

Lenten Reflection 2015

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your merciful love;
according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.
Wash me completely from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.*

Psalm 51:3-4

In his 2015 Lenten Message, Pope Francis tells us “Lent is a time of renewal for the whole Church, for each community and every believer.” He goes on to emphasize just how much God cares for us. God loves us so much as to have sent Jesus into our world to save us from our sins.

Unfortunately, we have not always been as loving and caring. Especially when we are comfortable, we tend to become indifferent to the plight of others. Pope Francis calls this the “globalization of indifference,” and he appeals to us to use this Lent as a time for “internal renewal, lest we become indifferent and withdraw into ourselves.” To do this he recommends that we reflect on three scripture verses:

1, “If one member suffers, all suffer together” (1 Cor 12:26). Pope Francis refers this passage to the Church. He reminds us that we are all part of the Body of Christ and the communion of saints. As such we must be both recipients and givers of God’s gifts.

2. “Where is your brother?” (Gen 4:9). Here Pope Francis asks us to apply our loving concern to the real flesh and blood of our parishes and communities through prayer and outreach to those in need. His wish is that “especially our parishes and our communities may become islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference.”

3. “Make your hearts firm!” (James 5:8). This is Pope Francis’s call to individual Christians. Each of us can be overwhelmed by the flood of news about human suffering and environmental decay to the degree that we feel impotent to help in any way. Before this feeling immerses us in indifference, we can pray and engage in acts of charity. We can also recognize our own limitations and our dependence on God to extend compassionate care to our brothers and sisters, that is to everyone.

In sum, Pope Francis invites us to pray with him, “Make our hearts like yours.” “In this way,” he says, “we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference.”

Please spend some time with this reflection. Also consider doing the following:

- ❖ Read the complete Lenten Message of Pope Francis at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20141004_messaggio-quaresima2015.html.
- ❖ Pray, especially as part of the “24 Hours for the Lord” initiative from March 13th to the 14th.
- ❖ Resist indifference to the most marginalized and vulnerable among us. Below are just a few suggestions:
 - Donate food for the hungry and clothes for the needy.
 - Advocate for affordable housing, living wages, and universal health care.
 - Support immigration reform.
 - Learn how you can help end human trafficking; visit <http://lifewaynetwork.org>.
 - Oppose solitary confinement and all forms of torture; visit <http://www.nrcat.org/>
 - Promote responsible environmental policies and practices; visit <http://www.greenfaith.org/about>.
 - Attend the conference (April 24-25) and join the interfaith service, rally, march, and festival for nuclear weapons abolition on April 26th in Manhattan; visit <http://www.peaceandplanet.org> for details.

Join the 33rd Good Friday Way of the Cross organized by Pax Christi Metro New York on April 3rd, starting at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, E. 47th St. between 1st & 2nd Aves. at 8:30 AM. Commemorate Jesus’ passion in the suffering of people today.

*This reflection was prepared by Pax Christi Metro New York,
371 Sixth Avenue, New York, NY 10014;
212-420-0250; info@nypaxchristi.org; www.nypaxchristi.org*