

## INTRODUCTION

**I**n this Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has called all of us to personal transformation—which may seem easier to do when we are by ourselves and not facing the often-difficult reality of other people, places, things, and situations.

We can begin by practicing mercy in our families, of course. But there are many other places too—at work, for example, the place where we spend most of our time, where personalities often clash, and where people often try to get ahead at the expense of their coworkers. Then there's the parish, where instead of praising God and living as God's people, we often fall prey to in-groups and gossip, to judgmentalism and conflicts.

No matter who we are, where we go, or what we do, God constantly offers us opportunities to live and practice mercy. And to help us recognize these opportunities, each of the entries in this booklet begins with a quote from Sister Joan Chittister's classic book *God's Tender Mercy*, followed by Scripture, prayer, and suggested practices. Together, let us seek a life of mercy and transformation.

## WITHOUT SIN

*Jesus' message is plain: Beware of letting sin consume you. No, not yours. Theirs. The fact is...that we have more than enough of our own sin to struggle through.*

### SCRIPTURE

“Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” **JOHN 8:7**

---

### PRAYER

Lord, it is so easy for me to judge others, to think that my way is the only way to go. Open my eyes to see the gifts others bring, especially newcomers in our midst, and open my ears to hear their viewpoints. Help me to see through their eyes what brought them here. Let me not be blinded by my own self-importance or my insecurities.

---

### ACTION

Today I will make a point of contacting someone with whom I disagree and having a conversation.

## LISTENING FOR GOD

*Maybe what is really disintegrating now is the amount of love and listening it takes if the world is to be propelled back into a holy, healthy, happy existence.*

### SCRIPTURE

After the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. 1 KINGS 19:12-13

---

### PRAYER

Dear Lord, you teach us to expect surprises. You came to Elijah as the smallest of sounds, one that would be missed if ears weren't tuned to you. Help me to remember that you speak through all of your people. Help me be attentive and open to their wisdom. Help me to engage rather than confront, so that we may all grow together in understanding and love.

---

### ACTION

Today I will try to read and pray about what makes for good relationships.

## EVERY SINFUL THING

*Every one of us is capable of every sinful thing.  
Most of us have simply never had the opportunity  
or the anger or the sense of desolation it takes to do it.  
While we're being grateful for that, it behooves us to be  
merciful to those who have.*

### SCRIPTURE

“Father, forgive them; for they do not know  
what they are doing.” LUKE 23:34

### PRAYER

Lord, help me to recognize the silent sins, the ones I don't even notice because they stem from my blindness and deafness—Whom have I ignored? Whom have I thought of as less than I? Whom have I simply not seen? Help me too to recognize in myself the faults I find in others, and help me to forgive others, as you have forgiven me.

### ACTION

Today I will try harder to be patient at all times with everyone I meet.

## EMBRACE BROKENNESS

*The major holy-making moment in our own lives may be when we receive the mercy we know we do not deserve. Then, we may never again substitute disdain for understanding, rejection for openness, legalism for justice. "I think perhaps it is a better world," Helen Waddell writes, "if one has a broken heart. Then one is quick to recognize it, elsewhere."*

### SCRIPTURE

Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. **LUKE 2:19**

---

### PRAYER

Lord, help me remember when my heart has been broken, when I felt despair. Help me remember the people who reached out, brought you to me through their presence, and restored my soul. Help me to reach out in my brokenness to the brokenness in others.

---

### ACTION

I will try to be aware of someone's pain and reach out, even if all I have to offer at first is a smile.

## MERCY IN PRACTICE

*Our only hope is that when we are all sitting somewhere bereft, exposed, outcast, humiliated, and rejected by the rest of society, someone, somewhere will “reach out a hand and lift us up.”*

### SCRIPTURE

“Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.” **JOHN 8:10-11**

---

### PRAYER

Lord, we’ve all done things in our lives we’re ashamed of, that we keep hidden. Help me to remember all the times you’ve lifted me up through the Eucharist, through the sacrament of penance, and through the kindness of others. Help me always to recognize the woundedness of others so that others may come to recognize you in me.

---

### ACTION

Today I will plan to go to confession so that I might again be immersed in God’s mercy and love.