# The Mission of the Missionaries of Mercy

**Fr. Roger J. Landry** New Missionaries of Mercy Training September 2023



### Overview of this Talk

- Welcome to this beautiful and fruitful work!
- Purpose of this talk is to give an overview to the history of the Missionaries of Mercy, the indications of Pope Francis, and an introduction to our specific duties and faculties.
- The basic outline is:
  - Pope Francis' decisions and words
  - Our three-fold mission
  - A brief introduction to our special faculties



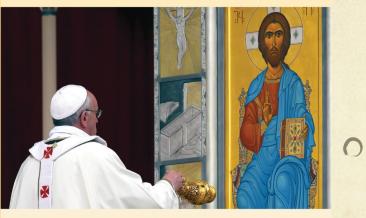
### Mercy in Pope Francis' Life

- The dawn of the realization of his vocation in the confessional of San Jose in Buenos Aires, Sept. 21, 1953.
- His pre-papal work as a confessor and words about divine mercy at the root of Christian identity.
- "Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?" (Sept. 19, 2013 interview).
- His papal motto: Miserando atque Eligendo.
- His first Sunday Mass and Angelus meditation. "God never tires of forgiving..."
- Jubilee of Mercy in response to the "Kairos of Mercy." (Dec. 8, 2015 through Nov. 20, 2016).

### Misericordiae Vultus, 18

April 11, 2015 (Divine Mercy Sunday) Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee of Mercy

#### MISERICORDIAE VULTUS



#### POPE FRANCIS



BULL OF INDICTION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

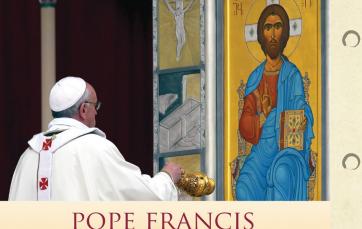
- "During Lent of this Holy Year, I intend to send out Missionaries of Mercy.
- "They will be a sign of the Church's maternal solicitude for the People of God, enabling them to enter the profound richness of this mystery so fundamental to the faith.
  - "There will be priests to whom I will grant the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See, so that the breadth of their mandate as confessors will be even clearer.
- "They will be, above all, living signs of the Father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon.

### Misericordiae Vultus, 18

April 11, 2015 (Divine Mercy Sunday) Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee of Mercy

- "They will be missionaries of mercy because they will be facilitators of a **truly human encounter**, a **source of liberation**, rich with responsibility for overcoming obstacles and taking up the new life of Baptism again.
  - "They will be led in their mission by the words of the Apostle: "For God has consigned all men to disobedience, **that he may have mercy upon all**" (*Rom*11:32).
  - "May these Missionaries live this call with the assurance that they can fix their eyes on Jesus, "the merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God" (*Heb* 2:17).
- "I ask my brother Bishops to invite and welcome these Missionaries so that they can be, above all, persuasive preachers of mercy.
  - "May individual dioceses organize 'missions to the people' in such a way that these Missionaries may be **heralds of joy and forgiveness**."

#### MISERICORDIAE VULTUS

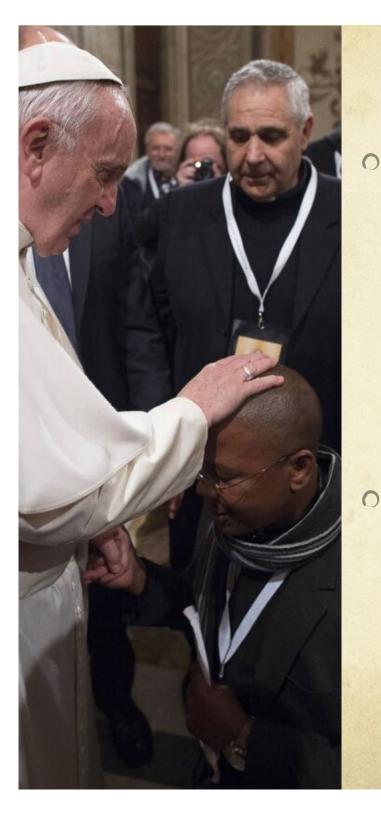


BULL OF INDICTION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY IUBILEE OF MERCY

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- "It is with great pleasure that I meet with you, before giving you the mandate to be Missionaries of Mercy.
- "Being a Missionary of Mercy is a responsibility that is entrusted to you, because it calls you to testify firsthand to the closeness of God and to *his* way of loving, ... *his* way of forgiving, which is truly mercy.
- "I should like to offer you a few brief reflections, so that the mandate you receive may be fulfilled in a consistent manner, and as a practical help for the many people who will approach you.



- "First of all I wish to remind you that in this mystery you are called to express the *motherhood of the Church*. The Church is Mother because she always generates new children in the faith, ... nourishes the faith, and ... offers God's forgiveness, regenerating a new life, the fruit of conversion. We cannot run the risk that a penitent not perceive the maternal presence of the Church, which welcomes and loves each one. We are called to be the living expression of the Church that as mother welcomes whomsoever approaches her, conscious that through the Church one is joined to Christ.
- "Entering the confessional, let us always remember that it is Christ who welcomes, it is Christ who listens, it is Christ who forgives, it is Christ who grants peace. We are his ministers; and we are always the first to be in need of being forgiven by him. ... Every missionary is called to remember his own existence as a sinner and to humbly act as a "channel" of God's mercy.

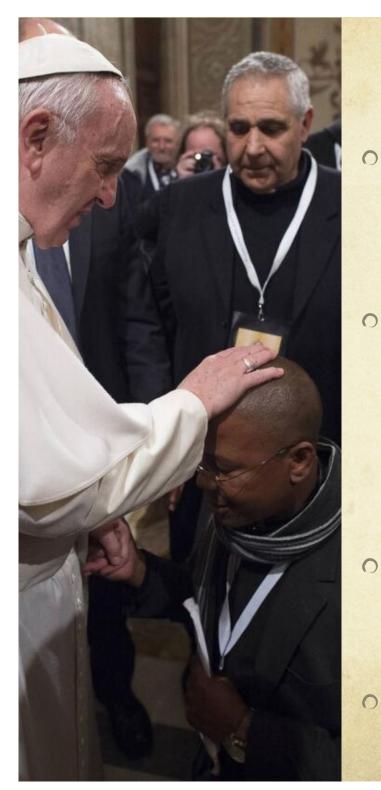


"Another important aspect is that of being able to perceive the *desire for forgiveness* present in the heart of the penitent. This desire is the fruit of the grace of God's action in people's lives. ... This very desire is at the start of conversion. The heart turns to God acknowledging the evil committed, but with the hope of obtaining forgiveness, ... in which we entrust ourselves to the mercy of God, and have full trust in being understood, forgiven and supported by him.

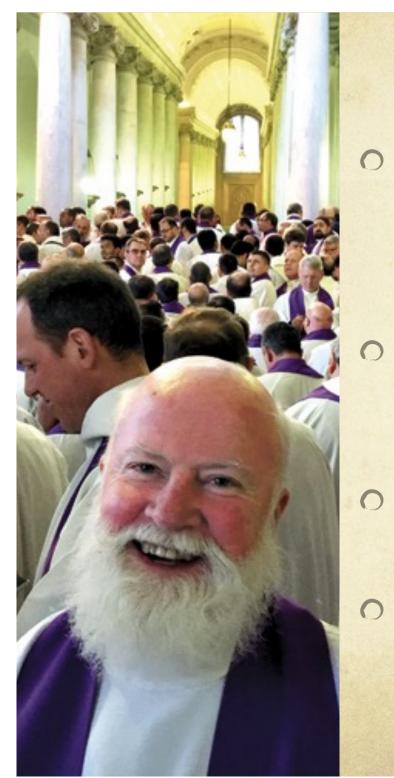
"I ask you to **understand** not only the language of words, but also **that of gestures.** [To understand what humbly coming forward means, even if one can't easily confess or express contrition in words.] ... **The Lord understands** these things. ... Receive everyone with the language of gestures. the **language by which they are able to communicate.** 



- "Lastly, I would like to recall … *shame*. It is not easy to place ourselves before another man, especially knowing that he represents God, and confess our sins.
- "Shame ... requires the confessor to assume an attitude of respect and encouragement. .... Gestures, gestures speak.
- The story of Noah's sons covering his nakedness illustrates "how important our role is in the confessional. Before us is a person who is 'naked,' ... with his weaknesses and his limitations, with the shame of being a sinner, who is often unable to express it. Let us not forget: *before us is not a sin, but a contrite sinner*, a sinner who does not want to be like this but who cannot help it.
  - "We are called to act like Shem and Japheth, the sons of Noah, who took a garment to shield their father from shame. Being a confessor in accordance with the heart of Christ is the equivalent of shielding sinners with the *garment of mercy*, so they may no longer be ashamed and may recover the joy of their filial dignity and may also know where to find it.



- "It is not, therefore, with the **sword of judgment** that we will manage to lead the lost sheep back to the fold, but with the **holiness of life** that is the principle of renewal and reform in the Church. Holiness is nourished with love and is able to bear the burden of those who are weakest.
  - "A Missionary of Mercy remembers to bear the sinner on his own shoulders, and to console him or her with the strength of compassion. The sinner who goes to confession... finds a father. ... I like to tell confessors: if you do not feel you are a father, do not enter the confessional, it's better, do something else. Because so much harm can be done, so much harm to a soul that is not welcomed with a father's heart, with the heart of Mother Church.
- "When you feel the burden of the sins confessed to you, and that of your personal limitations and those of your words, **trust in the strength of mercy** that comes to meet everyone as the love which knows no bounds."
- "I accompany you on this missionary adventure."



### February 10, 2016 Homily

- "At this celebration, the Missionaries of Mercy are present, to receive the mandate to be signs and instruments of God's forgiveness.
  - "Dear brothers, may you help to open the doors of hearts, to overcome shame, not to avoid the light.
- "May your hands bless and lift up brothers and sisters with paternity;
  - "through you may the gaze and the hands of God rest on his children and heal them of their wounds!"



#### IUBILAEUM MISERICORDIAE

ANNUS SANCTUS EXTRAORDINARIUS MMXV - MMXVI

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From the Vatican, February 10, 2016

Prot. N. IM/356/2016/P

Dear Missionary of Mercy,

Pope Francis has granted you the faculty to absolve, for the duration of the Jubilee Year, those sins reserved to the Holy See. By disposition of the Holy Father, this faculty is to be understood as being limited *exclusively* to the following sins:

- 1. profaning the Eucharistic species by taking them away or keeping them for a sacrilegious purpose;
- 2. use of physical force against the Roman Pontiff;
- absolution of an accomplice in a sin against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue;
- 4. a direct violation against the sacramental seal by a confessor.

I am certain that you will be a joyful proclaimer of divine mercy and its faithful dispenser, above all in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

May I take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your willingness to undertake such an important ministry in the Jubilee Year.

# February 10, 2016 Faculties Letter

Translation issues: "Absolve" should be "remit" and "sins" should be "censures."

Original decree lists four of the six censures in canon law reserved to the Apostolic See. A fifth would be added in the Renewal.

Since every censure can be absolved by the Apostolic See, "exclusively" is obviously important.

#### It does not list the following two censures:

• Canon 1379.3: Both a person who attempts to confer a sacred order on a woman, and the woman who attempts to receive the sacred order, incur a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; a cleric, moreover, may be punished by dismissal from the clerical state.

Can. 1387— Both the Bishop who, without a pontifical mandate, consecrates a person a Bishop, and the one who receives the consecration from him, incur a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See.

# PAPA FRANCESCO MISERICORDIA ET MISERA

LETTERA APOSTOLICA A CONCLUSIONE DEL GIUBILEO STRAORDINARIO DELLA MISERICORDIA

> Introduzione di Mons. Rino Fisichella





#### Misericordia et Misera, 9

Nov. 20, 2016 Apostolic Letter to close the Jubilee of Mercy.

- "An experience of grace lived out by the Church with great effectiveness in the Jubilee Year has certainly been the service of the *Missionaries of Mercy*.
  - "Their pastoral activity sought to emphasize that God places no obstacles in the way of those who seek him with a contrite heart, because he goes out to meet everyone like a father.
- "I have received many testimonies of joy from those who encountered the Lord once more in the sacrament of Confession.

# PAPA FRANCESCO MISERICORDIA ET MISERA

LETTERA APOSTOLICA A CONCLUSIONE Del Giubileo Straordinario Della Misericordia

> Introduzione di Mons. Rino Fisichella





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#### Misericordia et Misera, 9

Nov. 20, 2016 Apostolic Letter to close the Jubilee of Mercy.

- "I thank every Missionary of Mercy for this valuable service aimed at rendering effective the grace of forgiveness.
  - "This extraordinary ministry does not end with the closing of the Holy Door. I wish it to continue until further notice as a concrete sign that the grace of the Jubilee remains alive and effective the world over.
  - "As a direct expression of my concern and closeness to the Missionaries of Mercy in this period, the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization will supervise them and find the most suitable forms for the exercise of this valuable ministry."



Praeses

To All the Missionaries of Mercy

From the Vatican, December 7, 2016

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Prot. N. NE/672/2016/P

Dear Missionary of Mercy,

On October 13, in anticipation of the conclusion of the Extraordinar Holy Year, I had written to all of the Missionaries of Mercy in order to than them for their dedicated service during the Jubilee and to remind them tha the faculties granted them would cease with the closing of the Holy Door o St. Peter's Basilica.

However, Pope Francis, in the light of the many spiritual blessing arising from the ministry of the Missionaries, has decided that this sign o divine mercy is to remain in the Church until further notice. Thus, in the Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, which he gave to the Church or November 20 at the conclusion of the solemn Mass for the closing of the Hol Door of St. Peter's, the Holy Father states: "This extraordinary ministry doe not end with the closing of the Holy Door. I wish it to continue until furthe notice as a concrete sign that the grace of the Jubilee remains alive an effective the world over." (M.M., 9).

Therefore, I would ask you to consider, in consultation with you Ordinary, whether you wish to continue as a Missionary of Mercy. Pleas communicate your decision, be it either affirmative or negative, by electroni mail to this Pontifical Council (<u>missionariesofmercy@pcpne.va</u>) no late than <u>December 31, 2016</u>. In this communication, in the case of an affirmative decision, you must state explicitly that you have discussed the matter with your Ordinary and that he is in agreement that you should continue in this extraordinary Ministry. In this case you wil receive a new Decree confirming the faculties already granted.

### Dec. 7, 2016 Letter from + Fisichella

"I would ask you to consider, in **consultation with your Ordinary,** whether you wish to continue as a Missionary of Mercy.

"Please communicate your decision, be it either affirmative or negative, ... no later than December 31, 2016. In this communication, in the case of an affirmative decision, you must state explicitly that you have discussed the matter with your Ordinary and that he is in agreement that you should continue in this extraordinary Ministry. In this case you will receive a new Decree confirming the faculties already granted.

"In the meantime, I would remind you that the **faculties granted to you are still valid** and I would encourage you to continue in this important service that is so dear to the Holy Father."



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#### MISSIONARIUM MISERICORDIAE

ut, tamquam donum praecipuum Misericordiae Patris, singula peccata quae Sedi Apostolicae reservata sunt, ad mentem instructionis huic Decreto adnexae, rite ac valide absolveas ubicumque terrarum, donec aliter provideatur.

In tuo munere pro christifidelium animarum salute, rite et fideliter adimplendo, cum simplicitate cordis et benevolentia ac benignitate animi, semper prae oculis habeas Misericordem Deum, Patrem Misericordiarum, et Beatissimam Virginem Mariam, Matrem Misericordiae.

Caritas, Pax et Misericordia Domini Nostri Iesu Christi sint semper tecum.

Ex aedibus Pontificii Consilii de Nova Evangelizatione Promovenda die 21 mensis Novembris A.D. 2016



## Renewal of Mandate

- "Francis, Supreme Pontiff, confirms you, until otherwise provided, as a Missionary of Mercy
  - "so that, as a sublime gift of the Father's
    Mercy, you may validly according to the rite
    absolve anywhere on earth individual sins
    that are reserved to the Holy See.

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- "In your work for the salvation of souls of the faithful, as you faithfully fulfill [your mandate] according to the rite [of Penance and Reconciliation], with simplicity of heart, good will and a kind spirit,
  - "may you always have before your eyes the Merciful God, the Father of Mercies, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy. May the charity, peace and mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you."



Praeses

**To the Missionaries of Mercy** who have accepted to continue in the Ministry entrusted to them on the occasion of the Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy

From the Vatican, April 26, 2017

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#### Prot. N. NE/532/2017/P

#### Dear Missionary of Mercy,

As you are aware, in the light of the spiritual fruits to which the work of the Missionaries of Mercy gave rise during the recent Extraordinary Holy Year, the Holy Father has decided that this sensitive ministry, an expression of Divine Mercy and the pastoral solicitude of the Church, is to continue until further notice "as a concrete sign that the grace of the Jubilee remains alive and effective the world over" (*Misericordia et Misera*, 9). For these reasons, in accord with your Ordinary and recognizing your wish to continue in this ministry, I am sending you, enclosed herewith, the Decree by which the Holy Father confirms you as a *Missionary of Mercy*.

As in the Jubilee Year, in this new phase of your service I would ask that you make yourself available to Pastors, Rectors of Sanctuaries, and Diocesan Bishops, ready to undertake missions to the people and initiatives related particularly to the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to preaching on the Mystery of Divine Mercy, above all in the periods of the liturgical year outwith Ordinary Time. You would do well to promote your own ministry by suggesting that such celebrations be organized.

You will be called upon to embody, in an exemplary fashion, those characteristics which the Holy Father suggests should be proper every confessor. Thus you should to strive to be *welcoming* to all, a *witnesses* of fatherly tenderness whatever the gravity of the sin involved, *attentive* in helping penitents to reflect on the wrong they have done, *clear* in presenting moral principles, *willing* to walk patiently alongside the faithful on their penitential journey, *far-sighted* in discerning individual cases and *generous* in dispensing God's forgiveness, and *open-hearted* (cf. *Misericordia et Misera*, 10).

I would remind you that the faculties granted to you on the occasion of the Extraordinary Holy Year are still valid and are limited to the absolution of the following sins which involve a censure reserved to the Apostolic See:

1. **Profanation of the Eucharistic species** by taking them away or keeping them for a sacrilegious purpose.

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#### April 26, 2017 Letter from Archbishop Fisichella

"You will be called upon to embody, in an exemplary fashion, those characteristics that the Holy Father suggests should be proper to every confessor. Thus you should strive to be welcoming to all, a witness of fatherly tenderness whatever the gravity of the sin involved, attentive in helping penitents to reflect on the wrong they had done, clear in presenting moral principles, willing to walk patiently alongside the faithful on their penitential journey, far-sighted in discerning individual cases, generous in dispensing God's forgiveness, and open-hearted (MM 10).

Now a **fifth faculty**: "The recording by means of a technical device of what the priest or the penitent says in a Sacramental Confession (whether real or simulated), or the divulgation of such a recording through the means of social communication."

"I would remind you that the **faculties granted to you** on the occasion of the Extraordinary Holy Year **are still valid** and are limited to the absolution of the following sins that involve a censure reserved to the Apostolic See...



- 2. Use of physical force against the Roman Pontiff.
- 3. Absolution of an accomplice in a sin against the Sixth Commandment.
- 4. Direct violation of the Sacramental Seal by a confessor.
- 5. The recording by means of a technical device of what the priest or the penitent says in a Sacramental Confession (whether real or simulated), or the divulgation of such a recording through the means of social communication. (cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Decretum de sacramenti Paenitentiae dignitate tuenda*, 23 September 1988 (AAS 80 [1988] 1367).

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I would also like to remind you that the Ministry of the Missionary of Mercy is limited exclusively to the internal forum. Thus a Missionary is not competent to enter into questions or measures which are the competence of the external forum.

Regarding the **remission of censures**, it is sufficient that the Missionary use the regular formula of absolution, which remains unchanged, with the intention of absolving from the censure. However, **if it would bring greater peace to the penitent**, the Missionary may, **before** pronouncing the regular formula of absolution, absolve the penitent from the censure by pronouncing the specific formula proposed in *Appendix I* of the *Ritus Poenitentiae*. (In this regard, it is advisable to consult the version of the *Rite of Penance* used in your territory).

Regarding the **penance**, I would strongly recommend that it be such as to truly assist the full conversion of the penitent.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share with you that the Holy Father desires to meet with all of the Missionaries of Mercy, here in Rome, on the the Second Sunday of Easter (also known as "Divine Mercy Sunday") of 2018. This occasion, concerning which you will receive further details in the future, will provide an opportunity for formation and the sharing of experiences. Your presence is thus required in Rome from April 8 to April 11, 2018.

Finally, I would like to remind you that all communications pertaining to the Ministry of the Missionaries of Mercy are to be sent exclusively via email to the following address: (*missionariesofmercy@pcpne.va*).

I would like to thank you once again for the service that you have already rendered to the Church during the *Jubilee of Mercy* and for your willingness to continue in this mission. I wish you a fruitful ministry and every blessing, as I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Arino Fisichella

#### April 26, 2017 Letter from Archbishop Fisichella

"The ministry of the Missionary of Mercy is **limited exclusively to the internal forum**. Thus, a Missionary is not competent to enter into questions or measures that are the competence of the external forum."

"Regarding the remission of censures, it is sufficient that the Missionary use the regular formula of absolution, which remains unchanged, with the intention of absolving from the censure. However, if it would bring greater peace to the penitent, the Missionary may, before pronouncing the regular formula of absolution, absolve the penitent from the censure by pronouncing the specific formula proposed in Appendix I of the *Ritus Poenitentiae.*"

"Regarding the **penance**, **I would strongly recommend** that it be such as to **truly assist the full conversion** of the penitent."

Enclosure 1

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- "As you well know, at the conclusion of that Extraordinary Jubilee, your ministry should have concluded. Yet, reflecting on the great service that you rendered to the Church, and on how much good you did and offered to so many believers with your preaching and above all with the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I found it opportune that your mandate should be extended for a little longer.
- "I have received many testimonies about **conversions that came about through your service**. And you are witnesses to this.
- "We truly must remember that God's mercy knows no bounds, and with your ministry you are tangible signs that the Church cannot, must not and does not want to create any barriers or difficulties that obstruct access to the Father's forgiveness. The 'prodigal son' did not have to pass through customs; he was welcomed by the Father, without obstacles.



- "I would like to share some reflections with you aimed at giving more support to the responsibility that I have placed in your hands, and so that the ministry of mercy that you are called to live in a wholly particular way may be better expressed, according to the will of the Father whom Jesus revealed to us and that, in the light of Easter, it may acquire its most complete meaning.
  - "I would like to highlight **the doctrine that underpins your ministry,** which is not an idea. ... It is a **pastoral experience** backed by a true and proper doctrine.
- Is 49:8, 13-15 "is a text steeped in the theme of mercy. Benevolence, consolation, closeness, the promise of eternal love..., are all expressions intended to express the richness of divine mercy, without being able to exhaust it in any single aspect.
- **Saint Paul**, in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, returning to this text of Isaiah, **updates it** and seems to wish to **apply it precisely to us**.



- "This responsibility placed in your hands we are responsible for it! — calls for a style of life consistent with the mission we have received. … We give no one reason for scandal, 'so that no fault may be found with our ministry' (2 Cor 6:3). Being co-workers of mercy, therefore, presumes that we share the merciful love that we were the first to receive.
- "I confess to you that many times, many times I have paused on this verse [from St. Paul, 1 Tim 1:13]: 'I was treated with mercy.' And this does me good; it gives me courage. I feel, as it were, the Father's embrace, the Father's caress. ... I too can say 'I have been treated with mercy.'
- St. Paul "could make a list of many successes, name the many communities he had established.... Instead, he prefers to emphasize the experience that most impressed him and marked his life: ... to acknowledge God's mercy first and foremost in one's own personal existence. ...



- "It is important to always set out from this firm point: God has treated me with mercy. This is the key to becoming God's co-workers. We experience mercy and are transformed into ministers of mercy.
- "A true missionary of mercy mirrors the Apostle's
  experience: God has chosen me; God trusts me; God has
  placed his trust in me by calling me, though I be a sinner, to
  work with him in order to make his mercy real, effective and
  palpable.
- "Saint Paul adds something extremely important to the words of the Prophet Isaiah. Those who are God's co-workers and administrators of mercy must be careful not to foil God's grace. He writes: 'We entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain' (2 Cor 6:1). This is the first admonition that is given to us: to recognize the action of grace and its primacy in our life and that of others.



- "God's *primerear* can never be forgotten nor taken as obvious, otherwise one cannot fully understand the mystery of salvation achieved with the act of reconciliation that God fulfils through the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.
  Reconciliation is not, as is often thought, our private initiative nor the result of our diligence. ... We must always emphasize, but especially with regard to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, that the first initiative is the Lord's; it is he who precedes us in love, but not in a universal form: case by case. He precedes in every case, with every person.
  - "When a penitent approaches us, it is important and comforting to recognize that we have before us the first fruit of the encounter that has already occurred with the love of God, who with his grace has opened his heart and made it available for conversion. Our priestly heart should perceive the miracle of a person who has encountered God and who has already experienced the power of His grace. There could be no true reconciliation if this did not begin with an encounter with God, which precedes the one with us confessors.



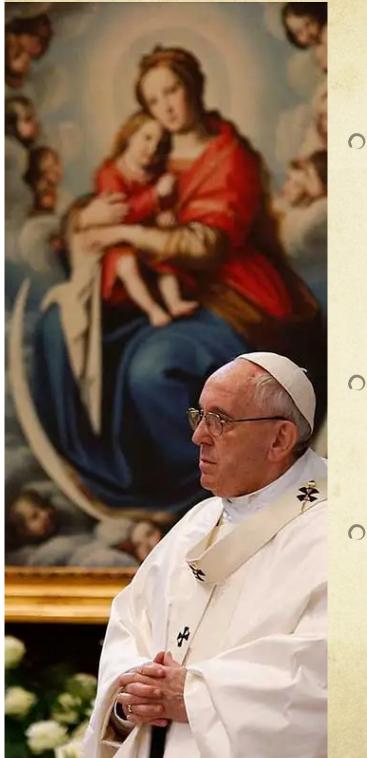
- "Our task and this is a second step consists in not rendering vain God's action of grace but supporting it and enabling it to reach fulfilment.
- "Recognizing a sinner's repentance is tantamount to welcoming him or her with arms wide open, after the example of the father in the parable who welcomes his son when he returns home (cf. Lk 15:20). ... It means the father did not need to hear the apology the son had prepared (cf. v. 22), because the confessor already understood everything, strong from his own experience of being a sinner. ... It is not necessary to question where the Father's grace has already intervened; it is not permissible to violate a person's sacred space in his relationship with God.
- "God does not stand idle, awaiting the sinner: **He runs to him,** because the joy of seeing him return is too great, and God loves to rejoice, rejoice when He sees the sinner coming. It almost seems that God himself has a "**restless heart" until he finds the son that was lost.**



- "Mercy, which calls for listening, permits one then to guide the steps of the reconciled sinner. God frees him from fear, from anguish, from shame, from duress.
  Forgiveness is really a form of liberation in order to restore joy and meaning to life.
- "An invitation to emerge from the sinful condition to don once again the vestments of the children of God.
  Hence, in pardon, mercy restores dignity. The penitent does not hesitate to repent of the sin committed; and the priest does not blame him for the wrong for which he feels remorse, but rather, encourages him to look to the future with new eyes. ... Mercy opens one to hope, creates hope and nurtures hope.

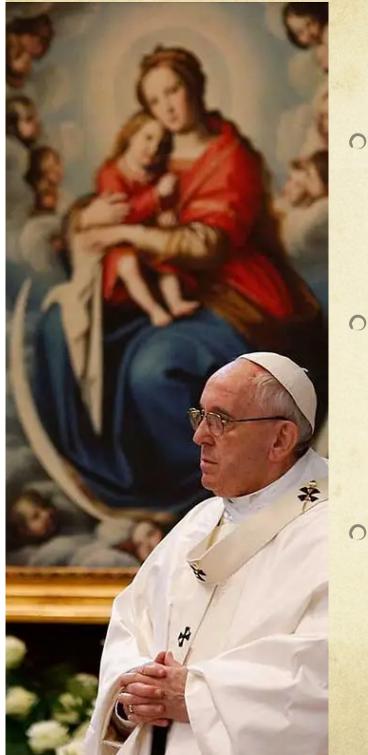


- "I will conclude. It is this certainty typical of love [coming from God's promise 'I will never forget you' (Is 49:15)] that we are called to support in those who approach the confessional, to give them the strength to believe and hope. The ability to know how to start afresh, despite everything, because, each time, God takes us by the hand and encourages us to look ahead. Mercy takes us by the hand and and instils the certainty that the love God loves with defeats all forms of solitude and abandonment.
  - **"The Missionaries of Mercy** are called to be **interpreters of and witnesses to this experience** that is imbued in a community which welcomes all and always without distinction, which supports anyone in need and in difficulty, which experiences communion as a fountain of life."



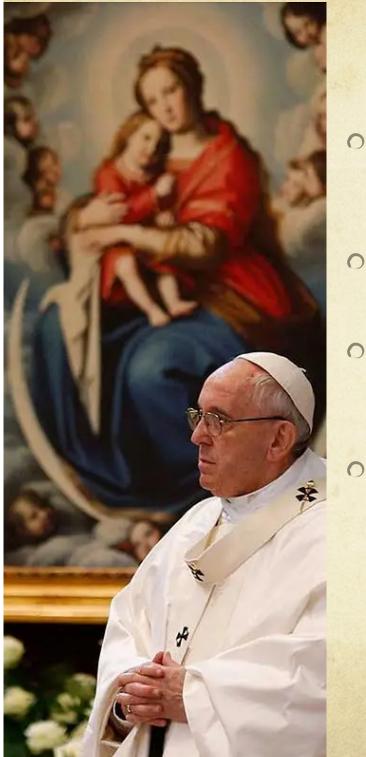
### April 10, 2018 Homily

- "In addressing you, dear brothers, I am thinking of your ministry which you have been carrying out since the Jubilee of Mercy. A ministry that moves in both of these directions: at the service of people, so that they may be 'born anew,' and at the service of communities, so that they may live the commandment of love, with joy and consistency.
- "One called to bear witness to Christ's Resurrection **must himself, personally, be 'born anew.'** ... This means truly leaving primacy to the Father, to Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- "Priests are normal, simple, meek, balanced people, who are capable of allowing themselves to be constantly regenerated by the Spirit, docile to his power, interiorly free above all of themselves because moved by the 'wind' of the Spirit that 'blows where it wills' (cf. Jn 3:8).



# April 10, 2018 Homily

- "The second indication concerns service to the community: being **priests capable of "lifting up"** in the "wilderness" of the world the sign of salvation, that is, **the Cross of Christ, as a source of conversion and renewal** for the whole community and for the world itself (cf. Jn 3:14-15)...
- "The Lord, dead and Risen, is the power that creates communion in the Church. ... This power of communion was manifested from the beginning in the community of Jerusalem where [there] ... was a communion that meant practical sharing of goods, so that 'they had everything in common' and 'there was not a needy person among them.'
  - "You, dear brothers, also place your specific ministry as
    Missionaries of Mercy at the service of this dynamism.
    In fact, both the Church and the world today particularly
    need Mercy so that the unity willed by God in Christ may
    prevail over the negative action of the evil one who exploits
    so many current means, good in themselves, but which,
    when misused, instead of uniting, divide.



# April 10, 2018 Homily

- "We know that **without Mercy** this principle [of unity] does not have the strength to be put into concrete practice in life and history.
- "Dear brothers, start afresh from this encounter with the joy of being confirmed in the ministry of Mercy.
- "Confirmed first and foremost in the welcome knowledge that you are the **first called to be reborn**, always and again 'anew,' **through God's love**.
  - "And at the same time, confirmed in your mission to offer to all the sign of Jesus 'lifted up' from the earth, so that the community may be a sign and instrument of unity throughout the world."



Praeses

From the Vatican, March 7, 2019

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rot. N. NE/229/2019/P

Dear Missionary of Mercy:

Lent, which is about to begin, is for the whole Church a time favorable for conversion, a propitious moment to welcome the renewing grace of the Sacrament of Penance and to walk resolutely towards Easter in order to live the mystery of Christ's Resurrection. For the Missionaries of Mercy, this time can mean an opportunity to pay special attention to confessions, preaching and the works of mercy.

It is up to each Missionary, in fact, to make themselves available to their Bishops, undertaking the most appropriate initiatives to give the faithful a renewed experience of the merciful love of God given to us in Christ. In this regard, I remind you that the "24 Hours for the Lord" initiative, desired by the Holy Father, becomes a valuable opportunity to implement your ministry. I am sure that creativity and dedication will not be lacking in this commitment, especially during this time of Lent.

I also take this opportunity to remind you that this Pontifical Council hopes, wherever possible, that all Missionaries of Mercy organize themselves in order to hold congresses or encounters, possibly with a national character. These encounters can become real occasions for discussion, prayer and discernment on the most appropriate ways to develop their particular ministry in the specific ecclesial and social reality of each country. Finally, I would like you to know, in advance, that the Holy Father intends to meet again all the Missionaries of Mercy in Rome in the year 2020, on a date to be determined.

With the wish of a holy and fruitful Lent and thanking you sincerely for your continuous commitment, I send you my best regards.

+ Lofmunn ₩ Ring Fisichella

To all Missionaries of Mercy IN THEIR RESPECTIVE TERRITORIES

# March 7, 2019 Letter from Archbishop Fisichella

"I take this opportunity to remind you that this Pontifical Council hopes, wherever possible, that all **Missionaries of Mercy organize themselves** in order to hold congresses or encounters, possibly with a national character.

"These encounters can become real occasions for discussion, prayer and discernment on the most appropriate ways to develop their particular ministry in the specific ecclesial and social reality of each country."

# Missionaries of Mercy in the USA and Canada

- In the United States and Canada, we have sought to act on this appeal.
- We have designed a **website** (missionariesofmercyusa.org) to facilitate people being able to find us and know about our work.
- We have established a **google group** as well as a **WhatsApp** group to coordinate and communicate more effectively.
- We send out **regular newsletters** with news and to promote events.

#### • We have arranged three National Gatherings

- January 24-27, 2020 in Lexington, Kentucky
- August 30 to September 2, 2021 at St. Meinrad Archabbey
- April 24-27, 2023 at St. Meinrad Archabbey
- During the 2022 International Meeting in Rome, we arranged a gathering of USA Missionaries as well as, after the Meeting, pilgrimages to the patriarchal basilicas and a private visit to the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel.
- We have written the US Bishops and have placed ourselves at the service of the local Church.
- We have done a Survey on Best, Worst and Most Common practices in the Sacrament of Confession.





To the Reverend Fathers Missionaries of Mercy

From the Vatican, 4 October 2019

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Prot. N. NE/879/2019/P

#### Dear Missionary of Mercy,

I have the pleasure of sending you a copy of the *Directory* of the Missionaries of Mercy, prepared by this Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization and updated to March of this year. This publication, which has already been sent to every Diocesan Bishop, seeks to promote the ministry of all Missionaries of Mercy and, at the same time, to foster communion among you.

As you can see, the *Directory* includes contact information for each Missionary. Should errors have been introduced in the compilation of the information, or if there have been changes to the data listed, I would ask you to inform this Pontifical Council immediately so that we can revise the entry in view of the next edition that will include, obviously, those Missionaries appointed in the meantime.

Finally, I inform you that from the 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020, the *III International Meeting of the Missionaries of Mercy* will be held in the Vatican. This meeting will be an occasion for meeting other Missionaries and exchanging experiences, but it will also serve for the future development of this particular ministry.

Since the Holy Father holds very dear the ministry of the Missionaries of Mercy which has shown itself to be fruitful for all the People of God, I invite you to continue in this particular and sensitive service, doing your best to respond with kindness and readiness to the faithful who request your assistance.

Grateful for your generous cooperation, I ask the Lord to bless your person and your ministry.

Enc.

Via della Conciliazione, 5 - 00120 Città del Vaticano Tel. +3906 698.69500 - Fax +3906 698.69522 - E-mail: praeses@novaevengelizatio.va

### October 4, 2019 Letter from Archbishop Fisichella

The publication of the **Directory** of the Missionaries of Mercy.

"This publication, which has already been sent to every Diocesan Bishop, seeks to **promote the ministry of all Missionaries of Mercy** and, at the same time, to **foster communion among you**."

"I would ask you to **inform this Pontifical Council** [whenever there are changes] so that we can revise the entry in view of the next edition that will include, obviously, those Missionaries appointed in the meantime." The address is: missionariesofmercy@novaevangelizatio.va

"Since the Holy Father holds very dear the ministry of the Missionaries of Mercy which has shown itself to be fruitful for all the People of God, I invite you to continue in this particular and sensitive service, doing your best to respond with kindness and readiness to the faithful who request your assistance."





# Missionaries of Me

#### ros de la Misericordia

#### Missionari della Misericordia

#### Annuario 2022

nários da Misericórdia

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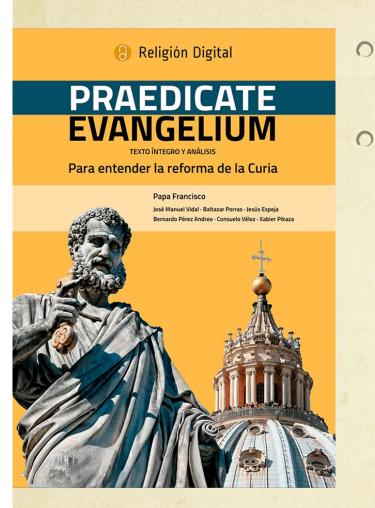
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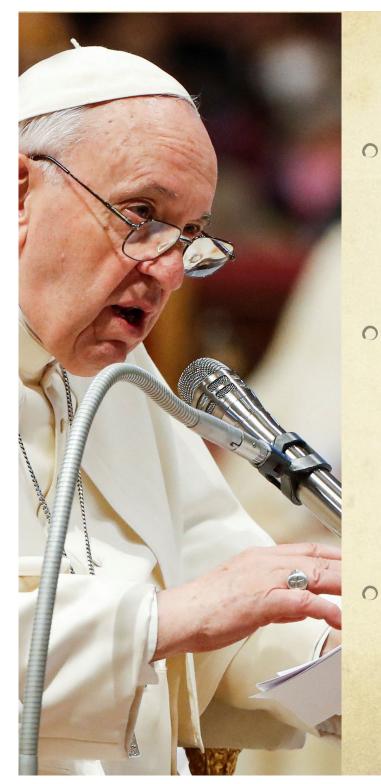
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# Praedicate Evangelium, 59.2

- Apostolic Constitution published March 19, 2022 and promulgated June 5, 2022.
  - "Evangelization takes place especially by the proclamation of divine mercy, in a variety of forms and expressions. In a particular way, the specific activity of the Missionaries of Mercy contributes to this end; the Section [for Fundamental Questions Regarding Evangelization in the World, of the Dicastery for Evangelization] promotes and supports their training and provides criteria for their pastoral activity.



## April 24, 2022 Homily

- "Not only do the disciples **receive mercy** [on the night of the Resurrection]; they become **dispensers of the mercy that they themselves received**. They receive this power not on account of their merits or studies, but as a **pure gift of grace**, based however on their experience of having been themselves forgiven.
- "I am now speaking to you, missionaries of mercy: if you do not feel forgiven, do not carry out your service as a missionary of mercy until you feel that forgiveness. The mercy that we have received enables us to dispense a great deal of mercy and forgiveness. In the Church forgiveness must be received in this same way, through the humble goodness of a merciful confessor who sees himself not as the holder of some power but as a channel of mercy, who pours out upon others the forgiveness that he himself first received.
- "From this arises the ability to forgive everything because God always forgives everything. We are the ones who tire of asking forgiveness, but he always forgives. You must be channels of that forgiveness through your own experience of being forgiven."



### April 25, 2022 Meeting

- "I wanted to meet you again, because I entrusted to you the mission that is closest to my heart: being an effective tool of God's mercy.
- "I see that every year the number of Missionaries of Mercy increases. This brings me joy, because it means that your presence in the particular Churches is considered important and valid.
- "As I wrote in the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, 'Evangelization takes place in particular through the proclamation of divine mercy, by means of multiple approaches and expressions. The specific action of the Missionaries of Mercy contributes to this purpose in a special way' (Art. 59 §2).
- "I hope, therefore, that you may grow further, and for this reason I address to the bishops my desire that holy, merciful priests may be identified, ready to forgive, to become missionaries of Mercy to full effect.



#### April 25, 2022 Meeting

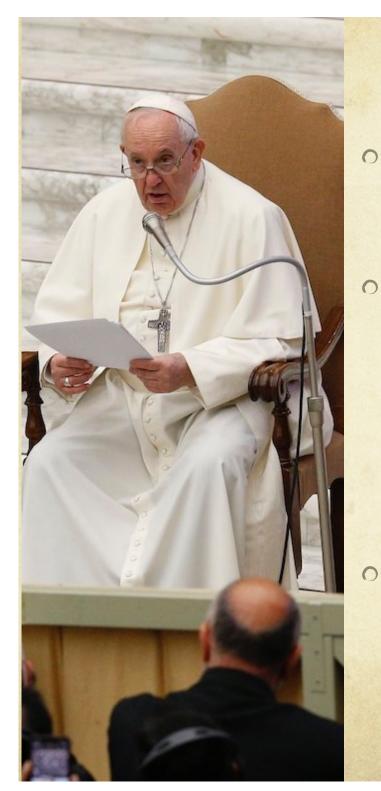
"Today I wish to offer you another biblical figure who may inspire your ministry. She is Ruth, the Moabite woman who, despite coming from a foreign country, entered fully into salvation history. ... Ruth trusted God and acted out of great affection for her elderly mother-in-law, who otherwise would have been left alone and abandoned.

We can also draw from this an important teaching for us.
... God does not abandon those who entrust
themselves to him, but rather meets them with a love
that repays any other desire. Ruth shows the characteristics
of *mercy* when she *does not leave* Naomi alone, but instead
shares her future with her. ... Ruth is an icon of how we can
overcome the many forms of exclusion and marginalization
that lurk in our behavior.



### April 25, 2022 Meeting

- "Dear Missionaries of Mercy, in the Book of Ruth God never speaks. He is named many times; the characters often make reference to him, but he remains silent. … God communicates precisely through Ruth. Every one of her gestures of goodness towards Naomi … becomes the tangible sign of the Lord's closeness and goodness.
- "Through this figure, we too are invited to grasp the presence of God in the life of people. ... It is up to us, with our ministry, to give voice to God and to show the face of his mercy. Let us never forget that he does not act in the daily lives of people through dramatic acts, but in a silent, discreet, simple way, so as to manifest himself through people who become the sacrament of his presence.
- "Here then is the exhortation I leave you: always have the blanket of mercy at hand, to envelop with its warmth all those who approach you to be forgiven; offer consolation to those who are sad and lonely; be generous like Ruth, because only in this way will the Lord recognize you as his faithful ministers. I bless you all and I accompany you with my prayer, so that your ministry may be fruitful."



#### The Three-Fold Mandate

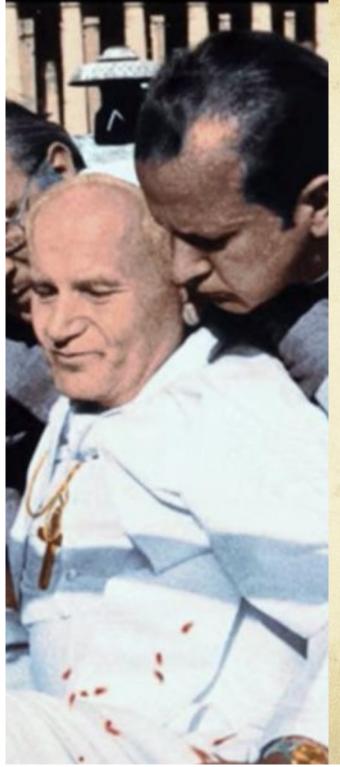
- First, they are to be "**above all, persuasive preachers of mercy**" (MV 18). To be "heralds of joy and forgiveness" who remind everyone in the Church that God desires mercy and "rejoices more for one repentant sinner."
- Second, the Missionaries of Mercy are to dedicate themselves
  in a particular way to hearing confessions. As he indicated
  on Feb. 9, 2016, he wants them to be "signs and instruments of
  God's forgiveness" or as he wrote in MV 18, "living signs of the
  Father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon"
  and of "the Church's maternal solicitude for the People of
  God." Signs have an intrinsic relation to what they indicate. The
  Missionaries of Mercy, "merciful like the Father," are supposed
  to be living examples of God's mercy as well as God's means,
  his "channels," to bring about that forgiveness.
- Third, they are to be exemplary and contagious witnesses to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. "Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples" (MV 15).
  The works of mercy are the means by which Missionaries will be signs and agents of the communion to which mercy is meant to lead.



#### Notes on the Special Faculties

- In August 2021, at our second National Gathering, Fr. Anthony McLaughlin, JCD, gave presentation on our special faculties, which are essential to the exercise of our mandate in the confessional.
  - We need to keep in mind the distinction between a sin and an ecclesiastical crime, and between absolution and remission, respectively. Certain crimes are so grave that their remission is reserved to the Apostolic See.
  - We have been given the faculty to remit the censure due to four sins in the Code of Canon Law: Profaning the Eucharistic species by taking them away or keeping them for a sacrilegious purpose (c. 1382); the use of physical force against the Roman Pontiff (c. 1370); the absolution of an accomplice in a sin against the Sixth Commandment (c. 1385) and a direct violation against the sacramental seal by a confessor (c. 1386).

We have also been given the faculty to remit the *latae sententiae* censure caused by recording with a technical device what the priest or the penitent says in a Sacramental Confession (whether real or simulated) or spreading such a recording through the means of social communication.



#### Physical Attack on the Pope

- Can. 1370 § 1. A person who uses physical force against the Roman Pontiff incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; if the offender is a cleric, another penalty, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, may be added according to the gravity of the crime.
- For an offense to exist there must be physical, external, and violent action directed toward the person of the Roman Pontiff. Lawful defense would be excluded.
- Not a verbal attack. Not an attack on his reputation or goods.
- Physical force may result in injury or damage to the person of the Pope, if it is manifested with blows, injuries or the intention to kill.
- It may affect his personal liberty if he was kidnapped or imprisoned, or his personal dignity, if someone spat upon him or tore his clothes.
- The offense may be done without witnesses.
- If the offender was a cleric and dismissal had been added, the Missionaries of Mercy could remit censure but not re-admit the cleric offender to the clerical state. That would be reserved to the Apostolic See.



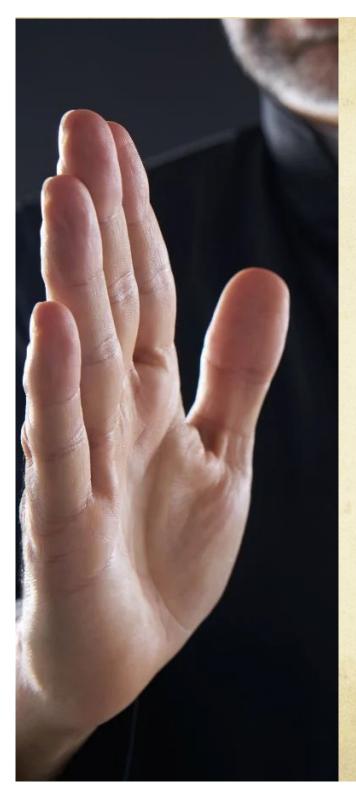
#### Desecration of the Eucharist

Can. 1382 - § 1. One who throws away the consecrated species or, for a sacrilegious purpose, takes them away or keeps them, incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; a cleric, moreover, may be punished with some other penalty, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state.

• A person incurs the penalty:

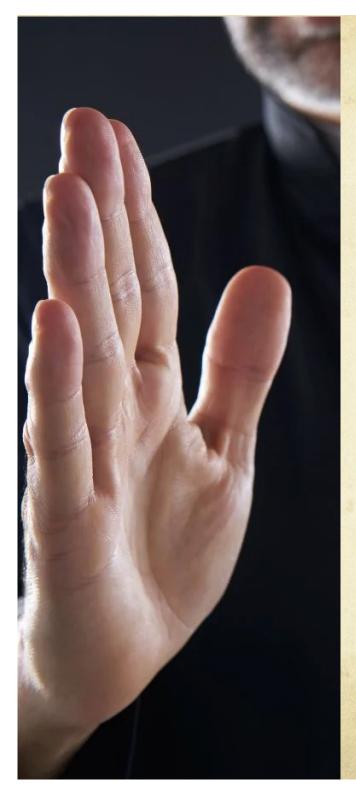
• By deliberately "throwing away the sacred species." To throw away (*abicit*) the consecrated species involves any voluntarily and gravely contemptuous action toward the Sacred Species, like intentionally tossing a consecrated Host or the Precious Blood on the ground, spitting out the host after receiving Holy Communion, throwing away the consecrated species with anger, contempt, hated.

There must be a sacrilegious purpose.



## Absolution of an Accomplice against the Sixth Commandment

- Can. 1384 A priest who acts against the prescription of can. 977 incurs a latae sententiae excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See.
- Canon 977: The absolution of an accomplice in a sin against the sixth commandment is invalid except danger of death.



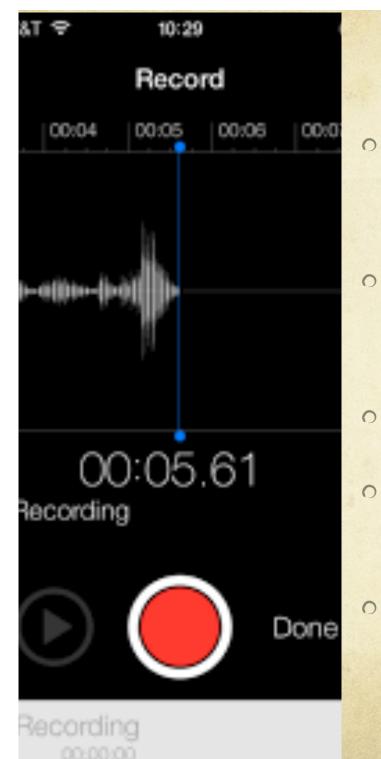
## Absolution of an Accomplice against the Sixth Commandment

- A priest shouldn't ordinarily hear the confession of a partner in any sin.
- But this faculty specifically refers to external sins against chastity, not because they are the worst sins, but because of the particular danger of abusing the sacrament of penance with the accompanying scandal, and the danger of easy repetition of such sins.
- This prohibition against absolving one's accomplice in a sin against chastity and the nullity of such absolution is not a penalty. It is a limitation of the priest's faculty to absolve for the protection of the dignity of the sacrament and for the spiritual welfare of the penitent, as well as the priest.
- This refers to any Catholic priest Penitent and any Christian penitent, (even those not Catholic, see c. 844, 3,4). The **priest incurs the penalty of excommunication; the penitent remains unabsolved.**
- The Sin must be grave and external on the part of both persons, committed at any time, even before priest received sacred ordination. This involves all external sexual acts, like mutual masturbation, pornography, oral sex, or, after ordination, sins of sacrilege against chastity.
- If the priest did not recognize the penitent he did not knowingly absolve, absolution is valid. He may have come to know later that penitent had been to him for confession.



#### Direct Violation of the Seal

- Can. 1386 § I. A confessor who directly violates the sacramental seal incurs a latae sententiae excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; he who does so only indirectly is to be punished according to the gravity of the offence.
- Under canon 983, a confessor has the obligation of the sacramental seal concerning sins heard in confession, and the obligation not to use the knowledge acquired in confession, even though there is no danger of revelation. These two grave obligations admit of no exception.
- Regarding the object of the seal, doctrine distinguishes between what is essential and what is accidental. The essential object is all sins heard in a penitent's confession, including sins of both the penitent and other persons, mortal or venial, occult or public, if they were revealed for the purpose of absolution and have been heard by the confessor by virtue of sacramental knowledge.
- Direct violation occurs when a confessor reveals the object of the sacramental seal together with the name of the person who committed the sin, the attaching: "sin to sinner."
- Indirect violation of the seal occurs when a confessor reveals the object of the seal together with the circumstances, which carry the danger of revealing the name if the sinner or raising suspicion about her or him.



# Recording or Divulging of a Confession

In 1988, The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in order to protect the sanctity of the sacrament of Penance and in order to defend the rights of ministers and Christian faithful within the same sacrament regarding the sacramental seal and secrecy connected to Confession, in virtue of the special faculty conferred by the Supreme Apostolic Authority of the Church (can. 30), determined that:

Without prejudice to the prescription of can. 1386, anyone who by means of any technical device makes a recording of what the priest or the penitent says in a Sacramental Confession (either real or simulated) by oneself or by another person, or who divulges it through the means of social communication, incurs excommunication latae sententiae.

To commit the offense the offender must have the intent. (He couldn't just be recording the organ playing in Church and accidentally pick it up).

**Upon hearing a recording of a confession, the one possessing it is also bound by the Secret of Confession**. Canon 983 § 2 states: "An interpreter, if there is one, is also to observe this secret, *as are all others* who in any way whatever have come to knowledge of sins from a confession."

The obligation to keep knowledge of confessional matters secret is over and above the natural law based on a person's right to privacy, c. 220. Although the obligation falling on persons other than the confessor is not called the seal in the Code, it is most serious and the transgressor is punished with a just penalty, not excluding excommunication, c. 1386. § 2



### The Exercise of the Faculty

- Those exempt from the censures:
  - **Can. 1322** Those who habitually lack the use of reason, even though they appeared sane when they violated a law or precept, are deemed incapable of committing an offence.
  - Can. 1323— No one is liable to a penalty who, when violating a law or precept: §1 has not completed the sixteenth year of age; §2 was, without fault, ignorant of violating the law or precept; inadvertence and error are equivalent to ignorance; §3 acted under physical force, or under the impetus of a chance occurrence which the person could not foresee or if foreseen could not avoid;  $\S4$  acted under the compulsion of grave fear, even if only relative, or by reason of necessity or grave inconvenience, unless, however, the act is intrinsically evil or tends to be harmful to souls; §5 acted, within the limits of due moderation, in lawful self-defense or defense of another against an unjust aggressor; §6 lacked the use of reason, without prejudice to the provisions of cann. 1324 §1.2 and 1326 §1.4; §7 thought, through no personal fault, that some one of the circumstances existed which are mentioned in nn. 4 or 5.



### The Exercise of the Faculty

- They must be exercised in the Sacrament of Penance, not in the external forum.
- They can be exercised in the case of doubt.
- The remission can take one of two forms:
  - Use formula of absolution of sins with the intention to remit from the censure.
  - Before the absolution of sins, the following formula:
     "By the power granted to me, I absolve you from the bond of excommunication in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
     (Potestáte mihi concéssa, ego te absólvo a omni vinculo excommunicatiónis in nómine Patris, et Filii, +et Spiritus Sancti.)
- Please note that the Formula of Absolution of sins cannot be changed, e.g., "I absolve you from your sins and from the bond of excommunication in the name..."
  - Archbishop Fisichella: "Regarding the penance, I would strongly recommend that it be such as to truly assist **the full conversion** of the penitent."



Home Homilies ~ Articles Plan of Life Book ~ Retreats ~ Teaching ~ Biography ~ Search Q

#### Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels

"Receive the Gospel of Christ-whose herald you now are Believe what you read. Teach what you believe Practice what you teach."

Those words have never lost their resonance

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gaspel." by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts. You may also follow postings of articles, homilies and teachings on Earshook Twitter and Youtube

You can also subscribe to the podcast of daily homilies, lectures and talks through Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hunary crowd confident that if He wishes. He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (In 6:1-14).

In Christ Fr. Roger J. Landry

#### Most Recent Homilies

God's Comfort and the Conversion Required to Receive It, Second Sunday of Advent (B), December 6, 2020

Accepting, Following and Announcing lesus without Offense. Second Sunday of Advent (EF), December 6, 2020

Walking the Way of the Kingdom lesus Indicates, First Saturday of Advent, December 5, 2020

Running to Meet Our Light, Strength and Salvation, First Friday of Advent, December 4 2020

Listening to and Acting on the Long Awaited One's Words, First Thursday of Advent, December 3, 2020

Going Hungry to Meet Christ in a Three-Fold Banquet, First Wednesday of Advent. December 2, 2020

Childlike Eyes to See, First Tuesday of Advent, December 1, 2020

Singing the Song of the Lamb, 34th Wednesday (II), November 25, 2020

Turning to the Lord Who Comes to Judge the Earth, 34th Tuesday (II), November 24, 2020

Following the King and Lamb Wherever He Goes, 34th Monday (II), November 23, 2020

#### Most Recent Talks

Our Duty and Salvation The Anchor November 27, 2020 Living the Reality of the Kingdom of Christ, National Catholic Register, November 19,

Most Recent Articles

The Knights Our Age Needs, The Anchor, November 13, 2020

Coming to Know the Original Three-

Dimensional Carlo Acutis. The Anchor.

A Good Shepherd Full of Christian and

The Anchor, September 18, 2020

The Pastoral Malpractice of Lituraical

Abuse, The Anchor, September 4, 2020

The Chosen, The Anchor, August 21, 2020

Priestly Virtues The Pilot October 5 2020

Returning to the Sacrament of Divine Love.

2020

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October 16 2020

Remembering Andrew Walther, November

Prayer Vigil, October 31, 2020 Apprenticeship in the Art of Living, Duc in Just a Parish Priest, The Anchor, October Altum Virtual Schools Summit October 28-30.2020

to December 8, 2020

Preaching on Marital Love and Accompanying Couples toward the Full Embrace of the Church's Teaching, Diocese of Gary Cleray Convocation, October 20,

Receiving the Lord Jesus as Mary and

Leonine Forum, December 5, 2020

Joseph, Advent Day of Recollection for the

Novena in Preparation for the Immaculate

Conception, Leonine Forum, November 28

Blessed Michael McGivney and the Call to

Holiness, McGivney Festival Young Adult

The Divorced and Remarried, Challenges and Triumphs in Pastoral Care, Diocese of Gary Clergy Convocation, October 20, 2020

2020

The Heart of the New Evangelization: Meeting, Knowing and Loving Jesus Back, New Zealand Evangelion's In his Name Virtual Conference, October 10-11, 2020

Christian Anthropology: The Human Person in the Modern World, Leonine Forum Opening Lecture, October 8, 2020

Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching. UNSRC Catholic Club, August 27, 2020 Makina Better Confessions, Catholic Information Conference, July 24, 2020

# For the Slides of this Talk

You may download a PDF of the PowerPoint sides of this talk and listen to the audio recording by going to:

www.catholicpreaching.com and then clicking on the appropriate link under "Most Recent Talks"

Email: fatherlandry@catholicpreaching.com YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/FrRogerLandry Twitter: @FrRogerLandry Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/roger.landry.524



# Overview of the Mission of the Missionaries of Mercy

Fr. Roger J. Landry New Missionaries of Mercy Training September 2023