

...I believe that this is a time for mercy. The Church is showing her maternal side, her motherly face, to a humanity that is wounded. She does not wait for the wounded to knock on her doors, she looks for them on the streets, she gathers them in, she embraces them, she takes care of them, she makes them feel loved. And so, as I said, and I am ever more convinced of it, this is a *kairós*, our era is a *kairós* of mercy, an opportune time. When John XXIII solemnly opened the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, he said, "The Bride of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than arm herself with the weapons of rigor." In his meditation "Thoughts on Death," the blessed Paul VI revealed the essence of his spiritual life in the synthesis proposed by Saint Augustine: poverty and mercy. "My poverty—Pope Montini wrote—the mercy of God. That I may at least honor who you are, God of infinite bounty, invoking, accepting, and celebrating your sweet mercy." Saint John Paul II took the notion further with his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, in which he affirmed that the Church lives an authentic life when it professes and proclaims mercy, the most amazing attribute of the Creator and Redeemer, and when it leads humanity to the font of mercy. In addition, he instituted the festivity of Holy Mercy, endorsed the figure of Saint Faustina Kowalska, and focused on Jesus' words on mercy. Pope Benedict XVI also spoke of this in his teachings: "Mercy is in reality the core of the Gospel message; it is the name of God himself, the face with which he revealed himself in the Old Testament and fully in Jesus Christ, incarnation of Creative and Redemptive Love. This love of mercy also illuminates the face of the Church, and is manifested through the Sacraments, in particular that of the Reconciliation, as well as in works of charity, both of community and individuals. Everything that the Church says and does shows that God has mercy for man." ...

What is mercy for you?

Etymologically, "mercy" derives from *miseri cordis*, which means opening one's heart to wretchedness. And immediately we go to the Lord: mercy is the divine attitude which embraces, it is God's giving himself to us, accepting us, and bowing to forgive. Jesus said he came not for those who were good but for the sinners. He did not come for the healthy, who do not need the doctor, but for the sick. For this reason, we can say that mercy is God's identity card. God of Mercy, merciful God. For me, this really is the Lord's identity....

Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy: A Conversation with Andrea Torielli*, Chapter 1: A Time for Mercy; Random House, 2016