

**Diocese of Elphin**  
Primary School Prayer Service to celebrate  
The Jubilee Year of Mercy  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016

*Mercy*

**COMPASSION**

Gentleness

**Love**

*Sincerity*

**Forgiveness**

**Kindness**

*Patience*

*Generosity*

Gratitude

**Courtesy**

*Healing*



## Greetings from Bishop Kevin Doran



Thank you for coming together today for this time of prayer.

You may wonder why I have invited you to do this today. Since becoming pope on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2013, Pope Francis has frequently reminded us of two core beliefs which are shared by Christians, Muslims and Jews. The first is that God is merciful, not just sometimes, but always. He reaches out to us to lift us up. The second core belief is that God wants us to be merciful and kind to one another. This year, Pope Francis has designated this year as a “Jubilee of Mercy”, a special year when we reflect on the Mercy of God and allow it to become part of our lives. He has reminded us how, in moments of quiet prayer especially, we come into the presence of God who knows us even better than we know ourselves. God knows our desire to be good and he also understands our struggles. He knows our successes and failures and he never stops loving us.

Pope Francis has also asked us to be “Merciful like the Father”. We sometimes experience the Mercy of God in a very concrete way in the goodness of other people who believe in God. In our turn, we can also be channels of God’s mercy to others. I decided to respond to the invitation of Pope Francis by celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy with different groups on different dates during the year. Already we have had the Jubilee of Mercy for the sick and those who care for them; for people expecting a baby; for people involved in sports; for priests. Today, I want to join with everybody who is involved in education to celebrate God’s mercy.

I think our schools can be communities of mercy, if we all allow the love of God to touch our lives. We can be more forgiving; we can care for one another in times of difficulty or sadness. In that way, with God’s help, we can be “Merciful like the Father”. In your time of prayer today, I invite you to reflect on the different ways in which your school is a community of mercy and to give thanks to God.

Thank you.

+ Kevin Doran  
Bishop of Elphin

# Planning and Preparation

## Time and Format

A time for the service and whether it will be classed based or school based should be decided on and where it will take place identified

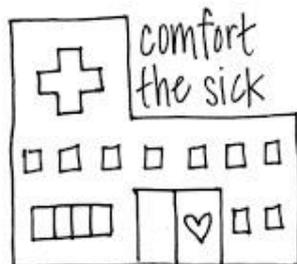
## Who should be invited?

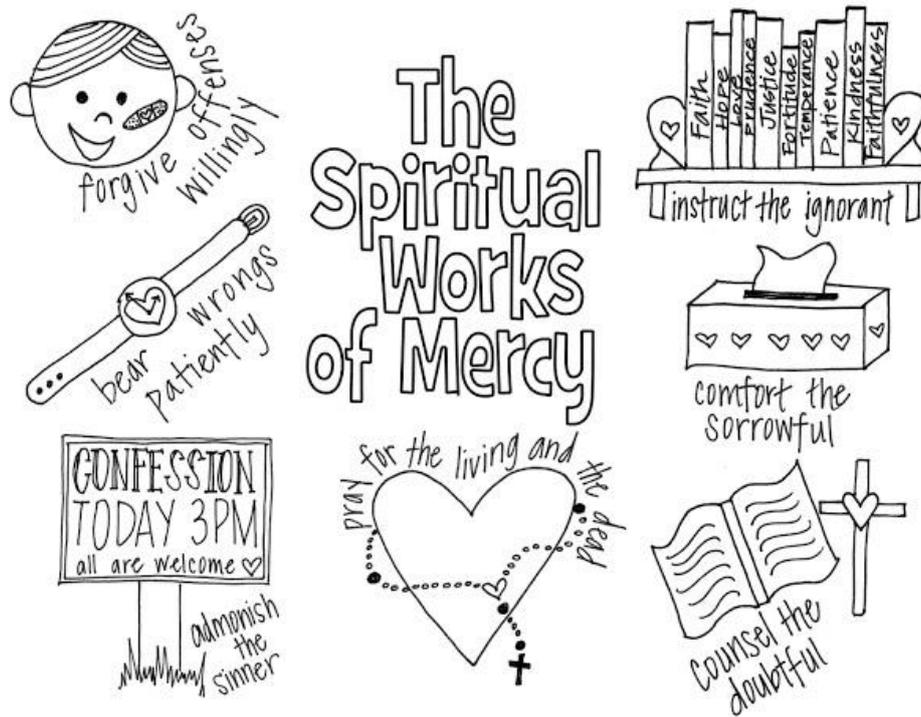
This is up to each school – inviting local clergy and parents will make the celebration all the more special.

## Class Work

It is recommended that teachers might take some class time during the week before Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of September to:

- Introduce pupils to the idea of God’s mercy- some of the parables may help here
- Discuss the corporal/spiritual works of mercy or the words on the cover of this service





- To engage in activities or art work around the idea of mercy which could be used during the Friday Prayer Service.

### Sacred Space

The Sacred Space night includes the following elements:

- Jubilee Framed Prayer
- Jubilee of Mercy Candle
- Bible
- Holy Water (optional)
- Artwork of students related to theme of Mercy (optional).
- PowerPoint Projector & Screen (optional)

### Leadership Requirements

- Presider –the local priest could be asked to perform this role
- Choir and/or Cantor
- Musician(s)
- Ministers of the Word (to proclaim readings)
- Readers (Participatory Reflection & Prayer of the Faithful)
- Person to manage PowerPoint (if being used)

**Opening Hymn:** Whatsoever you do

<http://youtu.be/uOMeVkXdxXQ?list=RDUOMeVkXdxXQ>

**Sign of the Cross:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. All: Amen

## **Introduction**

*(This can be read by children from senior classes)*

**Reader 1:** This Jubilee Year of Mercy was proclaimed by Pope Francis on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and will conclude on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016 which is the Feast of Christ the King.

**Reader 2:** Pope Francis wants this to be the year when we remember that our God is a God of mercy, a God of love and compassion, a God who forgives all and always forgives.

**Reader 3:** God's mercy is for everyone; no one is excluded. This year we are invited to consider what that means for each one of us as a member of God's family.

**Reader 4:** The motto for this Jubilee Year of Mercy "Merciful like the Father" is taken from the Gospel of Luke (6:36). It provides a summary of what the jubilee year is – an invitation to follow the example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive.

**Reader 5:** Each diocese around the world is invited to open a Door of Mercy in a cathedral, church or popular shrine. You can visit the Holy Door in Sligo Cathedral up until 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

**Reader 6:** Today we have a specially framed Year of Mercy Prayer which we now display on our Prayer Space. (Place Mercy Prayer on the Prayer Space.)

**Reader 7:** We will now light a special candle for the Year of Mercy and place it on our Prayer Space. (Light the candle and place on the Prayer Space.)

## Gospel Reading

*(This can be read by the Priest, Teacher or children from senior classes)*



### Reader A: A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

#### The Story of the Prodigal Son

One day Jesus told this story to his friends. There was a man who had two sons. One day the younger son said to his father: "Father, give me my share of all you have." And the father divided his money between the two sons.

A few days later the younger son took his money, left his home, and went into a strange country far away. There he made new friends and he had a very good time until all his money was gone.

**Reader B:** Now he was alone, hungry, without friends and without money. He began to look for work, but the only kind of work he could find was minding a herd of pigs in muddy fields. Then one day the young man said to himself: "In my father's house there are many servants who have plenty to eat. I have behaved so badly that I am not worthy to be my father's son anymore. But I will ask him to let me come back to become one of his servants."

**Reader C:** He got up and started on his journey home. He was feeling very hungry and miserable and thinking all the way how he would ask for forgiveness from his good father. He was still a long way off from his home when his father saw him. The father felt so sorry for his son that he ran out to meet him. He hugged him and took him home. He did not scold his son for all the bad things he had done. The son said: "Father, I have behaved too badly to be called your son!" But instead of answering him, the father said to the servants: "Bring the best clothes for my son. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Prepare the very best dinner for us. We shall have a feast and be happy because my son who was lost is found again."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Reflection/Discussion

**Teacher:** We are all God's children. When we do wrong, we behave like the younger son, who left his father. What should we do to make things right again? We must come to our Father and tell Him that we are sorry. Then He will receive us gladly, just as the father in the story received his son.

**All:** Act of Sorrow

O my God, I thank you for loving me,  
I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and not loving you,  
Help me live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen

## Prayers of the Faithful

(Please print the following prayers and place on Prayer Space after each one is read.)

**Child 1:** I am the face of God's mercy when I am kind and gentle each day in the classroom and in the playground. Help us Lord to show love just as you showed love to your friends.

Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Child 2:** I am the face of God's mercy when I am fair and just in the games I play and the choices I make. Help us Lord to make everybody in our school community feel wanted and to understand that they all have an important role to play.

Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Child 3:** I am the face of God's mercy as I learn to forgive those who hurt me by calling names, ignoring me or excluding me from the group. Help us Lord to grow in love each day by making good choices.

Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Child 4:** I am the face of God's mercy when I use my eyes, my ears, my hands and my feet to show love at home, at school and at play. Help us Lord to be like this candle and carry your light to the people we meet each day.

Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

## Closing Prayer

*(This can be read by the teacher or a pupil)*

### Jubilee Year of Mercy Prayer for Children

Jesus, you are my friend. Your love and mercy surrounds me. You are gentle and kind. Your heart overflows with love for me. I can depend on you always. Keep me close in the shelter of your wings. Help me to spread your love at home and in school. Help me to see the beauty of your creation and to care for all living things. We make this prayer in your name. Amen.

**Closing Hymn:** He's got the whole world in his hands

<https://youtu.be/lXtFqCw6rH8>

