*Editorial*

The Holy Father declared that this year, is the Year of Mercy. An invitation from the Holy Father not only to reflect on the Mercy of God but to translate that in real life. The majority of us are product of “Launching the year” with big liturgical celebrations and closing it with another big liturgical celebration. Little is done to translate these invitations from the Holy Father in real life.

I feel this year we are being called to do more as individuals, family, Small Christian Communities, Parishes up to the Church as whole in a specific locality. We all have suffered or are still suffering from the consequences of unforgiveness. I feel strongly that we are called to be more compassionate as our heavenly father is compassionate.

I would like to see compassionate as to be weak with the weak, to be powerless with the powerless and to be vulnerable with the vulnerable. In short, it is a movement of entering into the painful situation and experience the other and remaining with him/her in a sense of solidarity and oneness. It is to remain immersed in the conditions of fellow human beings in their brockenness.

There are many broken persons we encounter in our homes, communities, parishes, institutions who need our presence and understanding. We should remember that:

* In God justice and compassion are synonymous. God’s justice is *restorative* and not retributive. God’s justice restores the inviolable human dignity of every broken person and makes him/her a just person.
* Compassion forgives and heals. Most often than not, people become sick because of unforgiveness and the psycho-spiritual wounds and hurts they experience. Compassionate enables us to forgive and erase our mistakes and sins of the past, and cancel all our offences.
* Compassion erases the faults of the other. Compassionate is like the eraser, which cancels out all the mistakes.
* Compassionate re-creates the broken. Compassion involves loving the seemingly unlovable. Entering into the brokenness of the people re-creates all that is gloomy and stony, all that is damaged and deformed in them.
* To show life-giving compassion, one does not need to do heroic deeds. Compassion can be shown in ordinary activities of life; for example by a hearty welcome, patient listening, genuine interest in our neighbour, attending to the ordinary needs of our companions e.t.c.
* Compassionate involves both giving and receiving love.
* Compassion does not look for reward. Compassionate people who help others in need do not look for reward.

It is therefore, a genuine call to think Mercy, live merciful, and act merciful, for this is the call of God our Father.

*The Editor*

**2nd Sunday of Easter**

*3-04-2016*

Acts 2: 42-47

1Pet 1:3-9

Jn 20: 19-31

**Message of the Liturgy**

Today is Divine Mercy Sunday, it is a very special Sunday when the Divine Floodgates from Heaven are wide opened and Jesus offers us the total forgiveness of all sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He wants to foster a growing love for God and for our neighbor. When we obtain God’s pardon, we in turn might be persuaded to show a prompt pardon to our brothers and sisters. The faithful receive in great abundance the gift of the consolation of the Holy Spirit. Today’s liturgy indicates the path of mercy which, while re-establishing the relationship of each person with God, also creates new relations of fraternal solidarity among human beings.

**For the homily**

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles tells of the formation of the Spread of the Gospel after the Resurrection of Jesus and the formation of the first Christian Communities throughout the World. There are four things we are invited to learn from this first Christian community. First, all followed the teaching of the Apostles; second, they had everything in common; third, they met together for the celebration of the Eucharist, and finally, they prayed together. These first Christians were of great inspiration to many people in Jerusalem due to their love for one another. Furthermore, this community, touched many lives of the outsiders through their cheerfulness, simplicity and brotherliness, these external manifestation of their faith won the approval of many people. Though many people could not fully comprehend how possible people could manage to live in a community like this; but the reason is simple, they only witnessed or lived the risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as we are celebrating the feast of Divine Mercy today, it is our time to encourage fallen away Catholics, all the people who need our spiritual nourishment to return to the practice of their faith and seek repentance. By doing that, we will be proclaiming the risen Lord to many.

This first Letter of St. Peter is a homily to the newly baptized Christians. It is also a letter written to the suffering Christian Community. The Christians were facing a lot of unjust treatment due to their faith in Christ for the authority, and the people of other religions. Hence the invitation from Peter, realizing their situation he reminds them of their Baptism. St. Peter tells them that through Baptism they received new life and rose with Christ. These Christians they did not have the opportunity to experience the physical Jesus, but they were happy and satisfied with their Christians faith, witnessing God by their lives. The faithful had a task of witnessing to Christ and withstanding all the trials of their time. One vital thing we should always realize in our Christian faith is that: God is always with us and at all times. He allows us to face some temptations, challenges, rejections, persecution and many other bad things. But in all these circumstances, He is with us. All what He need from us; is trust, strong faith, to have docile hearts, endurance and acknowledge that God is my Light and everything. Therefore, we should not despair but came to God and He will guide us towards salvation. We need to pray for strong faith so that we live life worthy attaining His Mercy and salvation.

Today’s gospel from John is about the first appearances of Jesus to his disciples after his death and resurrection. How Jesus appeared in their midst on the first evening of that first Sunday when they were huddled together in fear? He greeted them with words of peace and then showed to them the wounds in his hands and his side so that they might believe what their eyes and their ears were telling them.

During this night, Jesus gave his disciples his Spirit and the authority to go and forgive the sins. He gave them the authority to remove the weights that prevent people from living a whole and fruitful life. The disciple Thomas was not there that first night, but the other 10 told him about how Jesus had come to them and how they had seen him and heard him. Thomas reaction to this news was: “Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” This is a very normal reaction for a normal person. Give me proof, give me something I can touch and see and I will believe Jesus appeared again. A week later, Thomas is told to look at him and touch him and to believe and Thomas did so, he believed what he saw and said to Jesus when he believed “My Lord and my God.”

The disciples had it easier than we do. How easy it is to believe when you can see and touch as Thomas did, all in one way or the other. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me....Why is that? Why is it blessed to believe without seeing; without touching; without hearing first, from the Messiah’s mouth as it were, for us? The answer lies in the nature of seeing and in the nature of faith. Many people say that seeing is believing, but that is far from true, in fact the opposite is more often the case, believing is seeing, believing something opens up to us the possibility of experiencing it, of seeing it come to pass in our lives, and of having that which we believe produce in us many kinds of blessings.

If you wait to see something before you will believe in it then you may never see what you want to see come to pass. All we require is a decision to believe the reports that we have heard, and to commit our lives to Jesus as our Lord and our God, and all the rest will come out of that. St. Paul writes: “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your hearts that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” He also writes: “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

Think of all the people who have believed in Jesus, without ever having seen him as the disciples saw him, and who, after a number of years of believing have claimed that they have felt Christ's presence in their lives, seen their prayers and the prayers of others answered, and been helped through hard times because of their faith in God's promises. Happy are those who believe without seeing. Happy are those who have made a decision to assert that life is stronger than death, that goodness is stronger than evil, and that love is stronger than hate, despite all that they have seen that might suggest the opposite.

They are happy because when they have come to believe in the Lord of life, the Lord of goodness, and the Lord of love, they see and experience all that they believe in and they are saved they experience goodness from God, a goodness that always conquers the evils that they may face in their daily lives. Paul says that: “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” The gospel message is very clear today belief comes first and sight then follows that, when you believe you become, and you live.

*Goodrich Mughogho, OFM*

**3rd Sunday of Easter**

*10-04-2016*

Acts 5: 27b-32, 40b-41

Rev. 5:11-14

Jn 21:1-19

**Message of the Liturgy**

The readings of today invite us as Christians to be witnesses of the resurrection. Just like the disciples did, we are invited to courageously proclaim the message of the resurrection to all in our societies.

**For the Homily**

The Gospel of today continue presenting to us the apparitions of Jesus to his disciples after his glorious resurrection. The most striking aspect in almost all the apparitions is that the disciples do not recognise Jesus at first instance. Today we hear of the disciples who have passed the whole night fishing but only in vain; not even a single fish is caught in their nets. In the morning, Jesus is there on the waterside and asks for something to eat. With their negative response, he commands them to cast again the nets. This time a miracle happens, they catch so plentiful a fish. And the beloved disciple immediately says, ‘it is the Lord.’ The disciple recognises Jesus inwardly and is able to proclaim to Simon Peter and the rest.

This is one of the main points we get from today’s readings; recognising and testifying about the risen Christ. It is an invitation for us to go out, bear witness and proclaim to all with the words ‘it is the Lord.’ As we continue to journey in the light of Easter, we should still ask ourselves of the meaning of the risen Lord to us. ‘It is the Lord’ might be words of great significance. They might be words of praise in times of joy, of consolation in times of sorrow, and of encouragement in times of doubt and desperation. They are words from someone deeply touched by faith and full of trust. From someone who has totally surrendered him/herself unto the hands of the Lord.

The disciples in the first reading are testimonies of the words ‘it is the Lord.’ They are so convinced of the greatness of the news they proclaim that they allow no fear to impede them. They have reached a point of no return for it is in the Lord that they have put their trust. Confident that it is the Lord who has sent them, they are able to courageously answer that it is better to listen to the Lord than fear human beings. The words, ‘it is the Lord’ strength us in moments of danger and temptations.

The second reading is the manifestation of praise given to the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is worth to be praised and honoured because of the great mysteries accomplished. ‘To the One who is sitting on the throne and to the Lamb, be all praise, honour, glory and power, forever and ever’. As Christians, we get a model from this. We are all invited today to be witnesses of the resurrection in our societies, our fields of work, our field of studies, in short, everywhere. In times of joy, in moments of difficulties, anxiety, we are all to be fortified by the words ‘it is the Lord’.

*Stephano Kamwaza, OC*

**4th Sunday of Easter**

*17-04-2016*

Acts 13:14. 43-52

Rev 7: 9.14b-17

Jn 10:27-30

**Message of the Liturgy**

Leaders are everywhere to be found. Quality leaders are very hard to find. Everyone likes to be a leader and lord over others. But what is demanded from a leader is service. Let ‘Servant leader’ be the quality of our leaders.

**For the Homily**

We are on the fourth Sunday of Easter time. This Sunday is also called as Good Shepherd Sunday. On this special day the Holy Catholic Church asks its flock to pray for Vocation that young people may come forward for God’s service. When we reflect on ‘Jesus as our good shepherd’ we are compelled to think aloud of the society in which we are living and of its leaders whose direct control we are kept in.

Around the globe it is very much perceptible, invariably all the nations suffer mostly owing to the leaders who don’t even possess the necessary qualities which are supposed to be present with all those who share the responsibility of leadership. In a normal sense the welfare of the people, like education, agriculture, health care, food security, enough job opportunity, transport facilities etc should be the prime focus of all the leaders who rule the countries. But in reality it is only a nightmare. When the civilization embraced the humanity, it came as byproduct that people be ruled by some sort of political system. Unfortunately the modern political system helps first of all the political parties, people of upper layer and of course some industry individuals and in no way does political system help the people who have no place in the social ladder the downtrodden.

That being the scenario of the present context and looking at Jesus as good shepherd makes more sense as how a leader should act. Reading 10th chapter of St. John’s gospel we can easily scull out main qualities a good leader must possess though the whole chapter is a fine source of inspiration for the one wanting to be a good leader. Thus, there are three praxes which stand predominant.

1. Knowing: the very first quality of the good Shepherd is to know the sheep. Jesus says, ‘I am the good shepherd. I know my own… (14); my sheep listen to my voice and I know them’ (27).

All the difficulties that people face in the hands of leaders are experienced because the leaders don’t know the people given to their care. The service that they render for the welfare of the people sometimes does not satisfy masses because leaders don’t know what exactly the needs of the masses are. That is why the tensions between mass and the leaders stay awakened and leads to unnecessary wastage of money. Only when the leaders know their people, then leaders become more enhancing persons and thus in a long run people do enjoy their presence.

1. Leading: secondly the leader should be able to lead the flock. Jesus says, ‘he (shepherd) goes before them and the sheep follow him (4).’ Leading the followers is an art or skill for a leader. If a leader finds difficulties in leading the followers then they reach nowhere as a result both can easily perish. A shepherd should lead the sheep to the green pasture that the sheep can enjoy. And the shepherd should be in forefront to lead them. In our society too, if the leaders are as such, then people will have good pasture.
2. Risking life: thirdly the very important quality of a leader should be able to risk his own life in order that the sheep would be saved or that they may have life and all its fullness (10). That means the leaders have only one business, that is, life of the people or the followers. All that gives life for the people, a leader should undertake. That’s his only business.

All these three qualities are very important for a leader. A leader who likes to lord over others can not possess these. A leader who is service oriented can only possess these. Let servant leadership come true in our life.

Our holy father Francis also insists on this year of Mercy that all the leaders of the church and the civil society be kind enough to the people put under their care. Leaders should be *the authentic signs of the Father’s mercy (The face of Mercy. no17).* InNo 20 holy father talks about justice and mercy as the two dimensions of a single reality. Justice is a civil term. It is often spoken off in relation with law and wore negative connotation but Holy Father insists that Justice in another word ‘Mercy’, which means leaders should rule the civil society through having eyes of Mercy. Mercy brings the attitude of servitude. When leaders go too much on legal character of Justice the aspect of servitude lessens and the attitude of authority and power increases. For a good leader merciful heart is necessary that he becomes a servant leader who knows his flock, who leads the flock, who lays down his life for the sheep.

*Athony Rajan, OCD*

**5th Sunday of Easter**

*24-04-2016*

Acts 14:21b-27

Rev 21:1-5a

Jn 13:31-33a. 34-35

**Message of the Liturgy**

As we continue celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ he is leaving us with a legacy. In today’s Gospel after realizing that his mission on earth is about to accomplished. Christ is leaving his disciples with a strong message to *love one another* (John13:34). It is this love for one another which made the disciple to proclaim the good news to other people.

**For the Homily**

The new commandment of Jesus is we should *love one another.* This is restricted to Christ followers. He did not command us to love only the people of our tribe, of our political party, of our church, those whom we cheer together the same football team. But rather he said *love one another*and this love should be spread to everyone not only in the church.

Though love is articulated in the Mosaic Law, this precept of love is new because Jesus set the standard too high by telling his disciple to love one another as he himself love them (Cf John 13: 34). Jesus wants His disciple to relate to each other, to love each other just as he loved and related with them when he was among them. This shows that love is a distinguish mark of the new era which the death and resurrection of Christ inaugurate.  As Christians do we love each other?  If we love each other, why is it that we hurt each other? Why is it that we don’t help those in power but we always look for their weakness and their down fall? Why is it that we mobilize the youth to form groups e.g. *Ashababu,bokho haram* in our beautiful content to disturb peace and order?   Why is it that we promote things that are against the natural?

Jesus is commanding his followers to love one another knowing that it is through love where we can turn good for evil, love for injuries and for deep wounds deeper love. Hence the world will be the best place to leave and many people will become followers of Christ. This shows that hatred of anybody is the contrary of being God’s children and God’s teaching.

*NesterioMtiwa OCD*

**6th Sunday of Easter**

*1-05-2016*

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29;

Rev 21:10-14, 22-23;

Jn 14:23-2

**Message of the Liturgy**

Today is the Sunday of the Holy Spirit. “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” This is the consoling message coming from Jesus. Jesus wants to relieve our anxieties and tears. How does this happen? By our coming to Jesus, and letting the Father and the Son make their home in us; by allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us everything, especially the lesson of love and forgiveness.

**For the homily**

In the first reading we are given thestory of the first general council ever held by the church authorities. There we saw that a vital decision was reached through the guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit. “It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and ours” (Acts 15:28) was how the authorities announced the decision they had reached.

In the gospel, Christ promised his apostles the night before his death, that when he returned to the father. The Holy Spirit would be sent to them. He would teach and remind them all that Christ had taught. This teaching wasn’t meant for the Apostles only but for us called by name of Christian. No one, no institution has the monopoly of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit “breathes where He will.” He is active in the Small Christian Community as He is active in the teaching magesterium. He inspires the individual Christians if they call on Him in their need. He inspires both sexes to offer their lives to the service of the Church. He is at work in different denominations, inspiring them towards that unity for which Christ prayed.

As Christians, we need the Holy Spirit to remain with us forever, as Jesus said he will (Jn 14:16). We need Him to do for us what he did for the Apostles. We need Him to remind us that:

* God is Our Father and He loves us more than we can understand
* He cares for us better than the best Father and Mother.
* He is always ready to forgive us when we return to Him
* He wants us to love one another as He has taught us
* We are not on our own to face the difficulties of life, He is with us
* He is preparing for us a place where we will live with Him forever
* In that place, there will be no pain or suffering

The Holy Spirit continues to teach us and remind us about the mission of Jesus Christ, which is also our mission. We are therefore, called to be attentive to his message. Once the Holy Spirit leads our life, their will be no reason to fear. Christ alone will suffice.

*Isaac Mpokwe, OCD*

**Ascension of the Lord**

*8-05-2016*

Acts 1:1-11

Eph 1:17-23

Lk 24:46-53

**Message of the Liturgy**

The Church that seeks *what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, thinking of what is above, not of what is on earth* (*Col. 3:1-2*), yet not just standing there and looking at the sky (*Acts 1:11*), but rather with her eyes on the earth, watching carefully at the plight of the people and sharing in the problems of the people.

**For the Homily**

Before Christ’s ascension, our unity with him in this body made our faith something more of sensual than a purely spiritual virtue. It was belief based on sight. It was a faith not powerful enough to help disciples face the whole weight of the cross that was fast approaching. No wonder they ran away from it. Jesus himself had shown us the greatness of pure faith when he confronted Thomas: “*Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed*” (John 20:29). We believed more on our vision than sorely our hearing. The Apostle Paul teaches: “*Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the word of Christ*” (Rom 10:17). It was *better for us that Christ should ascend into Heaven. For if he does not go, the Advocate will not come to us. But if he goes, he will send him to us* (cf John 16:7).

He ascends into heaven so that our faith may not be based on sight but on the Word of God, which is transmitted by the preaching of his messengers through the power of the Holy Spirit. Such a faith is so powerful that the disciples, having been equipped by it after Jesus departure, offered their lives for the same faith even when it demanded more from them.

The whole time He was with us on earth, Christ practically did everything for us. We “*know what happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him…*” (Acts 10:36-38)

The Ascension of the Lord opens a new chapter in the life of the Church. The Church as an instrument of salvation, which had been under intensive preparation for a mission, can now stand up and move in the direction of the Holy Spirit to remote areas to proclaim the Good News of salvation. The Church thus equipped by heavenly power, now it is the time for it to go *about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil* for he himself told us: “*All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age*” (Mat 28:18-20)

*Ephraim Kufankumodzi, OCD*

**Pentecost Sunday**

*15-05-2016*

Acts 2:1-11

1Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13

Jn 20:19-23

**Message of the Liturgy**

The Liturgy today is calling us to pass on the Spirit that Jesus passed on to his apostles. These gift either healing or prophecies are intended to serve the Church and be a source of unity and not division as it was happening in Corinth and also today in the Church.

**For the homily**

The good news is for all the people of the earth, the gospel message pulls down all language, walls, race, and tribal barriers. The gospel message builds bridges. On Pentecost day we have the exact contrary of what happened at Bebel (Gen 11:1-9). There people failed to understand each other and moved away from one another, here the Spirit brings together once again the people who had dispersed. When you see today many countries building walls around themselves, it’s a physical denial of the Spirit of Jesus. Soon we will have another Babel.

All those who allow themselves to be transformed by the word of gospel and by the Spirit speak a language that everybody can understand and that can unite all together once again: the language of love. It is the spirit who forms this new family.

What are the inner causes of divisions in our communities? It is envy and jealousy. Those who are gifted (intelligence, strong, healthy, literate, have the gift of counsel…) instead of humbly putting these qualities at the service of others start believing that they are “big people” and demand more respect. They are convinced that they deserve privileges, and always want to sit on the front row and occupy the first places.

Today’s gospel tells us of the first meeting between the Risen Lord and His disciples. John says that it was at this very meeting that Jesus granted his Spirit to the apostles through the sign of breathing on them. The people of Israel believed that people misbehaved because they harboured an evil spirit and they wondered when this painful situation can be changed. They were convinced that only God could expel this evil spirit from a person and breathe in a good one.

In a way or another, we all experience this evil spirit in ourselves. When we examine our own lives, we must admit that we commit injustices, we lack love, and we do all sorts of evil things. We have to let the Holy Spirit work in us; the Spirit which we received on the day of our Baptism and on the day of our Confirmation. The Spirit is like a small seed imprinted in our hearts: It will grow slowly and silently, but we will yield abundant fruits. And as Paul reminds us in today’s second reading, these gifts of the Spirit to each one of us are given for the common good, for the good of the whole community.

*Isaac K. Mpokwe, OCD*

**Holy Trinity Sunday**

*22-05-2016*

Prov 8:22-31;

Rom 5:1-5;

Jn 16: 12-15

**Message of the Liturgy**

We can know and say about God only what He has said about Himself. The self –revelation of God takes place only when love, peace and harmony are present. To believe in the Trinity is to believe that the origin, the model and the last destination of any life is love shared in community. Today we are celebrating the sharing imprinted in God Himself.

**For the homily**

Throughout the centuries, the theologians have tried to investigate the mystery of God deepening conceptually in his nature and exposing their conclusions with different language. But often, our words hide his mystery rather than reveal it. Jesus does not speak much of God. He simply offers his experience.

The way to the Trinity is Jesus because is the one who sees Him, sees the Father and the Spirit. Jesus calls God “ABBA” and experiences him as a mystery of goodness. He lives it as a good Presence that blesses the life and attracts his sons and daughters to fight against what makes the human being to suffer. For Jesus this last mystery of the reality that the believers call “God” is a close and friendly Presence that it is opening a way in the world in order to build up with us and next to us, a more human life.

Jesus never separates that Father from his project of transforming the world. It is impossible to think of him as someone closed in his unfathomable mystery, giving his back to the suffering of his sons and daughters. Thus Jesus asks his followers to open themselves to the mystery of that God, to believe in the Good News of his project; to unite ourselves to him in order to work for a more just and enjoyable world for all to seek and look always for his justice, his truth and his peace so that they may reign every time more among us.

On the other hand, Jesus experiences himself as “Son” of that God, born to impulse on the earth the humanizing project of the Father and to carry it to its definitive plenitude. Thus, Jesus seeks every time what the Father wants. His fidelity to him leads him to look always for the good of his sons and daughters. His passion for God is translated into compassion for all people who are suffering.

Thus, the whole existence of Jesus, the Son of God, consists in healing life and to alleviate suffering, to defend the victims and claim for them justice, to sow gestures of goodness and to offer everyone the mercy and gratuitous pardon of God: salvation that comes from the Father

Lastly Jesus acts always moved by the “Spirit” of God. It is the love of the Father the one who sends us to announce to the poor the Good News of his saving project. It is the breathing of God the one that moves it to heal life. It is the saving power manifested in his prophetic life.

This Spirit will not end in the world when Jesus goes away. Jesus himself promises it to his disciples: I will send him to you (Jn 16, 7). The power of the Spirit will make them witnesses of Jesus, Son of God and collaborators of the saving power of the Father.

To believe in the Trinity is to believe that the origin, the model and the last destination of any life is love shared in community

Thus to celebrate the Trinity is not to pretend to penetrate in the immensity of God and far less to resolve it with the divine “triangle”. We celebrate the Trinity when we discover joyfully that the origin of our life is a God-Community and when, therefore, we feel ourselves called from the deepest part of our being to look for our real happiness in sharing and solidarity.

We celebrate the Trinity when we try to build a society in which people may learn to live together, to share and to dialogue.

*Javier Compes, OCD*

**The Body and Blood of Christ**

29-05-2016

Gen 14:18-20

1Cor 11:23-26

Lk 9:11b-17

**Message of the Liturgy**

The solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ or Corpus Christi is a prominent festival in the Church as it celebrates in thankfulness the gift of Jesus’ body and blood as food and drink. Just as physical food nourishes the body and gives us strength, the Eucharist is food for our spiritual life empowering us to love God and our neighbour.

**For the Homily** The Eucharist is the greatest gift that Christ left us. By offering his own body and blood as food and drink Jesus proved to us the extent of his love for us. As the Gospel According to St. John succinctly puts it, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn. 15: 13). Jesus did this as he neared the end of his life. The very timing of the Last Supper speaks volumes about the seriousness of this gesture. As this was his last meal with his disciples before he died, the disciples valued it completely that they passed it on ritually to the next generation following the Lord’s command. St. Paul was one of the recipients of this tradition. In his first letter to the Corinthians that we read at Mass today he reminds us of the significance of commemorating this self-giving of Christ to us.

This remembrance of what the Lord did for us is more than a mere recalling of a past event. Rather, the memorial of the self-giving of Jesus through the celebration of the Lord’s Supper helps us to re-enact and relive that experience (as it happened long ago) so that its effects may be realized in our very lives today. This is why it is of paramount importance to actively participate at Mass and to receive the body and blood of Christ. It is with sadness that we realize that some of our brothers and sisters are unable to partake of the bread and the cup due to some prohibiting reasons as prescribed in the law of the Church. Nevertheless, it does not mean that those who are in this difficult situation are completely cut off from the graces of the Eucharist. According to St. Thomas Aquinas having *“an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and in lovingly embracing him as if we had actually received him”* suffices in such circumstances. However, those people whose cases can be rectified ought to do so swiftly in order that they may receive Jesus himself who is not only symbolically present but present in reality in the Eucharist.

Of course the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is incomprehensible by the senses since we know that the bread and wine that are transformed into the body and blood of Christ look and taste just like bread and wine. Yet faith helps us to transcend and grasp that these are not mere bread and wine but the very body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Essentially, the solemnity that we are celebrating today calls us to focus on the Eucharist and to reflect on its meaning for us. The celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ is an affirmation of our faith that in the form of bread and wine Jesus is present in our midst. And our participation in this festival is a response to the great works that God did for us in saving us. He did this by offering us his only Son as a sacrifice and we partake in this sacrifice by consuming him as a sacrificial victim. This great gift prompts in us a response of thanksgiving. Indeed the very name Eucharist means thanksgiving and it is really befitting that our attitude towards the Eucharist be that of gratitude.

From the first reading of today (Gen 14: 18- 20) we come across an encounter between Abram and the High Priest Melchizedek. Abram came to the priest to give thanksgiving for the victory in battle that was granted him. In this meeting the High Priest brought out bread and wine and blessed God with them. If we look keenly it is not difficult to see the foreshadowing of the Eucharist which was fully accomplished by Jesus on Holy Thursday. When we celebrate the Eucharist as St. Paul says, we give thanks to God and perpetuate the command that was given to the disciples- “Do this in remembrance of me”.

Note that in today’s Gospel the same motif of offering reoccurs as Jesus challenged his disciples to offer some food to the crowds. But the disciples underestimated and convinced themselves that they could not manage. Yet when they brought out the little that was there and Jesus blessed it just like Melchizedek did, the food was multiplied and all ate and were satisfied. This miracle resonates very well with a Chichewa saying that goes, “*Kupatsa mkudzala*”, which literally means, “To give is to sow”. Indeed blessed is the hand that gives.

To sum it all, the Eucharist is a summit of God’s love for us. No wonder that Corpus Christi is such a prominent festival in the Church as it celebrates in thankfulness the gift of Jesus’ body and blood as food and drink. Just as physical food nourishes the body and gives us strength, the Eucharist is food for our spiritual life empowering us to love God and our neighbour. This solemnity therefore is an opportune moment for us to appreciate the transforming power that the Eucharist gives us. The Eucharist which is also called Communion is at the very centre and core of the Church. As Communion it inspires us to unity as brothers and sisters who belong to one Kingdom of God. This unity and concern for one another is manifested when we show mercy and compassion to others especially those who are at the periphery of the society, those who lack food and other basic necessities. Jesus commands us to feed the hungry even when we think we do not have enough. If by taking part in the Eucharistic procession and Benediction we are affirming our faith in the real presence of Christ in the species of bread and wine, then our attitude towards the Eucharist should be that of reverence and our desire to receive it be unwavering.

*Deacon Damiano Gabriel CSSp*

**The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**

3-06-2016

Ezk 34:11-16

Rom 5:5b-11

Lk 15:3-7

**Message of the Liturgy**

It is an open fact and a well known thing that the love of Christ impels us. With this in mind we are therefore proud to be Catholics because every day the word of God shape us and our hearts renewed. In the celebration of Eucharist, the entire episode of Jesus love for humanity is made tangible, substantial and concrete. The paschal mystery of our Lord is the summit and the centre of the Church and the greatest demonstration of the love of God. It is then the Sacred Heart of Jesus which was pieced on the Cross is to be the summit of our lives forever

**For the Homily**

Today along with the entire church we celebrate and jubilate our salvation as it was planned by God. Let us have in mind that the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is not  a peripheral devotion but rather it is to honour and love God which is the heart of our Christian faith. Thus the heart of Jesus is seen as the emblem of the Divine Love. At the center of this feast is the heart of Jesus full of love to humanity. Out of the same love Jesus then He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. From this then we can deduce that Love is God’s activity just as our salvation which was brought by our Lord Jesus Christ. God alone is absolute love and the same love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5.5). On this feast we are invited first of all to check our love towards God and neighbour because love is the measure of our prayer life and we have know that at the evening of this life we shall be judged by love. Amid the chaos of life we are called to be love and we need to capture t he unconditional love in our life.

The sacred Heart of Jesus is to be our Model of life because from it we shall learn  surrender to God’s will in humble submission and by a supreme act of the will to accomplish the will of God whatever the circumstances may be. To learn from Him that all important action should be preceded and vivified by prayer, for only in prayer can a soul obtain the strength needed in life’s difficulties. In prayer, God will communicate, will counsel and will inspire.

The readings of today teach us to listen to Jesus as he is our Shepherd full of love. Out of his love he will lead us to greener pasture. Knowing that we are loved, it therefore follows that we should always abide ourselves to Jesus and that even if we fall we are to come back to him. Upon being forgiven we are also to forgive those who have ever disappointed us in life. It is through this that we shall be the followers of Jesus by deeds. Let us not be condemning those who have fallen but with love to help them to come back to Jesus so as to be refreshed and sustained. In entering into the Heart of Jesus we enter into the Heart of God and this has to be seen in our life.

Lastly, let it be clear that the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus does not remove the cross from our souls but gives us more strength to carry it. It does not suppress temptations but gives us more courage to overcome them. With this therefore then we will be formed and our hearts conformed to the will of Christ. A heart devoted to Jesus is meek, humble and always comes back to Jesus after falling. We are called to consecrate ourselves and our lives anew to the Pierced Heart of Jesus earnestly to return to the Eucharist and the sacramental life, and the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

*Patrick Dalikeni, OCD*

**10th Sunday Ordinary Time**

5-06-2016

1kgs 17:17-24

Gal 1:11-19

Lk 7:11-17

The Liturgy of today is inviting us to take the spirit of Jesus of giving life to the lifeless. There are many people around us who have no joy, no hope, living with broken relationships. They need you and me to help them bring them to the fullness of life, Jesus himself.

**For the homily**

In the gospel of today we see Jesus not only as a healer but the one who raises the dead. The incident happened at Nain, where Elisha raised another, widow’s son (2 Kings 4:18-37).

There is intense sorrow here in this burial procession. We are told, “he was the mother’s only son and she was a widow. This woman represents all the ageless sorrows of the world.

Jesus was moved to the depth of His heart. A feeling of compassion filled Him. He then went up and touched the bier. It was a dramatic moment. Jesus claimed as His own what death had seized as his prey. Jesus claimed for life a lad who had been marked for death. Jesus is not only the Lord of life; He is the Lord of death who Himself triumphed over the grave and who had promised that, because He lives, we shall also (John 14:19).

This year of mercy therefore, challenges us to be giver of life to those around. There are many men and women, youths “walking dead” they need us to bring them to life by our words and companionship.

*Isaac Mpokwe, OCD*

**11th Sunday Ord. Time**

12-06-2016

2Sam 12: 7-10.13

Gal 2:16, 19-21

Lk 7:36-8:3

**Message for Liturgy**

There is no doubt that parables constitute the heart of Jesus’ preaching. Today’s parable is about self-awareness and gratitude. It is nearly incredible to grow without self-awareness. And it is really difficult to be a follower of Jesus without being grateful. In the first reading and the Gospel we see that what God requires is heart which acknowledges its sinfulness.

**For the Homily**

David’s story is a classic to understand it well one needs to start from chapter 11. Today’s readings chose it well as a prelude for the gospel. It would be a fine preparation to remind ourselves of the story preceding today’s first reading: about David’s lust for Bathsheba, his manipulation to cause her husband’s death, and the self-awareness Nathan offered to David. David’s lust becomes much stronger than his conscience - for he’s even willing to sacrifice the life of another man, to protect his own needs and his dignity (Cf 2 Sam 11). We all had the experience of being quite blind to our sin and can see ourselves in what happens next. When Nathan reports to David about an alleged injustice - a rich man taking the treasured possession of a poor man - David is outraged: “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this merits death! ... because he has done this and has had no pity.” (2 Sam 12:6)  If we read between the lines we will realize that, Nathan tells David the humbling message we all need to hear “you are the man” (2 Sam 12:7) this message made to realize his sinfulness  and he said I have sinned against the Lord ( 2 Sam 12:13).  What David did is also what most of the time we do as Christians we tend to portray ourselves that we are just people while deep down our heart we know who we are and what we have done.

The Evil Spirit loves to keep its manipulative urgings us always to keep our sins as a secret, especially when he’s attracting us to do something that is apparently good, for instance, squandering the money of the government or the church, even going  out with someone wife or husband. When these activities or temptations are exposed to the light of day - through reflection and self-awareness, even discussing them with our confessor or spiritual director - the power of this Spirit, so contrary to the Spirit of the Lord, is taken away.

In the gospel we have a marvelous story of the relationship between self-awareness and gratitude. Jesus is at the home of good Pharisee a faithful observer of the law, and obviously eager to get to know Jesus more deeply. However, this woman who came into the room and throws herself at Jesus feet provides a mirror for the host into his own lack of gratitude. She’s not a faithful observer of the law, but she knows who she is. She knows her sinfulness. She must have encountered Jesus and his preaching and it must have touched her - changed her - so completely that she had to come and express her sense of gratitude. Her awareness of her sinfulness had imprinted out in her capacity to love that Pharisee didn’t have. Obedience to the law doesn’t get one to act lovingly. Gratitude always leads to generosity and love. *“So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”*(Lk 7:47)

We as Christians are we far much better that this Pharisee? What are our reactions when see people who we consider criminals are going to receive the sacraments? It obvious we take the stand of the Pharisee but we are not far much better from them. Let us always ask God to help us see who we are - what we have done and what we have failed to do - how dishonest and self-serving we have been - then, and only then, do we discover our need for a Jesus Christ.

*NesterioMtiwa OCD*

**12th Sunday Ord. Time**

*19-06-2016*

Zech 12:10-11, 13:1

Gal 3:26-29

Lk 9: 18-24

**Message of the Liturgy**

Most of the problems that we face in living and working together do result from identity crisis. More or at least gravity of the problems lessens when everyone knows what his or her identity is about in the particular given context. As Christians who follow Christ alone, what could be our true identity, is our concern as we are celebrating the 12th Sunday in the ordinary time.

**For the Homily**

‘Know thy self’ says Socretes the Philosopher. For him, knowing oneself is very important that by acquiring identity one can live meaningfully. In line with this Jesus is also posing a question to His disciples that who do the crowds say that He was? The disciples express before Jesus various rumors that were spread in the crowd about His identity. They list that he was John the Baptist who has been restored to life, Elijah the ancient prophet and one of the prophets in the Jewish history that came back to life.

Before proceeding to the nuances of the gospel it is worth noting the settings in which St. Luke places Jesus, His mission and disciples. This conversation between Jesus and his disciple takes places in solitude. All through his life Jesus never omitted ‘solitude.’ In fact He enjoyed being in solitude. So much more that whenever He enjoys solitude He came out with full purpose to carry out His action plans such as calling His disciples, appointing them for His mission, with changed vigor (transfiguration), setting out His aim towards Jerusalem and so forth. Today’s gospel too brings crucial point in Jesus’ life as how He sets His rest of His life and how He orients His disciples towards His purpose. Jesus as a Son of God, as the one who works round the clock for God’s kingdom on earth analysis the repercussions He has so far in the society. The opinion about Jesus that was circulating among the people varies. After having learnt the mind of the mass, now Jesus comes to His disciples with the same question that who do they say that He was? Peter, as a representative of all his companions comes out with the concrete answer that He was ‘the Christ of God.’

The answer, though very correct, Jesus warns the disciples not to tell anyone because the understanding people had about Him is different from the disciples, thus it may bring unnecessary chaos before He reveals Himself on the cross if the disciples were to speak out His true nature. And that is why Jesus starts speaking about His suffering and death on the cross so that the disciples have better understanding of what they profess. ‘The Christ of God’ is the true identity of Jesus but the understanding of Jesus about His identity is much deeper than the understanding of disciples and the crowds because we have instances like, Peter could not understand the meaning of suffering on the cross and the death of his master as he rebuked Jesus privately and the crowd had a notion of Messiah as political liberator. For Jesus revealing Himself on the cross as a suffering servant is His true identity. After this experience in solitude He fixes His way towards the cross. And He also expects the same from His followers when He says, ‘if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’

Finding out one’s own true identity in life helps the individuals to fix the way towards which they are heading. As true followers of Christ, Christians do have individual and collective identity just as Our Holy Father says, ‘the church sensed a responsibility to be a living sign of the Father’s love in the world’ (The face of Mercy No.4). God our heavenly Father is *rich in mercy* (no.1). God’s Merciful face should reach out the humanity in and through our identity that we are merciful and full of love. Today’s world expects from the Christian nothing else other than showing off ourselves as God’s people by our very way of life that we are living signs of God’s mercy. Let Mercy be our identity.

*Anthony Rajan, OCD*

**13th Sunday Ordinary Time**

*26-06-2016*

1kgs 19:16b-19-24

Gal 5:1, 13-18

Lk 9: 51-62

**CALLED TO BE WITNESS OF THE MERCIFULNESS OF GOD**

‘Be merciful as your Father is merciful,’ says Jesus (Lk 6.36). It is clear indeed to see that strong with the experience of the mercifulness of God only, we continue to walk still in history. The story of salvation narrated in the bible from the Old Testament evidences this profoundly. It is the manifestation of God’s merciful actions throughout the story of mankind. In history, humanity has always struggled to maintain the conditions of the alliance with God, but God never abandoned His people. God has always responded with mercy and love to all human misdeeds. Despite the unfaithfulness of the Israelites, God still guided them to the promised land. After the scream of the people of Nineveh when Prophet Jonah announced of the destruction of the city, God forgives them. During the exile God still remembers his people and He brings them back from Babylon. All these examples affirm and justify distinctly the words of the psalmist that ‘God’s love endures forever’(Ps 136). This, perhaps, is as well the trigger to the title of Pope Francis’ new book; *the name of God is mercy*. Indeed, I firmly believe that if each one of us was to write down all the circumstances which illustrate God’s merciful hand in our lives, we wouldn’t be able to finish within a day.

The climax of God’s mercy and love is manifested in Jesus. Despite his honourable divine condition, ‘He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped.’ (Ph: 2. 6-7). He offered himself for the love of mankind. His life, attitude and actions are overwhelmingly striking. With Jesus, we do not hear the words of scorn, condemnation and judgment. His words are of love and mercy aiming at illumining and inviting everyone for salvation – ‘neither do I condemn you, go and do not seen again.’ To sum it all, He sacrifices His life on the cross, the maximum expression of God’s love and mercy for mankind.

Now, in the world where the virtue of love seems to be in crisis, where egoism, individualism, hate, religious and civil war seem to be the leading pillars, the church has offered us an opportunity to reflect upon this element of God’s mercy. We, definitely, are the witnesses and beneficiaries of God’s mercy. Likewise, in this dramatic period of crises, we are authentically called to actualise God’s invitation to be merciful. We, as well, are called to be instruments and agents of reconciliation. The scripture puts it very clearly; ‘what I want is mercy not sacrifice’ (Hs 6,6). The world can never be at peace if the element of mercy is excluded in our actions. Mercifulness, combined with love for God and others, is the font of real joy, peace and serenity.

In the same manner, we are prominently called to gaze even more attentively and sincerely on mercy so as to become a more effective sign of God’s action in our lives. Mercy is the ‘bridge which connects God and man,’ says Pope Francis. It opens our hearts to hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. The forgiveness of God is the rebirth that the Lord realises in the person that receives it. It has all the perfume of a return to home, the relationship constructed on a base which is concreter than before. Definitely, mercy will always be greater than any sin, and no one can place limits on the love of God who is ever ready to forgive. Nevertheless, the free forgiveness of God presupposes our sincere and flexible response. Without sincere acknowledgement of being sinful, there can never be any assumption of responsibility and real change… *‘You know Lord that I was born guilty, a sinner from the moment of conception,’* the sincere contrite heart of the psalmist(Ps 50/51).

*Stephano Kamwaza, OCD*

OUR LIFE IS IN GOD’S HANDS

We hear people saying; you know? The Catholics do everything in details. They have the vision to see the needs of the people and the needs of the world. Is it not true that we are rich and we do things in details? As we all know that our beloved Popel Francis on 8th Dec 2015 opened the year Mercy. As Christians we are invited to reflect in the Mercy of God. Our Popel with his zeal he asked himself, how he could manage to reach and remind the people of God in the whole world about the Mercy of God?

My brothers and sisters in Christ, today we are saying our Papal Francis announced to all Christians, and the people in the world to reflect on the mercy of God. But how to understand this Holy year of the Mercy of God, and how should we often ponder on the Mercy of God? It is not simple to do so; the theme of mercy turns out to be more complex than it first appears. Consider first what is obvious: Sacred Scripture speaks of this theme again and again. The Lord Jesus describes Himself as a Good Shepherd. Recall the picture that he drew: The shepherd searches for the lost sheep, he finds it and carries it back rejoicing .Recall too, the woman who lost the silver piece and searched everywhere, until she found it. Then running to the neighbors, she shares her joy for finding the silver piece. What was the comment of our Lord Jesus Christ? “I tell you, there will be the same kind of joy before the angel of God over one repentant sinner”.

The same with the story of the prodigal son, in his senses; he said I will go back to my father. Recall the father looking out for the son, and when at last he saw him, he run towards him and kissed him. The theme of mercy is a primary strand of sacred scripture. All the scripture is a radiant with this theme. The mercy of God knows no limits. It is a theme that is proclaimed in the Old Testament and repeated again and again in the New Testament.

The theme of mercy looks very simple, indeed. Where could its complexity be? It is in us. Do we ever feel a sense of uneasiness, of guilt, even though our sins are in the past? We have gone to the sacrament of penance and met our Lord there. Yes, of course, we know all these texts and passages about the mercy of God, about confidence and trust and the rest. We know what the church teaches and proclaims-God forgives our sins. But somehow, all of this does not give us peace of mind that it should. Now why is this? We think there is a reason, like the way we think of the mercy of God, the mental image in which we frame it. We often tend to think of mercy as God covering over our sins, God forgives us, the evil remains in ourselves. That is the picture we have, which is distorted and wrong. Why? God takes away our sin and HEhe can even make use of them to bring us to Himself.

One time, I was in a friend’s home. While I was waiting for him to arrive, I could not help to notice a beautiful, oval-shaped mirror on the mantelpiece. Around the four corners, they had four oil paintings of flowers .When my friend came in he said “Look closer” When I did so, I saw a crack in one of the flowers which was painted over with great skill. He told me, that it was an ordinary mirror some time ago. “We were house-cleaning. hit it with a chair and it cracked. Our first thought was to take it down and throw it away” he narrated. “But our cousin, an artist”, said, “Let me try my hand with it.” “He painted that flower. It came out so well that we said”, “Paint three more.” “And there it was, more striking and more beautiful than it was before”.

The mercy of God is like that. God has a design of love for us. We take our instruments of self-will, egoism and pride, and we smash the design. When we repent, when we say, “Oh God have mercy on me!” The divine artist comes with His instruments of power, mercy and love, and He makes our sins the starting point of a new design. God uses our sins to forgive us in His own way. He weaves our sins into His design. And then, at last, we are aware of our transformation, until we come to this awareness in some way, whether by the way of repentance or of deep insight which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit working directly on the soul.

The first reason why the mercy of God does not give us peace of mind might possibly be the way we picture it-God, as it were, overlooking the evil in us; God offering a magnanimous gesture of forgiveness. But God does not cover-up in this way. He heals and renews to the depths. And He often uses the awareness of our need for mercy to do this.

There is another reason why the theme of mercy is complex. Guilt is like a weed whose roots reach down into the dark caverns of the mind, in experiences of the past, in a profound sense of inadequacy, in hostilities that boil and ferment deep down and tear us apart inside. Even though we repent and our sins are really forgiven, we may not forgive ourselves. Our own sense of total worthlessness remains.

My brothers and sisters OUR LIFE IS IN GOD’S HAND, our life it is a journey. We must be utterly sincere. We must say every day, Oh! God, give me the light to know Your holy truth and the strength to follow it. That is the spiritual journey begins. God calls us, “Go forth…..” This is the way sacred scripture presents man’s meeting with a God who calls us and need our response. “Zacchaeus hurry down. I mean to stay at your house today.” All spiritual transformation begins in a person-to-person meeting with God. Are we really open enough and be ready to receive the mercy of God? God created us in His likeness, and we remember always that OUR LIFE IS IN GOD’S HAND. Therefore in this Holy Year we should try our best, to be merciful as our Heavenly Father is Merciful.

*Sr Carolyn Kalimba, CS*

**HEALING: THE JOURNEY TO WHOLENESS**

We all want to be healthy. Healing is important to everyone. In fact what the world today needs is healing of hearts. Who does not want to meet a priest, a religious, men and women who radiate joy? The world needs people who are healed and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

We get wounded physically, psychologically, and spiritually. I always find emotional healing very demanding to heal. What we retrieve from our memories: false beliefs, over-dependence on reason, rigidity, traumatic experiences, hurts, unforgiveness, resentment, frustrations, insults, broken relationships e.t.c. All these and many more prevent us to enjoy life.

I would like to introduce to my fellow readers a healing process. What I start now in this issue will continue in the proceeding issues of “You Are My Friend”. Healing process begins when harmony and order is introduced within one’s body, feelings, emotions, mind and spirit as per the creator’s plan. The resources are within us to heal the physical, psychological and spiritual wounds. We can all be healed if we use the resources hidden within us.

Right at the beginning we need to get one thing right. Take it as a commandment of healing. **What is hidden cannot be healed.** For **example,** if some painful events of the past are not healed, they remain alive within us and become a source of discomfort, restlessness, moodiness, sleeplessness, stress, and depression. If healing has to start then I need to bring to my consciousness my past wounds. And start giving them a name.

In our next issue of “You Are My Friend” we will take you through a healing process. Hope some of you will find it helpful.

*Isaac Mpokwe, OCD*

**NO MERCY, NO CHRISTIANITY!**

Mercy is a disposition to be kind and forgiving. It is the feeling that motivates compassion. It is an alleviation of distress. It is all about showing great kindness towards the distressed. Mercy is a compassion or forgiveness that is shown towards an enemy in one’s own will. The word mercy comes from old French, *merci*, which means ‘pity’ or ‘thanks’, in Christian Latin, *merces*, or *merced* which means ‘reward’, which means ‘pity, favour or heavenly reward.’

However, let us now define and understand mercy in a contextualised manner. Mercy is, if someone hates you and then you decide not to pay back. Especially the person you name an enemy. Otherwise we only have only one enemy, the Devil. When other people suffer, or when they find themselves in deep sorrow, feel sorry for them. By feeling sorry for them, you are being merciful to them. Do not be merciful only by mouth. Try to put yourself in their shoes. Be part of them when they are in much need of mercy. Even if you are not in good terms with them, you are encouraged to be in union with them. Therefore, love, forgiveness and reconciliation, and mercy are indispensable for the virtuous Christian living.

Nevertheless, it is through the act of mercy that our Lord Jesus Christ answers our prayers. For it is love that the Lord ever desires. "I have desired mercy and not sacrifice." [Hosea 6:6 and Matthew 12:7] Therefore, mercy is the greatest virtue while love is the greatest commandment. The sum total of all virtues is confined to mercy. Being a greatest virtue, mercy is the absence of condemnation. Condemnation is the absence of mercy. That is why we normally pray that, **Lord have mercy on me.** This is the prayer that gives us courage to have mercy on others. However, God is merciful even to those who are not merciful to others. This is an invitation of starting being merciful to others. Otherwise we cannot receive mercy for the purpose of suppressing and condemning others. Yes! We cannot ask God to give us life so that we may continue to kill others. "Godliness is profitable to all things," [1Timothy 4:8].

Nonetheless, when we are in danger, in sin or in a less tentative dilemma, we ask for the lord’s mercifulness. When our neighbours are in same situations, we fail to share with them, the same merciful love we receive from God. More so, St Paul adds that, let us put on as Christians, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Let us continue bearing with one another and forgiving one another if one has grievances against one another. Nevertheless, as the Lord has forgiven us, and so we must do to others. Colossians 3:12-31. Honourably, have mercy on your friends and do to them whatever you would like others to do for you. Do to your brethren, whatever you would like the Lord to do for you, especially those things the Lord has done for you.

In time of hunger, let us try to share a little that we have. Let us remember our brothers and sisters in prisons, hospitals and in various orphanages who are suffering. Let us remember to work with mercy. Especially those of us who are priests, seminarians, nuns and other co-pastoral workers, let us lead by example. Others are: pastors, teachers, government officials and so on. Let us all mercifully serve the people. Consequently, this mercy should start from our hearts, our homes, our neighbours, our Small Christian Communities and in our parishes. Finally, it should be then extended to the people we serve and all the society.

Optimistically speaking, mercy is for the benefit of our country. It is also for the benefit of our own benefit as we live on this planet called earth.

**By Kelvin Mutalala**

*kelvinmutalala@yahoo.com*

**NYUNGWI 2016 PROGRAM**

**APRIL**

Fri 1st – Sun 3rd: Easter Weekend Recollection (Fr A. Nsope)

Sun 3rd – Sat 9th: A Session: *Creating an Alternative Space for Mercy in Our Religious Communities* (Fr J.P. Nampota)

Fri 15th – Sat 23rd: An Eight-Day Easter Preached Retreat

Sun 24th – Sat 30th: A Six-Day Directed Retreat (Fr Ephraim Kufankumodzi)

Sat 30th: End of Month Youth Recollection by OCD Fathers and SBVM Sisters

**MAY**

Sun 1st – Sat 7th: A Six-Day Preached Retreat for the Divine Providence Sisters

Mon 9th – Fri 13th: Session for Srs of Divine Providence: *Vocation as Commitment* (Fr J.P. Nampota)

Sun 15th: PENTECOST SUNDAY

Mon 16th – Fri 20th: Retreat for St Peter’s Major Seminarians

Mon 16th – Fri 20th: Session for Srs of Divine Providence: *Journey Towards Maturity of Love* (Fr E. Kufankumodzi)

*SUN 22ND MAY – SAT 1ST JULY: SESSION FOR PREPARATION FOR THE FINAL VOWS II*

Mon 23rd – Fri 27th: 1st Week of the Session: *Community Living: Its Dynamics* (Isaac Mpokwe, OCD)

Sat 28th: Day of Recollection for the Religious of the Archdiocese of Blantyre (by Divine Providence)

Mon 30th – Fri 3rd June: 2nd Week of the Session: *Spiritual Direction* (Fr Philbert Namphande, OCD)

**JUNE**

Mon 6th – Fri 11th: 3rd Week of Session: *Sexuality and Spirituality for Healthy Ministry* (Fr J.P.Nampota)

Mon 13th – Fri 17th: 4th Week of Session: *Canon Law on Religious Life* (Fr John Paul Nampota)

Mon 20th – Fri 24th: 5th Week of the Session: *Journey Towards Maturity of Love* (Fr E. Kufankumodzi)

Sat 25th: End of Month Youth Recollection by OCD Fathers and SBVM Sisters

Mon 27th – Fri 1st July: 6th Week of the Session: *Vocation as Commitment* (Fr J.P. Nampota)

**JULY**

Sun 3rd – Sat 9th: Free Booking for Retreats and Sessions

Sat 9th: Youth Recollection by OCD Fathers and SBVM Sisters

Sun 10th – Sat 16th: A Six-Day Preached Retreat

Sat 16th: THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Fri 22nd – Sun 24th: Weekend Recollection (Fr A. Nsope)

Sun 24th – Sat 30th: A Six-Day Directed Retreat (Fr John Paul Nampota)

**AUGUST**

Fri 5th – Sun 7th: Regional Assembly for the Divine Providence Sisters

Sun 7th – Sat 13th: A Six Day Preached Retreat for the Divine Providence Sisters

Sun 14th – Sun 21st: Preached Retreat for Secular Institute Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ

**SEPTEMBER**

Fri 2nd – Sun 4th: Weekend Recollection (Fr A. Nsope)

Sun 4th – Sat 10th: A Six-Day Directed Retreat

Sun 16th – Sat 24th: An Eight-Day Preached Retreat

Sat 24th: Day of Recollection for the Religious of the Archdiocese of Blantyre (Daughters of Wisdom)

Sun 25th – Sat 1st: *Creating an Alternative Space for Mercy in Our Religious Communities* (Fr J.P. Nampota)

**OCTOBER**

Sun 2nd – Sat 8th: Session on St John of the Cross for OCD Friars

Sat 15th: SOLEMNITY OF ST TERESA OF JESUS

Fri 16th – Sat 22nd: A Six-Day Preached Retreat

Sun 24th – Sat 30th: A Six-Day Directed Retreat

Sat 29th: End of Month Youth Recollection by OCD Fathers and SBVM Sisters

**NOVEMBER**

Sun 4th – Sat 12th: Session: An Eight-Day Preached Retreat

Fri 18th – Sun 20th: Retreat for Friends of Medjugorie

Sun 20th: CHRIST THE UNIVERSAL KING

Sun 20th – 26th: A Six Day Preached Retreat in Preparation for Advent

Sun 27th: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sun 27th: Advent Youth Recollection by OCD Fathers and SBVM Sisters

**DECEMBER**

Fri 2nd – Sun 4th: Advent Weekend Recollection (Fr A. Nsope)

Sun 4th –Thu 8th: A Regional Chapter for the Sisters of Our Lady

Fri 16th – Fri 23rd: An Eight-Day Preached Advent Retreat

Mon 26th – Mon 2ndJan: A Seven-Day End of Year Preached Retreat

**Contacts:** 0995504566 or [pnampota@gmail.com](mailto:pnampota@gmail.com)

0888078500 or [ekufankumodzi@gmail.com](mailto:ekufankumodzi@gmail.com)

**Contribution: for a retreat: *USD12 per day per person* and for a Session *USD13 per day per person***

**CARMEL 2016**

**April October**

03-09 01-08

17-23 16-22

**May November**

08-14 06-12

22-28 20-25

**June December**

05-11 27 Nov – 03 December

19-25 11-17

**July**

03-09

19-25

**Fee K 5,000.00**  per night

**Celphones 0999 02 75 50 0999 36 30 40**