

Day of Reflection

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Pope Francis invites us to look to the “wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace” that is God’s mercy, not just as individuals but as a Church.

Today I will reflect on *Misericordiae Vultus*. Paragraph 15 (b) states: “God’s mercy transforms human hearts.” It is not a big statement, in the sense that you all know that love changes things and human beings. When you put love, the chemistry of love can dissolve any enemy. Imagine how much more powerful is God’s Mercy. It enables us, through the experience of a faithful love, and this is God’s love, the kind of love that is called the “hasset”, the steadfast love is mentioned, especially in Isaiah where he says *“the mountains may be removed and the hills turned to dust, but my steadfast love for you will always stand there”*.

So this love is always faithful and never changing.

“To become merciful in turn. In an ever new miracle, divine mercy shines forth in our lives, inspiring each of us to love our neighbour and to devote ourselves to what the Church’s tradition calls the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.”

Here he has the background of the quote that when we gave the document to the members, at the bottom of the front page there is the quote from Lamentations, chapter 3. I told you that this is not a quote that the Pope quotes directly in the document itself. He uses 49 different quotes from the Bible. That quote is missing – Lamentations chapter 3, which says *“But this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercy never comes to an end. They are new every morning.”* And this is the thought that the Pope brought out in his message, where he said that Divine Mercy shines forth in our lives inspiring each of us to love our neighbour and to devote ourselves towards the Church’s traditions called the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

It says: “In an ever new miracle. By God’s mercy before we open our eyes, they are there already to meet us.”

These words remind us that the faith finds expression in concrete everyday actions meant to help our brothers, and neighbours by feeding, visiting, comforting and instructing them. So, he divides them into these different four parts that these acts of mercy, these works of corporal or spiritual works of mercy, fall under the four headings – feeding – visiting – comforting – and instructing.

The importance is found in the instructing. In fact later on the Pope mentions that one of the spiritual acts of mercy, works of mercy, is to instruct the ignorant, and to eliminate doubt because doubt is the action of the devil. When the devil wants to destroy you, he does to you and to me what he did to Eve. He puts a doubt in your mind ‘it may be that God doesn’t love me,

that is why I should not eat from this fruit' 'it may be' ... and once there is a doubt we continue to work on that doubt. It is like a crack in the building ... if you do not fix it, then the crack will continue to grow. The water, the ice, the wind, will continue to do damage. And that is what the devil does in our lives. He enters with these doubts.

Pope Francis divides the works of mercy under four headings; feeding – visiting – comforting and instructing. Here we encounter what Tertullian says. He says that ignorance is the number one enemy of the Church because it is an enemy that has entered inside. When the enemy is outside of the city you can, so to speak, control him to a certain extent. But once the enemy is inside, you cannot control him. He is victorious over you, and ignorance is one of the enemies that gets inside of us, especially when it comes to the Bible. St Jerome says that "The Bible has survived the hatred of its enemies and the ignorance of its friends." The Pope tells us to have an intense and prayerful listening to the Word of God.

"I expressed my hope that the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy" - that is this quote that you have been given, which is taken word for word from *Misericordiae Vultus* 15b.

The Pope tells us that "Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; this will be a way to reawaken our conscience" Notice the following words which are very strong and powerful: "too often grown dull in the face of poverty," too often we are senseless, motionless, there is no emotion to the needs of in the people around us, and our conscience has grown dull. "and to enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy." Not only, as you see there, it is quoted from the same paragraph, "God's mercy", and here the Pope is very much influenced by Cardinal Walter Kasper, in his book "Mercy, the Essence of the Gospel" it speaks about it. Mercy is the essence of the Gospel, and rightly so. Jesus Christ said, "Go and learn for I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

"It is the unprecedented and scandalous mystery of the extension in time of the suffering of the Innocent Lamb, the burning bush of gratuitous love. Before this love, we can, like Moses, take off our sandals (cf. Ex 3:5), especially when the poor are our brothers or sisters in Christ who are suffering for their faith." Obviously here, the Pope is making indirect reference especially to Syria and in those areas where people, because of their faith, are discriminated against and even killed.

Then it is worth listening to these works of mercy that the Pope himself said:

"It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these words of mercy in His preaching, so that we can know whether or not we are living as His disciples."

So a person who does not practice the works of mercy, whether corporal or spiritual, cannot claim to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

“Let us rediscover these **corporal works of mercy:**” so now he is going to mention the corporal works of mercy: “to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead.” ... burying the dead ... it is interesting that he placed it at the end, the way also he also he placed it at the end with the spiritual works of mercy.

We will comment on these soon, “And let us not forget the **spiritual works of mercy:** to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us evil, and pray for the living and the dead.”

So praying for the living and the dead too. Burying the dead and praying for the dead, the Jewish people say that it is the highest form of mercy because the dead cannot repay you. You know, you can do something for someone, and then they can say thank you ... but the dead, perhaps they will reward us, they will pray for us - they go to heaven, and then they will pray for us, but you don't have that certainty. Though scripture says “*this is the Will of God, that all will come to the knowledge of the truth, and thus be saved.*” and Jesus Christ Himself told us “*It is the pleasure of My Father to give you his Kingdom.*” It is His pleasure that we be saved.

To feed the hungry. There is material hunger, psychological hunger, spiritual hunger, so hungry does not only mean food. As a matter of fact, in the prophet Amos, it says “*I am going to bring a famine on the earth, not a famine for bread or water, but a famine for my word.*” The people are going to be yearning to hear the Word of God, the way we read in the Gospel, “*The crowd was pressing upon him to hear the Word of God.*” And so Jesus Christ had to step on the boat of Peter, and from the boat He continued to preach because people were pressing upon Him. There are these beautiful explanations about the reaction of the people. For example when Jesus Christ was in the synagogue, we read in Gospel “*The eyes of all were fixed on him.*” When Jesus Christ preached in the synagogue, we read, “*and the people were spellbound by his word.*” They were spellbound, hypnotized ... they were yearning, they were so thirsty to hear that word, to come in touch with that word, that the woman suffering from hemorrhage too, she was convinced that even if she touched just the fringe of the garment of Jesus, she would be healed. And the same it is with us, “*He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from all destruction.*” As Jesus said, “*He who tastes me will thirst for more – will hunger for more.*”

Once you taste seriously Jesus Christ, you cannot stop wanting more. And that is why, in the Our Father, the original which we find in the Gospel of Matthew 6.9, it says “*Give us today the bread of tomorrow.*” It is not ‘give us today our daily bread’, but ‘*give us today the bread of tomorrow*’ ... ‘now that I have tasted the bread of the angels, I cannot wait for it to be given tomorrow ... can you give it to me today?’ In fact the whole of the Our Father is an eschatological prayer. It looks towards the future and makes it present. “*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*” Give us today the bread of tomorrow. So when the day of temptation comes, let me not succumb to it, thinking that evil has the upper hand, and so I will side with evil ... I will say ... it is good to be bad ... it's good not to go to Mass ... look at those people, they don't go to Church and they win the lottery, they have beautiful cars ... and you come to the temptation that in order to prosper you have to be evil. If you are innocent, then ... well Jesus Christ told you to be innocent, but to be astute like serpents too, not just to be

innocent, otherwise we will become simpletons, and Jesus Christ does not want us to be simpletons, for sure.

Then clothe the naked. To be divested, divested of personality. So naked is not just physical nakedness. There is a difference between nude and naked. So being divested is the one – and that is why we ‘put on Jesus Christ’ ... His actions, His words, His doctrines ... we live it, we dress the virtue.

Welcome the stranger. This is already in the Old Testament. The Jewish people are instructed to welcome the stranger because *“You were strangers in the land of Egypt.”* They have to welcome the strangers. And nowadays we are living in this time where, because of refugees and things like this we have an opportunity where we can really live it down to earth this notion of welcoming the stranger. Many times we feel ourselves insecure in front of the stranger, however, *‘blessed is the person who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.’* Sometimes we feel insecure because we place our trust in human beings rather than on the Lord who told us to welcome the stranger.

Heal the sick. Again, there is sickness that is physical, sickness that is psychological and sickness that is spiritual. The spiritual sickness that can be caused sometimes even providentially where we read in the Prophet Jeremiah *“I wound, but I heal.”* Where God, sometimes because of our stubbornness, will take off His hands from us, we fall into sin, and then in this sin, we discover His love, His mercy, His forgiveness. *“He who knew no sin has become sin for us.”* He got down into our mud rather than throwing the rope at us, trying to lift us up, He came with a ladder, He placed the ladder in the mud, He went down into the mud, put us on His shoulder and carried us out of this mud. He became sin for us. So this healing, especially in listening to the Word of God who sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from all destruction. He said to Moses *“And let them know that I am the Lord their God, their healer.”* It is the obedience towards the Word of God.

Sometimes we think that the doctor heals. No, the doctor has permission to heal. It is God Who heals. That is why the Talmud says “God has given doctors the permission to heal not to predict life.” And sometimes they tell you “You have six months to live.” and they live only a week, and sometimes they will say “You have six months to live.” and they live for another twenty-five years. So we know that it is God who is the author of life.

Visit the imprisoned. That is tough, because the imprisoned are not only the people who are in the Kingston Penitentiary, but each one of us are in prison, and we imprison our own selves too. Like the way we do things, we have certain habits, the way we handle certain things and others will get furious and nervous and impatient if some people handle some things the way we don’t want, or the way we are not accustomed to. This is very interesting, because when we try to explain the parable of the good Samaritan, we forget that the first person who has fallen prey to thieves, wounded and put aside is inside each one of us. Inside each one of us there is this person who has been abused, ridiculed, wounded in childhood or so, and then, because we being weak, we don’t want to show this person outwardly because he will not be accepted, we try to hide him also from ourselves by lying about ourselves, about our capacity. You have a sickness and someone will ask us “How are you?” and you say “I’m fine, thank you.”, and you know that you are not fine.

But if you say, “I’m not well. I have a pain in my stomach.” – and you think “I know you do not want to hear this. It may be this, it may be that ... you don’t want to hear a sermon about medicine”, and so you lie, we lie, I lie. We are imprisoned. There is this person who has fallen prey – we hide him – and he is waiting to be cured, he is waiting to be visited, because he is in prison. And once we do that, we learn how to love ourselves. We escape those sayings of Nietzsche, where he says “Be careful of the person who hates himself, you might be his next victim.” If I don’t know how to love myself, then I don’t think I am going to love other people. And so, by looking at the interest of others the way Jesus Christ did. St Paul says in Philippians in chapter 2 “*Then God will look after our own interest.*”

And: **Bury the dead.** We all know, in the book of Tobit, how there is this act of kindness. It is one of the acts of kindness, burying the dead. Let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy.

To counsel the doubtful. A lot of people, especially those who are very scrupulous, will have a doubt. You go to confession, and you begin to doubt – did he understand me? did I explain myself properly? ... These are to be eliminated. Scruples, the word scrupulum was a piece of gravel that entered between the heel in the sandal of the Roman soldiers while they were walking and it hurt. As soon as you step on gravel that came into your sandal, it hurts. And that is why they are scruples, because they hurt. So a doubt, for you it sometimes if someone is scrupulous, you say “oh my gosh” ... but for them it is real, it is very painful. It is better to be on the lax side than to be on the scrupulous side. It is better to be on the lax side because it is easier to set you straight, but if you are on the scrupulous side, it can lead you to serious sickness, and sometimes to mental sickness too. It is based mostly on fear, negative fear, not the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, thanking that God is there as a tyrant who is there to try to catch you in something to block you from giving the reward. No. God uses even our stupidities, even our stupidities to get us into heaven, because when He looks at me and says “You know, the disaster you did, I don’t think you are normal. And because you are not normal, I cannot judge you as a normal person, come in.” That is why we are encouraged ... we always find that when God finds you, He will say, “you have been kind, you did a disaster, but, I have to be kind to you because you were kind.” As they say, “you know, there is a way of cornering God ... be always kind, and then, when you approach Him, He has also to manifest His kindness towards you and me.” So about counsel the doubtful, when we encounter people who are scrupulous, we show patience and kindness to them and we try to help them to come out of it, because if you try to bring them straight, they will go back. But if you take the ostination on the other side, then they swing until they find themselves in the middle.

Instruct the Ignorant. The Jewish people have a beautiful saying worth remembering, where they say: “If you have not discovered your ignorance, it is a sign that you have lost your wisdom.” The more you know, the more you know that you do not know. If you think that you are not stupid, then you are stupid. There is another Jewish saying that says “Man learns and learns, and he dies like a fool.” It is our duty to instruct the ignorant, to try to help others with patience.

Admonish sinners. John is clear in the Letter. “*If you see your brother sinning, approach him, correct him.*” The Gospel too says “*If he does not listen to you, take another person with you as a witness. If he doesn’t listen to both of you, then present him to the Church and if he does not*

listen to the Church, then treat him like a Gentile.” Which means, the way you pray for the conversion of a Gentile, you pray also for that brother to be converted, because he is treading on shaky ground, so you have to give him some stability. Admonish the sinner, do not judge him but admonish him.

Comfort the afflicted. Comfort is one of the Fruits of the Spirit .. joy. So install joy where you find sorrow, especially in moments of bereavement. Here we have a great mission. We try to help people to show them that – we hear them say “God took my father ... God took my mother ... God took my child”. They were lent to you, they were not given to you, they were lent. In fact the mishnah says clearly that the creation of a person is the job of God, the father and the mother ... so they came through these three, but, in fact, they belong to God, and He lent them to us to bring them up for Him.

Forgive offenses. Here we stop. Forgive offenses. *“And if you do not forgive, neither will my Father forgive you.”* There is a condition. It is amazing. Sometimes we forget that there is a condition tied to forgiveness. *“If you do not forgive the sins of others, neither will My Father forgive your sins.”* Our prayer will be pharisaic, because when we say the Our Father, we tell God *“forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who trespass against us”* (Oh sure). We say “I forgive, but I do not forget.” That is not the kind of forgiveness that God wants from us. *“On that day I will forgive the sins of my people, and I will remember their sins no more.”* Jeremiah is clear. So forgive offenses.

Bear patiently those who do us evil. *“Vengeance is mine says the Lord. I will repay.”* Romans chapter 12. *“I will repay.”* Zechariah is clear. *“Truly, one who touches you touches the apple of my eye.”* So he says, let them know that whoever messes with you, he is messing with the apple of His eye. We are God’s apple, and so God will revenge. These are the battles that God constantly fights for His people. It’s not only the battle in the time of the Exodus when Moses said “These Egyptians that you are seeing today, you will see them no longer, you have only to stand still, the Lord will do your fighting. But as we know, there were the Books of the Wars of Yaweh, books that are lost in the Bible, but they are mentioned. They are mentioned *“as it was written in the Books of the Wars of Yaweh”*, the wars that God fought on behalf of the people. There were these chronicles but they are lost and God still fights for you and for me ... but we have to learn how to trust Him to do so. But, if we think that we are smarter than Him, like the guy who said “God, take care of my friends, but leave my enemies in my hands.” You don’t know who your enemies are. You don’t know because they stab you from the back.

Bear patiently with those who do us evil, and pray for the living and the dead. This is one of the spiritual acts of mercy.

So, then we go back to the message itself.

“In the light of this love, which is strong as death (cf. Song 8:6), the real poor are revealed as those who refuse to see themselves as such.” Who is poor? The person who is never satisfied with what he has. Who is rich? The person who is happy with what he has. Here it says: “the poor are those who refuse to see themselves as such”. They consider themselves rich, but they are actually the poorest of the poor.” In fact, this saying is worth thinking about. Some people are so poor that the only thing that they have to depend on is money. Some are so poor, poor of

love, affection, self-esteem ... they have a lot of money, but they are always grumbling, always complaining, they don't know how to live happily. They work hard for that money, and as soon as they die, someone will go and enjoy themselves with it. The poor are those, who, the only thing that they have to rely on is money. Whereas, we can live insofar as we discover that we are loved. And this is what the last three Popes have been telling us constantly. – It is more important to discover that God loves you, than that you love God. We love God because He loved us first. As St Paul says: *“The love of Christ impels us”* ... it pushes us ... it gives us the energy to love Him back. As St John of the Cross says “Love can only be repaid by love.” St Paul says: *“The life I now live is for Christ who loved me and gave himself for me.”* Love can only be repaid by love.

“They consider themselves rich, but they are actually the poorest of the poor. This is because they are slaves to sin, which leads them to use wealth and power, not for the service of God and others, but to stifle within their hearts the profound sense that they too are only poor beggars.” So, the best way to get is to give. In Hebrew it is called “Nathan” it’s “palindrome”. The “th” in Hebrew is one letter, so whether we read Nathan forward or backward, it is read Nathan. This helps us to see the truth about the GIVING, that is, **in giving we are receiving** at the same time. The first beneficiary of the giving is the benefactor himself/herself.

Though the Pope quotes the Acts of the Apostles, where he says *“As the Lord has said, it is better to give than to receive.”*, it is one of those oral traditions. In the Bible, it is not written that Jesus Christ said those words, but, it is an oral tradition. And it is true because in giving you are receiving. So it is not true that it is more blessed to give than to receive, because in giving, you are receiving automatically. In giving you create an empty space, and that empty space, God will fill it hundredfold. So, is it better to give, or to receive? This is like Rabbi Robinovich ... they asked him “How did you become so rich?” He said, “Because I am in competition with God.” “What do you mean?” “I give, God gives me. The more God gives me, the more I give.” The more I give, the more God gives me.” So, he is in competition with God.

It would be nice if we could find more people like him.

“The greater their power and wealth, the more this blindness and deception can grow.” Money blinds a lot of people. Money is a good servant, but it is a hopeless master. Once it takes over your life it will ruin you. If you have one hundred, you want two hundred ... if you have two hundred, you want four hundred ... once you have four hundred, you want eight hundred, and then you continue on with geometrical multiplication. It can even reach the point of being blind to Lazarus begging at the doorstep. They can be blind to this. Lazarus, a poor man, is a figure of Christ, who through the poor, pleads to our conversion. When we see a poor person, sometimes we say “I had pity on him, I helped him.” You had pity on him? ... God had pity on you, not you had pity on him. He left that person in that miserable state so that when that person comes in front of you, you will take from your money and give it to that person as God comes to occupy the space of that money. The only way that God can make you give money is by leaving that person in that miserable state. So that person has been carrying your sin and my sin. He has been carrying our sins, so one has to be careful about these things. The first beneficiary is the benefactor himself. The first person who is going to benefit from the giving is the person who is giving – it is not the receiver. We will benefit. As St Paul says – we have been quoting it left,

right and centre this morning in Philippians chapter 2 *“Have this mind among yourselves which was in Christ Jesus, he did not look to his own interest, but to the interest of others.”* If we look to the interest of others, help the other person in his boat, and your boat has already reached the shore. For the doctor will say, ‘push someone uphill and without knowing you are there.’

“As such, he presents the possibility of conversion which God offers us and which we may well fail to see. Such blindness is often accompanied by the proud illusion of our omnipotence”, and this brings us false arrogance, and as the Bible says *“God detests an arrogant person.”* The Wisdom says explicitly that *“God and arrogance cannot dwell in the same room.”* God detests a proud person. *“This illusion can likewise take social and political forms, as shown by the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century, and, in our own day, by the ideologies of monopolizing thought and techno science, which would make God irrelevant and reduce man to raw material to be exploited.”* What matters is mass production. They don’t care that they are going to ruin you, going to ruin your family, ruin society – *“mass production”*, and human beings become like a machine, like an object. Forgetting he becomes like an animal, at least there is some resemblance, but it becomes like an object, a machine, and then there is no resemblance there. *“This illusion can also be seen in the sinful structures linked to a model of false development based on the idolatry of money, which leads to lack of concern for the fate of the poor on the part of wealthier individuals and societies; they close their doors, refusing even to see the poor.”* And the doors are not just the doors of our houses, but the doors of our hearts.

“For all of us, then, this Jubilee Year is a favourable time to overcome our existential alienation by listening to God’s word and by practicing the Works of Mercy.” So here, it reduces our work, during this Holy Year of Mercy, to do two important things - one is listening to the Word of God, and the other one puts us into action by living these Works of Mercy.

“In the corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited; in the spiritual works of mercy – counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer – we touch more directly our own sinfulness.” So, when you help others, in reality we are helping ourselves. *“The corporal and spiritual works of mercy must never be separated.”* and this is an interesting statement because up until a few years ago, we used to look at a human being as the body and the soul, and we used to speak about how Jesus Christ came to save the soul. But today, we speak about Jesus Christ coming to save human beings, and a human being has these two elements, the body and the soul, and so we also have to look at our bodies. If we look at our bodies properly, we experience peace. As Albert Einstein has said *“Peace is the balance between the necessities of the body and the higher duties of the soul.”* When we learn how to balance these two things, then we live at peace. If we put a lot of emphasis on the body, then we become belly-worshippers, like eating, eating – their food is their God – what to eat and what not to eat. But they are not choosing what they are going to say about others. *“That is how I think.”* *“I did not ask you how you think.”* Like one of our Superiors used to say when he was our Father Master – he used to correct one of the students, and the student would say *“I will think about it.”* and the Superior said *“There is nothing to think about, go and do it.”*

“The corporal and spiritual works of mercy must never be separated. By touching the flesh of the crucified Christ in the suffering, sinners can receive the gift of realizing that they too are poor

and in need.” This is a lesson, because sometimes we have the tendency to over-emphasize material things, and so also the missionaries, they build hospitals, they build schools, and then they announce Jesus Christ to them. It does not work ... when their belly is full, they don't need Jesus Christ. But Scripture is clear “*Seek you first the kingdom of God and all other things will be given to you.*” So we have to keep the scale of values. As C. S. Lewis says, “when first things are put first, second things are not suppressed, but they are increased.”

“This love alone is the answer to that yearning for infinite happiness and love that we think we can satisfy with the idols of knowledge, power and riches.” There are these idols that constantly we touch them with our hands, the idol of knowledge, power and riches. Yet the danger always remains that by a constant refusal to open the doors of their hearts to Christ Who knocks on them in the poor, the proud, rich and powerful will end up condemning themselves and plunging into the eternal abyss of solitude which is Hell.” The fact is this ... when we meet a person who is rich and generous, he is very helpful, very, very joyful. When we meet a person who is rich, but is not generous, they are miserable. They are like Scrooge. Because, when a person administers properly, then God trusts more of His riches to him, but when a person does not administer properly, then even the little that he has will be taken away from him.

The pointed words of Abraham apply to them and to all of us: “*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*” (Lk 16.29). So we have these poor, perhaps Jesus Christ is catechising us through these poor. They come to us and He wants us to touch their poverty, to touch their hunger, their thirst and to feed them. In the long-run, after all, we are going to be judged on the acts of mercy. The acts of mercy are going to our judgement, not how much pure we were, how much faith we had, how much hope we had. No. No. It is on the acts of mercy that we are going to be examined.

“Such attentive listening will best prepare us to celebrate the final victory over sin and death of the Bridegroom, now risen, who desires to purify His betrothed in expectation of His coming.”

This is freedom, being liberated, being joined to this God. The Ten Commandments are introduced by this God of freedom. “*I am the Lord, your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of bondage.*” And so, the more we connect with Him, the more we are going to experience this freedom – freedom from self-centredness, freedom from greed.

“Let us not waste this Holy Year of Mercy, so favourable a time for conversion! We ask this through the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary, who, encountering the greatness of God's mercy freely bestowed upon her, was the first to acknowledge her lowliness and to call herself the Lord's humble servant.” So the first word that this message brings to us is Mary, the image of the Church, and the last word also concludes by once more presenting in front of us Mary, and her experience in not just saying, but living the Magnificat.