

ask yourself: What role do the works of mercy play in your life? In what ways do they inspire you or beckon you to change?



*"It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy."*

— Pope Francis

## Hear a Message of Mercy

On Ash Wednesday, Pope Francis will send Missionaries of Mercy to dioceses around the world. He states that these priests will have "the authority to pardon sin," but they will also be "persuasive preachers of mercy." Find out if a Missionary of Mercy will be ministering in your diocese. The experience of encountering a missionary of mercy will lead you to a deeper understanding of God's mercy and a new sense of meaning and purpose in your life.



*"May the message of mercy reach everyone, and may no one be indifferent to the call to experience mercy."* — Pope Francis

## Spend Twenty-Four Hours with the Lord

Pope Francis has designated "24 hours for the Lord" on the Friday and Saturday preceding the Fourth Week of Lent. Find out how your diocese or your parish will celebrate these twenty-four hours. You can also make your own plans for "24 hours with the Lord" by setting aside that time for prayer, fasting, and deeper reflection. During this holy time, Pope



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Francis hopes that we will find ourselves "rediscovering a path back to the Lord."



*"Let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us."* — Pope Francis

## Receive God's Mercy

We are each called to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a means of experiencing God's mercy on a very personal level. Make it a point during this Lenten season to receive this life-changing sacrament. Use this opportunity to go deeply into your soul and eradicate any sinful tendencies that have accumulated over the years. We are all prone to selfishness, greed, gossip, envy, arrogance, and lack of trust in God. Now is the time to address all of the things that we think, say, and do that are not in keeping with the person that God is calling us to be.



KAREN CALLAWAY



*"Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the center once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God's mercy with their own hands. For every penitent, it will be a source of true interior peace."*

— Pope Francis

## Change Your Life

How will you use the forty days of Lent to journey to a deeper understanding of God's mercy? How will your life be changed? How will you reach out to others? How will others offer mercy to you?



*"This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched!"* — Pope Francis

## Additional Resources

### Books

*A Year of Mercy With Pope Francis: Daily Reflections*, Ed. Kevin Cotter (Our Sunday Visitor, 2014).

By the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization and published by Our Sunday Visitor:

*Celebrating Mercy*  
*Confession: The Sacrament of Mercy*  
*The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy*  
*Mercy in the Fathers of the Church*  
*Mercy in the Teaching of the Popes*  
*The Parables of Mercy*  
*The Psalms of Mercy*  
*The Saints in Mercy*

### Website

*Misericordiae Vultus* (Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy), Pope Francis.  
w2.vatican.va

Download our 365 Days to Mercy app free from the iTunes and Google Play app stores.

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# LENT

## A TIME FOR MERCY



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*"We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace."*

—Pope Francis

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What are you doing for Lent during this Jubilee Year of Mercy? Instead of giving up something, why not spend the forty days responding to the invitation of Pope Francis to pray and reflect on the mystery of mercy?

Pope Francis is asking that during this Jubilee Year, the season of Lent should be “lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God’s mercy.” He is calling us to immerse ourselves so deeply in the mercy of God that we will undergo a profound spiritual conversion. He hopes that we will transform our lives “so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God!”

What a powerful invitation! Here are some suggestions for Lenten resolutions that will help you put this invitation for spiritual conversion into action!



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## Discover God’s Mercy

Pope Francis points out that sacred Scripture will help us to “rediscover the merciful face of the Father.” Start by reading the Gospel of Luke, the Evangelist of Mercy, who reveals God’s mercy in the words and actions of Jesus. As you read, pause to contemplate the powerful examples of mercy in the stories of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the good Samaritan, the feeding of the multitudes, and the healing of people who are sick. Pope Francis

also recommends reading the Gospel of Matthew and the prophets Micah and Isaiah.



*“In this way, it will be possible to contemplate God’s mercy and adopt it as our lifestyle.” — Pope Francis*

## Pray the Psalms

Spend some time this Lent experiencing the immense mercy of God in the Psalms. Start with Psalm 136, which tells the story of God’s goodness and includes the refrain “for his mercy endures forever” after each verse. As you become more comfortable praying this psalm, you might want to add others to your Lenten prayer. Pope Francis suggests Psalms 25, 103, 146, and 147. You also might discover others that speak to your heart about God’s loving care.



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*“In a special way the Psalms bring to the fore the grandeur of his merciful action.” — Pope Francis*

## Meditate on Mercy

Pope Francis warns that “the practice of mercy is waning in the wider culture,” and, too often, “the word seems to have dropped out of use.” Dedicate some of your Lenten prayer time to meditating on the need for mercy in our world. We tend to think



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of mercy as compassion or sympathy, but the word has a much deeper meaning. Mercy means that we enter into the suffering of other people, place ourselves inside their hearts and minds, and then respond to their needs — in the same way that God responds to our needs when we cry out to him. Ask yourself: Who is in need of mercy in your family, your workplace, your community, your country, and the entire world?



*“It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that awakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope.” — Pope Francis*

## Reflect on the Life of Mary

This Jubilee Year is entrusted to Mary, our mother of mercy. Set aside time during this Lenten season to contemplate the life of Mary — her “yes” when asked to become the mother of Jesus, her visit to Elizabeth, the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus, her hidden life with him in Nazareth, how she witnessed the extraordinary acts of mercy he exhibited in his public life, and the way she stood by the foot of the cross as he forgave the people who crucified him. Ask yourself: In what ways does your life reflect the life of Mary?



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*“May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God’s tenderness.” — Pope Francis*



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## Deepen Your Love

Pope Francis tells us that the real meaning of love can never be selfish or superficial and that love, by its very nature, is something “concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviors that are shown in daily living.” Every morning during Lent, remind yourself that you are called to love God and to love your neighbor. Every evening examine your conscience in the light of how loving you were throughout the day.

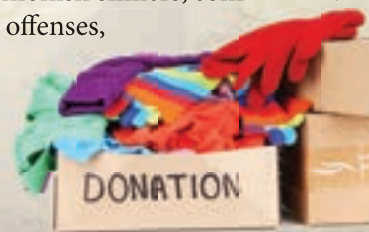


*“The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our well-being and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel.”*

— Pope Francis

## Rediscover the Works of Mercy

Reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works of mercy call us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy beckon us to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offenses, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead. As you reflect on the works of mercy,



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