

An Examination of Conscience

Love of God—(Mark 12:28-30). In what ways do I doubt God's love for me? In what particular areas am I called to be more obedient to God's commands?

Forgiveness—(Matthew 18:21-35; John 8:1-11). Do I accept God's forgiveness of all my sins? Do I find it hard to forgive myself? Are there situations in which I need to forgive? Perhaps I need to forgive someone who has hurt me.

Love for Others— (Luke 10:25-37; John 13:12-15). Where have I been selfish or arrogant or failed to care for others. Have I gossiped or slandered others?

Humility—(Mark 10:13-16; Philippians 2:6-11). Am I prideful? Am I self-sufficient, or do I turn to the Holy Spirit for the grace and power to overcome temptation and live a victorious Christian life?

Courage—(Joshua 1:7-9; Matthew 23:37-39). Do I speak out boldly when Christianity or my Catholic faith is challenged? Are there any fears that are holding me back from being the man or woman that God would have me be?

Prayer Intentions for Men and Women in Challenging Situations

- That all will know that their heavenly Father loves them unconditionally, and that there is nothing they have done that he doesn't long to forgive them for.
- That all will be able to find a time for daily prayer and reflection on Scripture and so experience God's love, mercy, and healing.
- That spouses, children, and parents of absent loved ones will experience God's presence and comfort, and that their practical needs will be met.
- That all priests, chaplains, and counselors will receive wisdom for their ministry to God's beloved sons and daughters.

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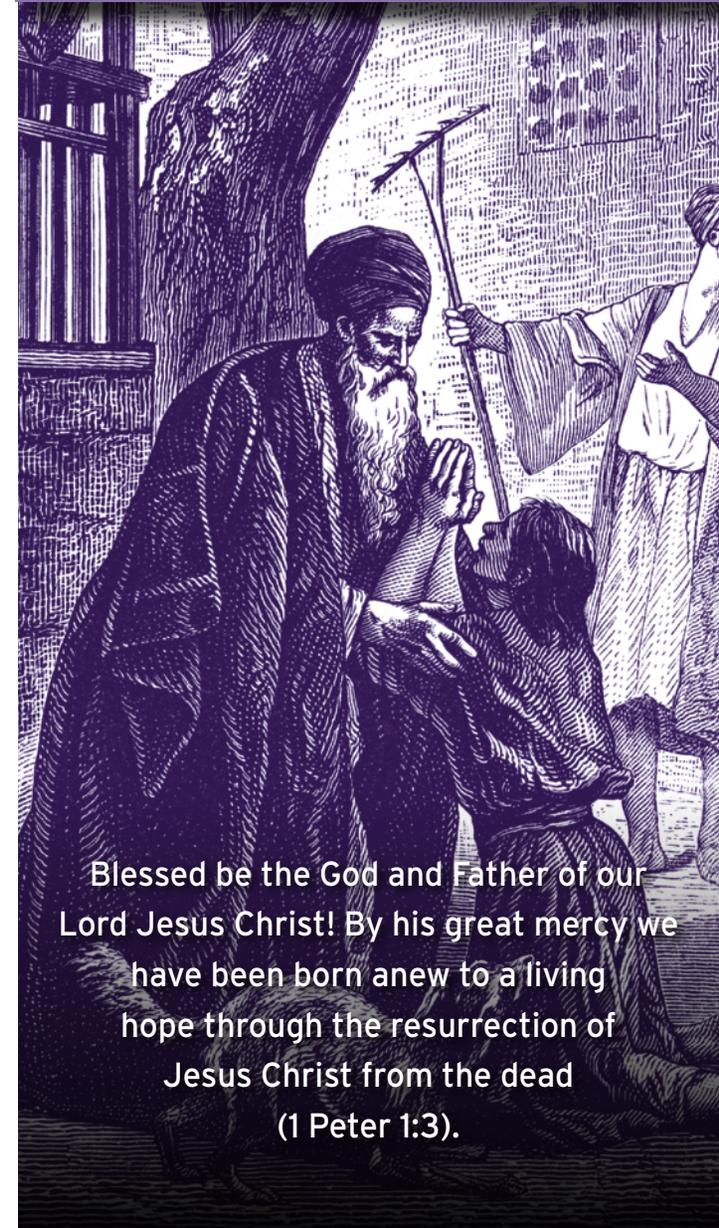
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Come Receive the Mercy of God!



Blessed be the God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we
have been born anew to a living
hope through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ from the dead
(1 Peter 1:3).

Every Lent the Church invites us to reflect upon and experience our heavenly Father's free gift of mercy.

During Lent, take some time in your daily prayer time or during Eucharistic Adoration to **reflect upon some of Pope Francis' encouraging words on the mercy of God**. He has frequently spoken of this great mercy of God in his homilies. He has even become known as the "Pope of Mercy."

"I am always struck when I reread the parable of the merciful Father (Luke 15:11-32). The Father, with patience, love, hope, and mercy, had never for a second stopped thinking about [his wayward son], and as soon as he sees him still far off, he runs out to meet him and embraces him with tenderness, the tenderness of God, without a word of reproach. . . . God is always waiting for us; he never grows tired. Jesus shows us this merciful patience of God so that we can regain confidence and hope—always!"

—*Homily on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7, 2013*

"God's patience has to call forth in us the courage to return to him, however many mistakes and sins there may be in our life. . . . It is there, in the wounds of Jesus, that we are truly secure; there we encounter the boundless love of his heart."

—*Homily on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7, 2013*

"Jesus' attitude is striking: we do not hear the words of scorn, we do not hear words of condemnation, but only words of love, of mercy, which are an invitation to conversion. 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again' (John 8:11).

—*Angelus on March 17, 2013*

"We need to understand properly this mercy of God, this merciful Father who is so patient. . . . Let us remember the Prophet Isaiah who says that even if our sins were scarlet, God's love would make them white as snow (see Isaiah 1:18). This mercy is beautiful."

—*Angelus on March 17, 2013*

"It is not easy to entrust oneself to God's mercy, because it is an abyss beyond our comprehension. But we must! . . . 'Oh, I am a great sinner!' All the better! Go to Jesus: he likes you to tell him these things! He forgets, he has a very special capacity for forgetting. He forgets, he kisses you, he embraces."

—*Homily on March 17, 2013*

Jesus Waits for Us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Lent is also a time to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Why? So that we—Jesus' brothers and sisters—can experience his unconditional love, mercy, and forgiveness. Yet many of us fear Confession. We are ashamed of our sins and fearful of telling the priest—and the Lord—what we did.

But Pope Francis encouraged all of us in a homily he gave at St. Martha's Residence on April 29, 2013 to meet Jesus in Confession.

"Look to your sins," Pope Francis said. "We are all sinners, all of us. This is the starting point. But if we

confess our sins, he is faithful. He is so just [that] he forgives us our sins.

"Confession is not like going to the dry cleaners to clean the dirt from our clothes," he said. "Jesus in the confession is not a dry cleaner: it is an encounter with Jesus, but with this Jesus who waits for us, who waits for us just as we are.

"We are often ashamed to tell the truth, the pope acknowledged. We say, 'But, Lord, look . . . this is how I am. . . I did this, I thought this.'" But shame, he emphasized, "is a true Christian virtue, a virtue of the humble, of the man and the woman who are humble.

"We must have trust, Pope Francis said, because when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He supports us before the Father and defends us in our weakness.

"Is going to Confession like going to a torture session?" Asked the pope. "No! It is going to praise God, because I, a sinner, have been saved by him. And is he waiting for me to beat me? No, with tenderness, to forgive me. And if tomorrow I do the same? Go again, and go and go and go."

"The Lord is tender towards those who come to him, and with tenderness he always understands us. . . . This is what happens in the Sacrament of Reconciliation."