

# An Attitude of Mercy

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## CALL TO PRAYER

**LEADER:** A journalist for a major Catholic publication has observed that Pope Francis is directing the church toward an “attitude of mercy.” Mercy has been a recurrent theme in Francis’ homilies, and he mentioned it several times while speaking with journalists in July 2013 on the plane back from World Youth Day in Brazil. “I believe this is the time of mercy,” he said, “a change of epoch. It’s a *kairos* moment for mercy.”

As we pray together this day, let us consider the meaning and implications of mercy for ourselves and our organization as we listen to God’s word.

## READING 1 *John 8: 3-11*

Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And, in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where

are they? Has no one condemned you?” She replied, “No one, sir.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin any more.”

*(Silent reflection)*

## READING 2

*(Homily of Pope Francis at the Parish of St. Anna in the Vatican, March 17, 2013)*

“I think we too ... at times, like to find a stick to beat others with, to condemn others. And Jesus has this message for us: mercy, I think — and I say it with humility —that this is the Lord’s most powerful message: mercy. ... [Jesus] forgets, he kisses you, he embraces you and he simply says to you: ‘Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more’ (John 8:11).

*(Silent reflection)*

1. Where in my life do I need God’s mercy?
2. Do I have an attitude of mercy toward others?
3. Does our organization embody an attitude of mercy?

## RESPONSE

*Psalm 103: 1-4, 8-11, 13-14, 22*  
*(Alternate sides)*

Bless the Lord, my soul;  
all my being, bless his holy name!

*Bless the Lord, my soul;  
Do not forget all the gifts of God,*

Who pardons all your sins,  
heals all your ills,

*Delivers your life from the pit,  
Surrounds you with love and  
compassion,*

Merciful and gracious is the Lord,  
slow to anger, abounding in  
kindness.

*God does not always rebuke,  
nurses no lasting anger,*

Has not dealt with us as  
our sins merit,  
Nor required us as our  
deeds deserve.

*As the heavens tower over the earth,  
so God’s love towers over the  
faithful.*

As a father has compassion  
on his children,  
so the Lord has compassion  
on the faithful.

*For he knows how we are formed,  
remembers that we are dust.*

Bless the Lord, all creatures,  
everywhere in God’s domain.

*Bless the Lord, my soul!*

**ALL:** Lord God, you show such mercy toward your people and toward each of us. Let us be open to this mercy and to its healing effects. Assist us as individuals and as an organization to be the face and instrument of your mercy to others, to develop an attitude of mercy toward all with whom we are in contact. Let us be transformed into your mercy so that our eyes, our tongues, our hands, our minds and our hearts reflect and channel your mercy. Like Pope Francis, let us be able to say, “Who am I to judge?” and like Jesus, to be able to say, “Neither do I condemn you.” Let us each contribute to the *kairos* moment of mercy, this time of mercy. We ask this in your name. Amen.