2018

MERCY PARTNERS ®
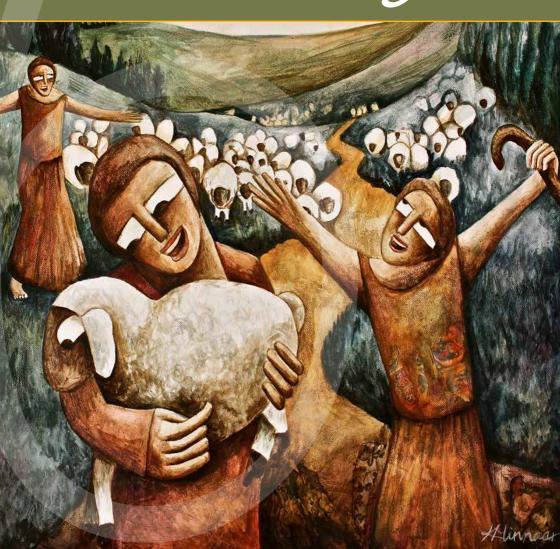
Walking in Mercy

Gathering: In belonging to a group, club, team, school or church, you receive and you give. By participating you develop relationships, you share common goals, you seek to achieve and your achievements can be celebrated communally. Jesus embodies the importance of community in living God's mercy in the world and the *Theological Framework* suggests that the New Testament, like the Old, stresses mercy as a gift and a way of being.

From the *Theological Framework*

Mercy arrives then as both gift and command: a new life for a new way of living. The New Testament declares that God willingly enters disordered and violent human relations in the most heart-rending way, revealing the meaning of mercy as "the willingness to enter the chaos of another." In Jesus, we encounter a God who heals the sick, feeds the hungry, befriends outcasts, and forgives, and asks all others to join in this way of living mercy in the world. The experience of mercy in relation to Jesus offers a new vision for community and thus a new way of structuring human relations. By his teaching, death, and resurrection, he gives life to a being-in-community that no longer secures identity and allegiance according to rivalry and scapegoating violence, and that in turn forms communal relations according to a different way, namely: friendship, mutual understanding, forgiveness, and self-sacrificing love (Ephesians 4:32-5:2).

For personal reflection

How are friendship, mutual understanding, forgiveness, and self-sacrificing love evident in your work?

Ephesians 4:32

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted,

Reading

Paul had a concrete missionary strategy of building living communities able to produce a visible and believable message. Yet for centuries we've interpreted his message as if he is speaking about individuals being privately "saved." This has made Paul seem more like a mere moralist than the mystic he is. Mystics tend to see things in wholes rather than getting preoccupied with the parts.

Paul believes that corporate evil can only be overcome or confronted with corporate good. He uses primitive yet powerful words for the negative side of corporations, institutions, and nations: he calls them "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers".

– Colossians 1:16.

These are not "bad angels" as much as collective attitudes that are almost impossible to break. Because they are so widely shared as mass consciousness—the way we're programmed to think—they no longer look like evil and are hard to resist. Murder is bad, but war is good; greedy people are bad, but capitalism is going to save the world; ambition and pride are supposedly major sins.

– Richard Rohr OFM, *The Apostle Paul*. Read the full document at goo.gl/unYhyb.

Discussion

Jesus and Paul promote a new social structure of mutuality, community and care for all. How can we promote and live the way of mercy in our ministries?

Prayer

Living God,
You give us mercy as a gift and command,
Remind us always to keep our focus on the whole, the good, the positive and the communal.
Help us to confront injustice and violence.
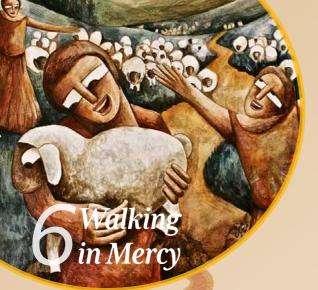Strengthen us to embody mercy and compassion in all that we do.
Amen.

Reference: *Mercy Partners Theological Framework,*
Chapter 2 – The Experience of God's Mercy.

forgiving one another"

6 *Walking in Mercy*

The Path of God's Mercy

A journey in scripture, church and human experience

Mercy is Relational

Mercy is Communion

Mercy is Covenant

God's Eternal Mercy

Gospel of Mercy

Walking in Mercy

Church of Mercy

Hearts of Mercy

God's Name 'Mercy'

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