

IDEA DEL MESE

November 2022

Being merciful

This month's Idea invites us to be merciful. But what is mercy and who are the merciful? The merciful are people whose hearts are filled with love for their brothers and sisters, a love that is practical and looks towards who seem to be the “least” because they are poor and forgotten - the very people in need of selfless love. Furthermore, being merciful enables us to be happy and feel we are very fortunate.

This proposal is a central concept in the main religions or philosophical systems of the world - in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Confucianism. It can transform and revolutionise the most commonly held precepts of our way of thinking. It has the power to change hearts, the capacity to create a new humanity and to make the dream of a more fraternal world possible.

At the same time, we should also be merciful to ourselves and forgive our own mistakes to the point of experiencing extraordinary and superabundant love.

The word “mercy” comes from the Hebrew *rehem* which means “womb” and evokes a sense of boundless divine mercy, like a mother's compassion for her child. It is a selfless and welcoming love that is always ready to forgive and does not measure. It is abundant, universal and concrete: it draws out a response from others and this is the ultimate goal of mercy.

So, if we have suffered due to any offence or injustice, let us forgive and be convinced that we too will be forgiven. We can be the first to be merciful and compassionate! Even if it seems difficult and challenging, let us ask ourselves in front of each neighbour how this person's mother would behave towards him or her. It is a thought that helps us understand and live mercy.

We would like to share this experience: “After two years of marriage, our daughter and her husband decided to separate. We welcomed her back into our home and in the moments of tension that followed, we tried to love her by being patient, forgiving and having an attitude of understanding in our hearts. We maintained an open relationship with her and her husband, above all by trying not to be judgmental. After three months of listening, discreetly helping and many prayers, they were reunited and there is a different sense of awareness, trust and hope in their relationship.”¹

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Being merciful is more than forgiving. It means having a big heart that longs to cancel out and to completely burn away anything that might be an obstacle in our relationships with others. The call to be merciful offers us a way to draw closer to the original design of universal fraternity.

ⁱ Taken from: www.focolare.org