

Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but that he is also called "to practice mercy" towards others: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."¹²⁰ The Church sees in these words a call to action, and she tries to practice mercy. All the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount indicate the way of conversion and of reform of life, but the one referring to those who are merciful is particularly eloquent in this regard. Man attains to the merciful love of God, His mercy, to the extent that he himself is interiorly transformed in the spirit of that love towards his neighbor.

This authentically evangelical process is not just a spiritual transformation realized once and for all: it is a whole lifestyle, an essential and continuous characteristic of the Christian vocation. It consists in the constant discovery and persevering practice of love as a unifying and also elevating power despite all difficulties of a psychological or social nature: it is a question, in fact, of a merciful love which, by its essence, is a creative love. In reciprocal relationships between persons merciful love is never a unilateral act or process. Even in the cases in which everything would seem to indicate that only one party is giving and offering, and the other only receiving and taking (for example, in the case of a physician giving treatment, a teacher teaching, parents supporting and bringing up their children, a benefactor helping the needy), in reality the one who gives is always also a beneficiary. In any case, he too can easily find himself in the position of the one who receives, who obtains a benefit, who experiences merciful love; he too can find himself the object of mercy. (*Pope John Paul II, Dives in Misericordia 14*)