

Article by the Prelate in "Avvenire"

An article by Bishop Javier Echevarría, published in "Avvenire," expressing gratitude for the Jubilee Year of Mercy in the Church. "A person who has experienced mercy is called to communicate it to others."

11/20/2016

At the close of the Holy Year of Mercy, a strong sense of gratitude unites the whole Church. In first place, filial gratitude to the Blessed Trinity, whose abundant gifts have

enabled us to experience God's infinite love for each man and woman, for each of us. And also union with the intentions of Pope Francis, who has convoked this Jubilee to highlight more fully this fundamental aspect of the faith—that God is an immensely good Father—and to remind us that the path of our happiness passes through being *dispensers of mercy*.

For our gratitude to be fully sincere, it needs to be united to the deep desire to improve personally. A person who has experienced mercy—by having recourse to the sacrament of confession, spending time in prayer, passing through a holy door or accepting the help of a brother or sister—is called to communicate it to others through their own life.

This Jubilee should leave a deep imprint on our soul. And it will do so

if we grow in our desire for holiness, if we have more frequent recourse to the sacraments, if we strive to improve our way of being. In short, it is an opportunity to help us embody more fully the image of Christ that others should be able to see in our life.

In the many places in today's world where the echo of the Gospel is no longer heard, we Christians face the challenge of the "first evangelization." "Where is your God," these people might ask us. And they will discover him in our prayer for those who offended us, in our care for the destitute, in our sympathy for those who are trapped in their vices, in the consolation we offer those who live alone, in the forgiveness we extend where society only speaks about justice, in the Christian coherence of our daily lives, in our work and family... By acting in this we, we too will grow in

our intimacy with God, because by acting in his name we will come to know him better and identify ourselves with him.

“If you wish to find God, seek him where he is hidden: in the needy, in the sick, in the hungry, in the imprisoned,” Pope Francis recently advised. We would impoverish our inner world if we were to refuse to deal with those who displease us, who are different, who could cost us time... Each person is “Christ passing by” our side, as Saint Josemaria, the founder of Opus Dei, liked to say.

Our daily life offers us many opportunities to be merciful: our home, our profession, our friends, making our way through the city, dealing with strangers... Saint Josemaria never tired of advising us to pray also for the people we see on the street; thus we will always be

ready to provide others the care they need.

Mercy is Love that reaches out to the needs of the others. And it invites us to turn our eyes to our Lady, who will teach us to be merciful and to welcome the Father's mercy into our own lives. Then we will experience more fully that we our brothers and sisters of all our fellow men and women.

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