

Conversion of Heart

Lenten Reflections on Mercy and Forgiveness

Week 2

READINGS: *Genesis 15: 5–12, 17–18; Philippians 3:17–4:1; Luke 9:28b–36*

“While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white” (Lk 9:29).



Renata Sedmalova / Shutterstock.com

Transfigure toward mercy by accepting it

In this week's reading, three of the apostles experience something they do not quite understand. As Jesus was transfigured before them with Moses and Elijah at his side, Peter thought it right to build tents for each, to contain this moment that he knew to be good.

But the voice of God interrupted him and said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him” (Lk 9:35). It turned out that Peter's plans weren't God's plans at all.

All of sudden, it was over. Jesus was found alone, and the light that emitted from him was dimmed. The disciples, especially Peter, were left with more questions than answers. They “fell silent and

did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen” (v. 36).

We oftentimes don't understand God's mercy in our lives. We are limited in our understanding, and our perception of our motives and those of others can only go so far. We try to live lives of peace and order, but sometimes our own plans don't work out and we end up hurting others.

As Catholics, our job isn't to understand God's mercy; it is to accept it. When we do this well, we come to a deeper understanding of how God works in our lives. It is only through this acceptance that we can truly see as God sees,

which enables us to do as God does by offering that same mercy to those who are most in need of it, none needier than ourselves.

For Reflection

- › Is God's will for your life clear to you right now?
- › Have you seen God work through the unplanned events in your life?
- › Do you find it easy to accept God's mercy?

“How happy I am to see myself imperfect and be in need of God’s mercy.”

~ ST. THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS



Faith Lesson

Attach yourself to GOD

Detachment has always been a means by which people have come closer to God. We witness Jesus’ constant detachment from worldly things every time he climbs a mountain to pray, preaches about the Kingdom, and heals the poor and outcast. He is the model par excellence of detachment.

When it comes to accepting God’s gift of mercy, our first step is to mimic the saints who followed Christ’s call to detachment. The first reaction of every holy man or woman after they accept this reward reacts the same way — with a sense of unworthiness that is followed by acts of fasting to make up for the sins they committed. In other words, we

disassociate ourselves with our former life and detach from our old ways. We are then a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17) and thus better equipped to complete our God-given mission.

What do you need to detach from so as to *attach* yourself to God more intimately?

Fasting TIPS

Consider making a fast from technology this week. Apart from abstaining from meat on Friday, try going off social media, streaming videos, or other forms of digital entertainment. If you really want to go all out, try fasting from all screens and take that time to pray and reflect.



Lord, I am not worthy to be called your servant, but, nevertheless, I am. Allow me to accept your mercy with humility and purity of heart so that I may teach others to do the same. Strengthen me in my weakness and allow me to overcome my imperfections so that I might better imitate your Son to whom I am forever in debt.



Become an instrument of peace

Francis of Assisi was a man lost in the darkness of sin. He was selfish and determined to gain honor as a soldier and popularity as a frequent partygoer. It wasn’t long before he hit rock bottom as a constant consumer of worldly pleasures. He realized his life was not well-lived, and God told him in a dream to return from war and convert his life. He spent several months attempting to live a good, holy life, oftentimes spending nights in a nearby cave where he would weep for his sins.

It wasn’t until he became completely detached from worldly desires that he found true peace and a reason for being — serving the poor. After years of service and founding many like-minded communities, he would become one of the greatest saints the Church has ever known.

As you continue your Lenten journey, take a page from St. Francis’s book and accept the mercy from God that will transform you into something greater than your own desires for yourself. God is the potter, and we are the clay. May he make of you a beautiful instrument of his peace.



2019 Parish Elections Nominations

**Pastoral Council
Faith Formation Commission
St. Cecilia Catholic School Board**

Nominations for Pastoral Council, Faith Formation Commission and Catholic School Board

Nominations will be accepted through Monday, April 8 at 4pm. To nominate yourself or another parishioner, complete the nomination form found in the narthex (to the right as you enter) and place in the gold nomination box. Please take time to think of fellow parishioners who would provide good leadership for the Parish.

Pastoral Council-The Council is the vehicle for dialog about the life and activities of the parish; a forum for planning and evaluation. The role of the Pastoral Council is, through ongoing pastoral planning, to maintain the integrity of the parish mission and the goals and objectives related to it. The pastor seeks collaborative relationship with the Pastoral Council, considering its guidance and active involvement in reaching consensus. The council meets monthly and members are elected to serve a 3-year term.

Faith Formation Commission-The Faith Formation Commission determines goals and objectives to meet the educational and faith formation needs of the total parish community, which include: the religious education program, youth and child ministry, spiritual growth opportunities, adult and family education, and sacramental preparation. Members are elected to serve a 3-year term.

St. Cecilia Catholic School Board-This board is a permanent standing committee of the Faith Formation Commission specifically charged with governance of Saint Cecilia School subject to the policies and regulations that proceed from the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board, the Archdiocesan Office and Faith Formation and Education, and in conformity with verification standards of the State of Iowa. Members are elected to serve a 3-year term.

Nominations will be accepted through Monday, April 8 at 4pm

2019 Elections Nomination Form

For Pastoral Council, Catholic School Board & Faith Formation Commission

Deadline for nominations is Monday, April 8 at 4pm. Completed nomination forms can be placed in the Gold Box in the Narthex, placed in the collection basket or submitted to the parish office.

Parish Elections are May 11 & 12. (Absentee ballots are available in the parish office May 6-10. Absentee ballots may only be completed in the parish office)

Please take time to think of fellow parishioners who would provide good leadership for the Parish.

You may also nominate yourself (if so, please write "self-nominated" next to your name).

Pastoral Council—2 Vacancies to be filled

Name	Phone/cell number
1.	
2.	
3.	

Catholic School Board—2 Vacancies to be filled

Name	Phone/cell number
1.	
2.	
3.	

Faith Formation Commission—2 Vacancies to be filled

Name	Phone/cell number
1.	
2.	
3.	

BRING OUT THE POPCORN!

STEWARDSHIP APPRECIATION EVENT

A screening of
"Pope Francis: A Man of His Word"

SATURDAY, MARCH 30 - 9 AM
DOORS OPEN AT 8:30 AM
NORTH GRAND CINEMA

Sponsored by the St. Cecilia Stewardship Committee in thanksgiving for and appreciation of our parishioners (of all ages) for their support of the many ministries, committees, councils and groups that provide strength and leadership throughout the parish. 100 coupons for a free large popcorn will be handed out on a first come, first served basis.

Run time 1 hour, 36 minutes.



