

BEC REFLECTION OCTOBER 2016

Theme: Mary, our Mother of Mercy

Focus: To imitate Mary as our model and example of God's mercy to the world

Opening Hymn: O Come to the Throne of Grace

1. O come to the throne of grace,
O come to the heart most pure!
To Mary, our hope of life,
In whom salvation is sure.
2. Immaculate Heart! we kneel
To consecrate all to thee:
The present, its pain and joy
The future, all it may be.

Chorus:

O Queen of the rosary, hail!
Immaculate Mother of grace;
O, pray for us, help us today,
Thou hope of the human race!

Opening prayer – Invite a member of the BEC to say the opening prayer

Look at life

There are two reasons why Mary is called the Mother of Mercy. She was...

- 1) A woman who has uniquely experienced God's mercy – She has experienced the divine mercy, and bore the very source of this mercy in her womb: Jesus Christ.
- 2) A prophet extolling the mercy of God – In her hymn of praise, the *Magnificat*, she proclaimed the mercy of God to the world.

Reflection: Share with your group a moment when you have experienced God's mercy.

Listen to God (Luke 1:47 –55)

And Mary said:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant.
Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for me.
Holy is his name,
and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him.

He has used the power of his arm,
he has routed the arrogant of heart.
He has pulled down princes from their thrones
and raised high the lowly.

He has filled the starving with good things,
sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the help of Israel his servant,
mindful of his faithful love
according to the promise he made to our ancestors
of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

Reflection

- Be silent for a minute and allow God to speak to you
- Pick out a word or short phrases from the text above and repeat it three times
- Share with others the word or phrase that has touched you and why?

Live in Love

Suffering is all around us in this fallen world, yet God promises that He is loving and merciful. How can you reconcile these two realities that seem like they compete against each other?

The key is to look for God's mercy, even when it seems like it can't coexist with the suffering you encounter.

Here's how you can find God's mercy in the midst of suffering:

- *Look for God beside you.* God promises to be close to those who are suffering and brokenhearted.
- *Realize that some parts of faith only grow in the dark.* God uses the darkness of suffering to teach you valuable spiritual lessons that you couldn't learn in the bright light of good times.
- *Ask God for the help you need to overcome sin.* Face the reality that much of the suffering in our fallen world is caused by human sin. But count on the fact that God is merciful toward all sinners.
- *Listen for God speaking in the silence*
- *Ask God for the faith to move forward even when you're afraid.*
- *Participate in God's plan to end injustice in the world.* Recognize that all Christians have a crucial role to play in God's plan to free people the suffering caused by injustices such as addiction, oppression, disease, poverty, racism, and debt.
- *Forgive, so your suffering won't poison your soul with bitterness.*

Choose some of the above as you activity for the coming month.

Concluding prayer

Invite another member of the BEC to say the concluding prayer

Concluding hymn: Immaculate Mary

Immaculate Mary, thy praises we sing;
Who reignest in splendor with Jesus our King.
Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria!
Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria!

In heaven, the blessed thy glory proclaim;
On earth we, thy children, invoke thy fair name.
Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria!
Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria!

Food for thought:

At the foot of the Cross, Mary, together with John, the disciple of love, witnessed the words of forgiveness spoken by Jesus. This supreme expression of mercy towards those who crucified him show us the point to which the mercy of God can reach. Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the *Salve Regina*, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus.

- Pope Francis, MV #24