members of the congregation*

## **Week 6      Being people of mercy for the world today      Sun Mar 20<sup>th</sup>**

### ***Sacred Space***

We see in the Gospel that when people encounter God's mercy, they respond generously, openly, courageously....so also in our lives. When we have really known God's loving mercy, we become more merciful and compassionate towards others.

This week, you might place some of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy on small cards or sheets...perhaps 1 or 2 of each and invite people to become a face of God's mercy in the community...

### ***At Sunday Mass***

#### **Homily**

The joy and faithfulness of the disciples in doing what Jesus asks...the delight in what they have seen Jesus do...our delight in what God has done in our lives, in the world...a sense of compassion and gratitude as we see the journey to the Passion that Jesus takes on our behalf...we journey with the merciful Jesus through the darkness of his passion.. *Misericordiae Vultus Paragraphs 7, 15,22*

#### **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The priest introduces the prayer and a member of the congregation, e.g. minister of the Word, leads the petitions.*

Priest: O God of mercy and compassion, aware of the challenges we face,  
we look to you for guidance and support.

We present to you our needs:

Reader: For leaders of Church and State, that they may do what is right in a spirit of  
mercy....*Lord, hear us*

Reader: For all Christians, that they have the courage of faithfulness to Christ...*Lord, hear us*

Reader: For all involved in public life, that they may not be swayed simply by the louder or  
stronger voice.....*Lord, hear us*

Reader: For those who are displaced from their own homes: that they may draw strength from  
our support of prayer and support – *Lord hear us*

Reader: For all who have died.....*Lord, hear us*

Priest: Lord, with arms outstretched, we call on your name:

You are our God; there is no other.

Help us reflect your mercy to a world in need.

We make this prayer in your abiding love,

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All: Amen

#### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

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