

## Meditations on Mercy: March 2016

For each month of the Jubilee of Mercy, we offer reflections based on scripture passages that Pope Francis uses in his Bull *Misericordiae Vultus* (MV). By beginning with a scripture passage and a reference to paragraphs in *Misericordiae Vultus*, each reflection offers a way to more deeply embrace the call to embody mercy that is asked of every Christian. These reflections can be done on your own, with your family, or with small groups in your parish.

### GATHERING

(10 minutes)

- Pray: Prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee of Mercy ([www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/gdm/en/giubileo/bolla.html](http://www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/gdm/en/giubileo/bolla.html))
- Discuss: Outside of our group activity, how did you see the mercy of God working in your life over the past few weeks?

### MARCH 2016

Ps 136; MV, no. 7

*“Praise the Lord, for he is good; /  
for his mercy endures forever . . .*

*Who skillfully made the heavens, /  
for his mercy endures forever . . .*

*Who split in two the Red Sea, /  
his mercy endures forever . . .*

*Who struck down great kings, /  
his mercy endures forever . . .*

*The Lord remembered us in our low  
estate, / for his mercy endures forever . . .*

*Praise the God of heaven, / for  
his mercy endures forever.” (Ps  
136:1, 5, 13, 17, 23, 26)*

As Lent comes to a close, we prepare to celebrate the Triduum followed by the Resurrection of Christ at Easter. Psalm 136 reminds us that, even before the events of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, God has always been merciful in his actions and will always continue to be. In this psalm, we see examples of the way God’s loving mercy has been displayed in history—in creation, the exodus, and God’s defense of his Chosen People. As each of these events is described, God’s mercy is continually remembered and invoked. By repeating the refrain “his mercy endures forever,” we are reminded that God’s mercy knows no bounds. Pope Francis notes that this phrase “seems to break through the dimensions of space and time, inserting everything into the eternal mystery of love. It is as if to say that not only in history, but for all eternity man will always be under the merciful gaze of the Father” (MV, no. 7).

Just as our Lenten journey has been filled with works of mercy, so too is the celebration and remembrance of Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Christ’s Paschal Mystery is the ultimate sign of God’s mercy, because through it we are saved. In the Paschal Mystery, God offers a concrete sign of his merciful love. Through our participation in the [sacraments](#), we enter into

# Mercy in Motion

the Paschal Mystery and draw closer to God. For example, in [Baptism](#), we die to sin and rise to new life in Christ, being made sharers in Christ's Death and Resurrection.

At the Easter Vigil, the whole of salvation history will be played out on a small scale—we will hear readings that highlight the beginning of creation, Abraham and Isaac, the exodus, the covenants God has made with his people, and the Resurrection of Christ. After the readings, those who have been preparing to enter the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults ([RCIA](#)) will celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation—[Baptism](#), [Confirmation](#), and the [Eucharist](#). In each of these, the new members of the Church are drawn deeper into the Paschal Mystery. Those gathered to witness these celebrations are also drawn deeper into the loving mercy of God by renewing their own commitment to their faith and encouraging the new members in their faith.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Read through some of the important stories in salvation history (creation, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Isaac, etc. Check out [these](#) readings, which could be read during the Easter Vigil!). What do these teach us about God's mercy? How do God's actions in these situations affect the way we understand God's continual salvific work in our lives today? How do our actions of compassion fit into salvation history?
2. Try to attend your parish's Easter Vigil celebration this year. What are some symbols and actions that you experience during the celebration that recall God's merciful actions throughout salvation history? How does the initiation of new members into the Church demonstrate God's mercy?

## CLOSING PRAYER

(5 minutes)

- Assemble intentions and reflections from this week's gathering.

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