



## DIOCESE OF KAMLOOPS

December 8, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

**Pope Saint John Paul II** - At the close of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 Pope Saint John Paul II wrote the Apostolic Letter **‘The New Millennium’** (*Nuovo Millennio Ineunte*)\*. In his Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee he expressed the hope that the bimillennial celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation would be lived as “one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity” and also “as a journey of reconciliation and a sign of true hope for all who look to Christ and to his Church.” (\*A *Papal Bull* is an official document issued by the Pope or by his offices. The name is derived from the lead seal (*bull*) traditionally affixed to such a document.)

In his Apostolic Letter Saint John Paul II stated, “Two thousand years have gone by, but sinners in need of mercy – and who is not? – still experience the consolation of that ‘today’ of salvation which on the Cross opened the gates of the Kingdom of God to the repentant thief: ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise’ (Lk 23:43).”(NMI-4)

The saint said of the great legacy of mercy, “I would not hesitate to describe it as the contemplation of the face of Christ: Christ considered in his historical features and in His mystery, Christ known through his manifold presence in the Church and in the world, and confessed in the meaning of history and the light of life’s journey.”(NMI-15)

**Pope Francis** - On the Sunday of Divine Mercy, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Pope Francis in the Bull of Indiction announced the **Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy** which is to begin on December 8<sup>th</sup> – the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

As Saint John Paul II invited us in 2000 to contemplate the face of Jesus, Pope Francis calls on us now “to contemplate the mystery of mercy” – “Jesus is the face of the Father’s mercy” (1).

The Holy Father then contemplates the mystery of mercy -

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 despite our sinfulness



## DIOCESE OF KAMLOOPS

### **Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.**

Pope Francis begins by showing how the psalms present the grandeur of God's merciful action. God forgives, heals, redeems, loves, feeds, executes justice and crowns with steadfast love - Ps 103:3-4; Ps 147:3,6; Ps 147:3,6; and in Ps 136, the Great Hallel, affirms the mercy of God through the events of the Old Testament with the words, "For His mercy endures forever."

At the last supper before leaving for the Mount of Olives Jesus sang this psalm of mercy placing Himself and His paschal sacrifice in the light of His mercy.

"With our eyes fixed on Jesus and His merciful gaze, we experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity"(8).

### **Mercy: The ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us.**

"The mission Jesus received from the Father was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness(8)."

God is love and this love has been made visible and tangible in Jesus' entire life, His person is love and nothing in Him is devoid of compassion. In the Gospels Jesus shows and teaches the message of mercy in His words and actions and gives the message that "mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life" (10) and "the time has come for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more"(10).

### **Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters.**

We are called to be merciful like the Father. We see how God loves us in His mercy when we call upon Him to come to our assistance He shows us when we call upon Him in our weakness.

In the Holy Year we are to open our eyes to see the misery of others, hear their cry and reach out reflecting on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy:

#### *CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY*

1. To feed the hungry
2. To give drink to the thirsty
3. To clothe the naked
4. To harbor the harbourless
5. To ransom the captive
6. To visit the sick
7. To bury the dead

#### *SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY*

1. To admonish the sinner
2. To instruct the ignorant
3. To counsel the doubtful
4. To comfort the sorrowful
5. To bear wrongs patiently
6. To forgive all injuries
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

Jesus tells us that we will be asked if we have helped others (Mt. 25:31-45).



## DIOCESE OF KAMLOOPS

### **Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man opening our hearts to the hope of being loved despite our sinfulness**

During this Jubilee Year the season of Lent is to be seen as a special time, accompanied by Isaiah to experience and celebrate God's mercy in a more intense way through prayer, fasting, works of charity and by placing the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a means of experiencing God's mercy and peace.

Priests have received the gift of the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins and in joy, as faithful servants of God's mercy, are to welcome the repentant sinner who has come home.

At the end of his letter Pope Francis draws our attention to the Mother of Mercy.

“Chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, Mary, from the outset, was prepared by the love of God to be the Ark of the Covenant between God and man. She treasured divine mercy in her heart in perfect harmony with her Son Jesus.”(24)

“Her life is authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing herald of mercy. She knows that her primary task, especially at a moment full of great hopes and signs of contradiction, is to introduce everyone to the great mystery of God's mercy by contemplating the face of Christ.”(25)

Yours in Christ

Most Reverend David J. Monroe  
Bishop of Kamloops