

The Catholic Church of the  
**Immaculate Conception**

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**February 21, 2016**

**Rev. Richard L. Perozich, Pastor**  
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[pictures@marshalong.com](mailto:pictures@marshalong.com)

**Parish Office Hours**  
Monday: Noon to 4:00 pm  
Tuesday-Friday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

Mass Schedule

**Daily Mass:** Monday - Saturday at 8:00 am  
**First Friday Mass & Devotion:** 8:00 am

Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil: 5:15 P.M.  
Sunday: 8:30 AM, 10:00AM, 11:30 AM, 5:15 P.M.

**Holy Day Masses:** 8 A.M., 7:00 P.M.

**Penance:** For daily Mass goes 7:30 AM. For Parish on Saturday: 4:30 to 5:00 P.M., and by appointment

**Baptisms & RCIA:** *By appointment only.* Please email Deacon Fitzmorris at [rfitzmor@sdcatholic.org](mailto:rfitzmor@sdcatholic.org).

**Weddings:** By appointment only. Arrangements must be made at least **one year** in advance. Please contact the office

**Funerals:** *For arrangements, please call the parish office.*



**History of Immaculate Conception Parish**

It was here in Old Town that Saint Junípero Serra celebrated his First Holy Mass in California on July 2, 1769, near the site of the present Immaculate Conception Church, and it was on the hill overlooking Old Town that he planted the cross which marked the site of the Mission and the Presidio.

In 1849, the first parish church was established in Old Town with the name of Immaculate Conception and was dedicated in 1858. It still stands and is known as the Old Adobe Chapel on Conde Street. The cornerstone to the present Immaculate Conception Church was laid in 1868 under the direction of Father Antonio Ubach. With the population swing toward the south, it was not until July 6, 1919, that the church was dedicated by Archbishop John J. Cantwell of Los Angeles.

# WE PRAY

## MASS INTENTIONS

22	8 AM	<i>The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle</i> George Cruz, SI	RP
23	8 AM	<i>St. Polycarp</i> †George Driscoll, Sr.	RE
24	8 AM	<i>Lenten Weekday</i> Jim & Nelda Harris, SI	RP
25	8 AM	<i>Lenten Weekday</i> Consuelo Rodriguez, SI	RP
26	8 AM	<i>Lenten Weekday</i> †Ruthe Ramirez	RP
27	8 AM	<i>Lenten Weekday</i> †Richard Green	RP
	5:15 PM	†Rev. David Carvalho, OSB	RP
28	8:30 AM	Reggie & Raynald Custodio, SI	RP
	10:00 AM	Joanna Makayan, SI	RE
	11:30 AM	†William Kennedy	RE
	5:15 PM	†Jorge M. Makayan	RP

## APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

### February: Intentions of the Holy Father

**Universal:** That we may take good care of creation--a gift freely given--cultivating and protecting it for future generations.

**Evangelization:** That opportunities may increase for dialogue and encounter between the Christian faith and the peoples of Asia.

## PRAY: SEMINARIANS IN THEOLOGY

1st	Manuel Del Rio, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo
4th	David Exner, North American College, Rome
4th	Brian Frice, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
2nd	Oscar Lopez, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo
3rd	Nathan McWeeney, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
1st	Raymond Napuli, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
1st	Michael O'Connor, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
2nd	Eric Tamayo, North American College, Rome
4th	Corey Tufford, North American College, Rome
4th	Derek Twilliger, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
3rd	Billy Zondler, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR

## PRAY FOR OUR PRIESTS

22	Rev. Fernando Ramirez, Jr.
23	Rev. Andres Ramos
24	Rev. Bernardo Ranoa
25	Rev. Bernard Rapp
26	Rev. Michael Ratajczak
27	Rev. Michael Ravenkamp, SJ
28	Rev. Dickens Remy

## PRAY THE SCRIPTURES

Monday:	1 Pt 5:1-4; Ps 23:1-6; Mt 16:13-19
Tuesday:	Is 1:10-20; Ps 50:8-23; Mt 23:1-12
Wednesday:	Jer 18:18-20; Ps 31:5-16; Mt 20:17-28
Thursday:	Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1:1-6; Lk 16:19-31
Friday:	Gn 37:3-28; Ps 105:16-21; Mt 21:33-46
Saturday:	Mi 7:14-20; Ps 103:1-12; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
Sunday:	Ex 3:1-15; Ps 103:1-11; 1 Cor 10:1-12; Lk 13:1-9

## PRAY FOR HEALING

*Jesus we ask you to bring your peace and healing touch to those who are ill afraid or worried. Amen*

Esther Fitch	Alicia Ambrose
Margaret Kelly	Inez Cerda Bull
Patricia Kennedy	Cosmo Busalacchi
Dorothy Kleint	Maria Casanova
Dena Mendoza	Steve Stone
Jean Miller	Maria Esperanza Kramer
Patricia O'Grady	Joan Busalacchi
Mary Jane Tiernan	Mark Brandon.
Marguerite Vorst	Jeanne Pontius
Martha Zamudio	Esther Salazar
Carlos Amaya	Joane Anderson
Fred Levine	Janet Meyers
Mike Rodriguez	Yolanda Garcia
Maguire Fitzpatrick	Susan Rykowski
Tony Jenkins	Elias Barajas
Peter Nalwalker	Shirley Hlog
Bob Witt	Olivia Ingram
Frank Garay	Grace Mulvanity
Frances Garcia	Angelica Ortega
Socorro Pacheco	Barbara Driscoll
Linda Lee	Lucille Miller
Amparo Valenzuela	Reginald Custodio
Robby Witt	Frankie Diaz, Jr.
Phyllis Altomare	Victoria Cardenas

## PRAY FOR OUR DEPLOYED MILITARY

*Jesus protect all who serve our country.*

Sgt. Ahmed John Alexander	Sgt. Adriana Matizel
Natalie Augustine	Wendell Miculob
Major Jerry Bloomquist	LTJG Joe F. Morales, USN;
Col. Mike Bodkin	LCPL Matthew A. Pena
Danny Carpenter, USMC	Sgt. Richard Pierce
LTJG Joseph Colangelo, USN	Sgt. William Paul Powers and
Cpl. Samuel James Comer	Cinco
Daniel Dinglebeck, USN PFC	CPL Wilson Santiago
David Eley, USMC	Alfred Tello
Micah Emery	Ricky Thibeault
Sgt. Christopher Escalona	Tony Tulloss
Capt. Pedro Esquivel	PFC Travis Vliet; & 3rd
1Lt. Cortez Fabia	Marine Aircraft Wing.
Juan Carlos Galazza	SCPO Desiree S. Hayes, USN
SSGT. Vincent Charles Lucario	Gil Perez, US Navy
Robert Clinton Long, MC2	

## † PRAY FOR OUR DECEASED †

*Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace Amen.*

William Kennedy	Angela Cordova
Joan Schmitt	Ramiro Moreno
Robert McMahon	Alexander Toczko
Concepción Garza	Jeannette Toczko
Richard Solís Moreno	José Teofilo Solorio
Alvin Weaver	Ray & Betty Jackson
William Bethel	Denise Cooney
Lillian Sinclair	Joanne Mangiameli
Olga Hritz	Edna Moore
Angelina Olivarez	Paul Ramirez
Alice Perry	Isabella Asaro
Joseph Moreno	Maude Laracy
Louie Serrano	Helen Peña
Gustavo Sosa	Lydia Castillo Herrera
Floyd Watson	Maria Necochea
Iola Torre	Bertha Lockwood
Emilie Graham	Salvador Rivera

**HOW GRACE MOVES OUR SOULS****FROM THE PASTOR**

— *A spiritual writer of the fourth century*

Those who have been considered worthy to go forth as the sons of God and to be born again of the Holy Spirit from on high, and who hold within them the Christ who renews them and fills them with light, are directed by the Spirit in varied and different ways and in their spiritual repose they are led invisibly in their hearts by grace.

At times, they are like men who mourn and lament over their fellow men, and pouring forth prayers for the whole human race, they plunge into tears and lamentation, on fire with spiritual love for mankind.

At other times they are enkindled by the Spirit with love and exultation that, were it possible, they would clasp in their embrace all mankind, without discrimination, good and bad alike.

Sometimes they are cast down below all mankind in lowliness of spirit, so that they reckon theirs to be the lowest and most abject of conditions.

And sometimes they are held by the Spirit in ineffable joy.

At one time they are like a brave man who puts on the king's full armor and goes down into battle; he fights bravely against the enemy and defeats them. In like manner, the spiritual man takes up the heavenly arms of the Spirit and marches against the enemy and engaging in battle tramples the foe beneath his feet.

At another time the soul is at rest in deepest silence, tranquility and peace, existing in sheer spiritual pleasure and in ineffable repose and a perfect state.

Again, the soul is instructed by grace in a certain understanding in the ineffable wisdom and the inscrutable knowledge of the Spirit on matters which neither tongue nor lips can utter.

Then again, the soul becomes like any ordinary man.

In such varied ways does grace work within them and many are the means by which it leads the soul, renewing it according to God's will and training it in different ways so that it may be set before the heavenly Father pure and whole and blameless.

We, too, therefore must make our prayer to God and entreat in love and in great hope that he may bestow upon us the heavenly grace of the gift of the Spirit. We pray that we, too, may be guided by that Spirit and that he may lead us into the fullness of divine will and refresh us with the varied kinds of his repose, that by the help of this guidance, exercise of grace and spiritual advancement, we may be considered worthy to attain to the perfection of the fullness of Christ, as the Apostle says: *that you may be filled to the complete fullness of Christ.*

**GOD WANTS TO SAVE YOU; WILL YOU LET HIM?  
POPE ASKS**

— *By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service*

God doesn't want to condemn anyone; he wants to save every person in the entire world, Pope Francis said.

"The problem is letting him enter one's heart" to transform one's life, the pope said during his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square Feb. 3.

"This is the heart of God, the heart of a father who loves his children and wants them to live rightly and justly and, therefore, to live in fullness and be happy," he said.

The pope continued a series of talks dedicated to divine mercy, looking specifically at how divine mercy and divine justice go hand in hand.

"It might seem that they are two things that contradict each other," he said, but they don't because "it is precisely God's mercy that brings true justice to fruition."

God's justice is different from the human administration of legal justice, which is "retributive, that imposes a penalty on the guilty," the pope said.

"This path still does not lead to true justice because it doesn't actually conquer evil but simply contains it," the pope said. "Rather, it is only by responding to (evil) with the good that evil truly can be overcome."

The Bible shows that true justice bypasses a court system, he said. The one who is wronged goes directly to the one who is guilty "in order to invite him to conversion, to help him to understand that he is doing wrong, to appeal to his conscience."

Through this act of persuasion, the one guilty of wrongdoing "can open himself to the forgiveness that the injured party is offering him. And this is beautiful," the pope said.

This is the way that families try to work out their conflicts, he said. The one who has been offended "loves the culprit and wants to salvage the relationship that binds them, not cut off this relationship," he said.

But it is not an easy path to take, he added. "It requires that the person who was wronged be ready to forgive and desire the salvation of and what's best for the one who has wronged him."

These reciprocal acts of forgiveness and conversion are the only way true justice can triumph, the pope said, because "if the guilty one recognizes the evil committed and stops doing it, then the evil is no more and the one who was unjust becomes just."

"This is how God acts with us sinners," he said. God constantly offers forgiveness and helps people recognize their sin in order to set them free.

That is because "God doesn't seek our condemnation, but our salvation. God doesn't want to condemn anybody," not even those whom many think deserve it like Pontius Pilate or Judas, he said. "The Lord of mercy wants to save everybody."


God's immense heart "goes beyond our small concept of justice" and opens up people's horizons to his limitless mercy, he said.

This is the kind of paternal heart people want to encounter in the confessional, the pope said.

While the priest may seek to help the penitent understand the evil committed, "we all go to the confessional to find a father, a father who helps us change our life, a father who gives us the strength to go on, a father who forgives us in the name of God."

That is why the sacrament of penance or reconciliation is such a big responsibility for the priest, the pope said, because the people "who come to you are just looking for a father" and the priest in the confessional is there "in the place of the father who brings justice with his mercy."


**AROUND THE PARISH**



**2016 Baptism Schedule**  
**No baptisms during March.**  
 Schedule is available on the parish website ([ic-sandiego.org](http://ic-sandiego.org)).

**28 FEB ... FAMILY CATECHESIS**  
 Parents and children as well as all interested adults are welcome to attend Family Catechesis in the bride's room of the parish hall every other week. The program continues on Sunday, February 14 at 9:45 right after the 8:30 AM Mass. All children must be accompanied by their parents at each session.

**HARP MEDITATION**  
 Marsha Long, choir director and organist, will provide harp music for meditation on Thursdays during Lent from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the church.



**Palm Sunday - The Passion of the Lord**  
 March 20  
 8:30, 10:00, 11:30 a.m., 5:15 p.m.  
 (Vigil Mass on Saturday, March 19 at 5:15 p.m.)


**Holy Thursday**  
 March 24  
 No 8:00 a.m. Mass  
 Mass of the Lord's Supper  
 7:00 p.m.

**Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)**  
 March 25  
 No 8:00 a.m. Mass  
 Stations of the Cross  
 3 PM and 6:15 PM  
 The Passion  
 7:00 p.m.

**Holy Saturday**  
 March 26  
 No 8:00 a.m. Mass  
 Easter Vigil Mass  
 8:00 p.m.

**Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord**  
 March 27 8:30, 10:00, 11:30 a.m., 5:15 p.m.

**THE TOMORROW PROJECT**  
 For meat-less options for Lenten suppers, consider the Tomorrow Project's food products. You may order online at [www.tomorrowproject.org](http://www.tomorrowproject.org), stop by store front at 1777 Fifth Ave, or call 619-230-1151.



**Stations of the Cross** continue on each Friday at 7:00 p.m. during Lent through March 25.  
**Exception:** Stations of the Cross will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Good Friday, March 25.  
**Note:** Free soup supper in the hall from 6 to 6:45 pm.

**28 FEB ... QUARTERS & CANS SUNDAY**  
 Please drop your Quarters and Cans envelopes in the regular collection next Sunday or the following Sunday. All money collected will be used here at Immaculate Conception to assist our brothers and sisters who come to us in need. Your generous donations will continue to be used to help feed, and in some cases assist those who are in need of our help with rent and utilities. The parish also provides gas and grocery cards. Resource information is also available so people can access public and private agencies that can help with their needs.  
 Food items collected will be taken by our volunteers to the Catholic Charities Food Resource Center. Please make sure these items are in non-breakable containers, unopened, and the dates have not expired. There is always a need for the following items:

- ◆ Canned goods including vegetables, fruit, chili, tuna fish, spam, chicken, beef, beans, soups, and spaghetti sauce;
- ◆ Peanut butter, jelly, and honey;
- ◆ Cereals, pasta, rice, and beans;
- ◆ Any paper goods such as toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates, cups, napkins, Kleenex tissues, baby wipes;
- ◆ Hygiene items such as shampoo, soaps, toothpaste, tooth brushes, dental floss, mouthwash, disposable razors, shaving cream, lotions and feminine products;
- ◆ Plastic, paper or reusable grocery bags for carrying the above.

**Thank You**  
 On behalf of the entire Quarter and Cans Committee and Father Richard we thank you for your continued support of these important programs as we try to follow Our Lord's command and put the Holy Gospel into action.

**AROUND THE PARISH**

**Gifts of Treasure**

With gratitude for the gifts we have received parishioners and visitors made a joyful return to the Lord.

**February 14, 2016**

**Total Collection: \$6,290.84**  
**Envelopes: \$4,710.28 Plate: \$1,580.56**  
**Total contributing households: 94**

5:15 Sat	\$1117.88
8:30 Sun	\$1136.82
10:00 Sun	\$1571.00
11:30 Sun	\$ 929.79
5:15 Sun	\$1043.36
Mailed	\$ 492.00

**EXPENSES**

February 8-12, 2016

Cable/Internet	\$70.00
Hall Maint.	\$ 60.00
Maint. Supplies	\$50.80
Ministry Supplies	\$135.70
Music	\$500.00
Postage	\$240.00
Termite Control	\$250.00

**Total: \$ 1,306.50**

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS...**

**22 FEB ... DEADLINE for COURTYARD TILE ORDERS.**  
 Minimum \$100 price increase after Feb. 22.

**Courtyard trees:** The new trees have been planted. They are known as Bauhinia blakeana, Hong Kong Orchid Tree.

**23 FEB ... LENTEN PENANCE SERVICE, 7:00 p.m.**

**WELCOME TO IMMACULATE CONCEPTION!**

To register at the parish, please fill out the form below and drop it in the basket or call the office at 295-4141.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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**Lenten Resources**

The Stations of the Cross with Pope John Paul II  
The Way of the Cross with text from the Scriptures  
The Way of the Cross, according to the method of

St. Alphonse Liguori

My Lenten Prayer Book

Spanish language versions also available.

**See our online catalog at:**

<http://www.ic-sandiego.org/gift-shop>

**SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL:  
DIGNITATIS HUMANAE**

**MAN'S DIGNITY AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

... 11. He acknowledged the power of government and its rights, when He commanded that tribute be given to Caesar: but He gave clear warning that the higher rights of God are to be kept inviolate: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). In the end, when He completed on the cross the work of redemption whereby He achieved salvation and true freedom for men, He brought His revelation to completion. For He bore witness to the truth, but He refused to impose the truth by force on those who spoke against it. Not by force of blows does His rule assert its claims. It is established by witnessing to the truth and by hearing the truth, and it extends its dominion by the love whereby Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws all men to Himself.

Taught by the word and example of Christ, the Apostles followed the same way. From the very origins of the Church the disciples of Christ strove to convert men to faith in Christ as the Lord; not, however, by the use of coercion or of devices unworthy of the Gospel, but by the power, above all, of the word of God. Steadfastly they proclaimed to all the plan of God our Savior, "who wills that all men should be saved and come to the acknowledgment of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).



**PARISH & COMMUNITY**

**Parish Calendar**

**February**

23	Penance Service	7:00 PM
25	Harp Meditation Choir Practice	2:00 PM 6:00 PM
26	Soup Supper Stations of the Cross	6:00 PM 7:00 PM
27	Quilting Group	9:30 AM
28	Quarters and Cans Sunday Family Catechesis	9:45 AM

**MARCH**

03	Harp Meditation Choir Practice	2:00 PM 6:00 PM
05	Soup Supper Stations of the Cross	6:00 PM 7:00 PM
06	Annual Lenten Collection	
07	I.C. Seniors Luncheon Meeting	11:00 AM
10	Harp Meditation Choir Practice	2:00 PM 6:00 PM
11	Soup Supper Stations of the Cross	6:00 PM 7:00 PM
12	Quilting Group	9:30 AM
13	Parish Breakfast	9:30 AM
17	Harp Meditation Choir Practice	2:00 PM 6:00 PM
18	Soup Supper Stations of the Cross	6:00 PM 7:00 PM
19	Quilting Group	9:30 AM

**APPLY...Saint Charles Borromeo Academy Accepting Applications**

Applications are being accepted now for the 2016-2017 school year. Visit the school, take a tour and talk with staff, students and parents regarding our strong academics and our faith-filled environment. Ideally located across from Liberty Station just west of Old Town and the 5 freeway.

See our video page at [Vimeo.com/SCBASanDiego](http://Vimeo.com/SCBASanDiego) or call: **(619) 223-8271**.

The essence of prayer is not the effort to make God give us something. Prayer, then, is not just informing God of our needs, for God already knows them. Rather, the purpose of prayer is to give God the opportunity to bestow the gifts He will give us when we are ready to accept them  
 -- Archbishop Fulton Sheen

**FROM MISERICORDIAE VULTUS - Pope Francis**

**BULL OF INDICTION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY**

*FRANCIS  
 BISHOP OF ROME SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS  
 OF GOD TO ALL WHO READ THIS LETTER,  
 GRACE MERCY, AND PEACE*

... 17. The initiative of “24 Hours for the Lord,” to be celebrated on the Friday and Saturday preceding the Fourth Week of Lent, should be implemented in every diocese. So many people, including the youth, are returning to the Sacrament of Reconciliation; through this experience they are rediscovering a path back to the Lord, living a moment of intense prayer and finding meaning in their lives. Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the centre once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God’s mercy with their own hands. For every penitent, it will be a source of true interior peace.

I will never tire of insisting that confessors be authentic signs of the Father’s mercy. We do not become good confessors automatically. We become good confessors when, above all, we allow ourselves to be penitents in search of his mercy. Let us never forget that to be confessors means to participate in the very mission of Jesus to be a concrete sign of the constancy of divine love that pardons and saves. We priests have received the gift of the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, and we are responsible for this. None of us wields power over this Sacrament; rather, we are faithful servants of God’s mercy through it.

**JOINT DECLARATION OF POPE FRANCIS AND PATRIARCH KIRILL OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA 2/12/16**

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with all of you” (2 Cor 13:13).

1. By God the Father’s will, from which all gifts come, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the help of the Holy Spirit Consolator, we, Pope Francis and Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, have met today in Havana. We give thanks to God, glorified in the Trinity, for this meeting, the first in history.

It is with joy that we have met like brothers in the Christian faith who encounter one another “to speak face to face” (2 Jn 12), from heart to heart, to discuss the mutual relations between the Churches, the crucial problems of our faithful, and the outlook for the progress of human civilization ...

**ON MERCY AND MERCILESSNESS**

— James V. Schall, S.J.

In the Magnificat, we read: “He (the Lord) has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.” Those who do not “fear” Him evidently do not come off so easily. Why not? It is no accident that mercy is bound up with fear. What is forgiven is worthy of the punishment that any disorder rightly deserves, whether forgiven or not. Mercy too has a component of intelligence designating what it is. Forgiveness of sin does not mean that what was forgiven was not evil. It means that it was. Mercy only comes into view when something that ought not to be actually occurs in the world through free agency.

The words “mercy” and “love” are not exactly the same. We love all being because, and only because, it is good. Mercy comes into view when something is not good, when evil is present in our souls. But if we do not acknowledge our part in an evil initiative and intend to correct it, mercy cannot gain entrance.

Chesterton said that the opposite of “funny” is not “serious.” Its opposite is “not funny.” Similarly, the opposite of mercy is “merciless.” Mercy is directly related to justice, a good. A fully just world, in which everyone has what is “due” to him, has no need of mercy at all, though it does have need of the love that goes to the core of the good in a way that justice does not.

St. Thomas remarks that the world is not created in justice. If it were, that would imply that God “owed” something to someone not Himself. The world’s existence is a result of gratuitousness, not justice. The world has no cause in itself to explain why it exists other than the suspicion that good might freely diffuse itself in being.

Mercy is a more surprising and restrictive word than we might at first realize. We want the world within itself, of course, to be “just.” But if it is only just, which it isn’t, then all actual crimes and sins that occur within it must be requited according to the degree of their disorder. Unpunished sins are very unsettling. They make the world itself seem unjust, as Plato correctly saw. This is, indeed, why he proposed a “last judgment.”

Mercy is the forgiveness of what need not or ought not to be forgiven. Indeed, mercy follows after, not before, both forgiveness and punishment. Mercy was never designed to minimize the heinousness of sins or to eliminate

their possibility. It was meant to affirm their disorder. But their disorder did not prevent God from forgetting them to allow us to begin anew.

Thus, God does not just “forgive” sins because He is merciful. He forgives them in the context of our realizing and acknowledging their disorder. Mercy is designed to encourage virtue, not to undermine it.

Pope Wojtyla said rightly that God would forgive everything that could be forgiven. Evidently, some things even God cannot do. He cannot forgive what does not freely ask to be forgiven. If He could or would forgive everything whether repented or not, it would mean that we could wander about with terrible sins on our souls that were simply ignored. When God said that our sins would be “blotted out,” He meant those things that we identify as sins when we acknowledge that we committed them and recognize that we ought not to have done so. These are the sins wherein mercy becomes relevant.

Mercy, paradoxically, can, if we are careless, become merciless. How so? Suppose an all-merciful God forgives all sins, whether repented or not. Everybody thus saves his soul automatically. We do not have to worry about what we do. The “merciful” God has already taken care of us whatever we do. Notice: no input on our part is required. God’s merciful love is said to be unrestricted. It is not limited by the distinction of good and evil.

But if everything is forgiven with no indication on our part that we acknowledge what is wrong and intend to cease doing it, this awareness empowers the merciless to do whatever they want. They too are already forgiven. This misunderstanding of mercy has created a jungle.

The second Jesuit General, Diego Laynez, said: “The throne of justice must not be turned into the throne of mercy. To do so is prejudicial to grace. It results in the denial of purgatory.” Benedict XVI made the same point in *Spe Salvi*. He pointed out that purgatory makes a good deal of sense when we realize the heinousness of our sins and the need ourselves to repent of them even if forgiven.

If the forgiveness of sins is automatic in mercy, we have no need of fear or grace to help us to realize and acknowledge our own disorders that alone are the objects of mercy.

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