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Message for BBNeighbourhoods  
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My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In a hymn cited by Saint Paul, the Church sings the mystery of the Incarnation:

*“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.”* (cf. Phil 2:5-8; Liturgy of the Hours, Saturday, Canticle at Evening Prayer, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 461)

It is only when we understand the incarnate nature of our faith that we can really come to grips with the most dramatic implication of all. Our faith, centred on a God who pours out His love for us, draws us back to Himself, the font of love.

As He entices us back into His love, God invites us to bring along as many people with us as we can. God is living among us so that we can live in Him. This is an invitation for each one of us to enter into a life of discipleship.

Just as God has made His love incarnate for us to experience, we too are called to incarnate God’s love for others to experience, so that others can also “taste and see” the Lord’s goodness in their own lives.

Just as God is revealed in Jesus Christ with gentleness, humility, and poverty, so too we are invited to learn the path of gentleness and humility in communicating the truth of God’s goodness and mercy. This is particularly important because of another reality of our pilgrimage of faith with Jesus, that is, the reality of sin and our human weakness.

Baptism is not just the first Sacrament, but it is also the Sacrament of mercy.

In Baptism, we are plunged into the waters of death, but the Sacrament is a reminder that God in His mercy pulls us out from the waters, and brings us to new life in his Son by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What is important in our journey with Christ is not the number of times that we fall, nor is it the number of time that we get up again. It is the number of times that we are picked up by the merciful hand of God, outstretched to each and every sinner. We see this outstretched hand most vividly in the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

The emphasis on mercy is also why Pope Francis made 2016 a Jubilee Year of Mercy. At the end of that Jubilee Year, the Holy Father wrote a beautiful Apostolic exhortation called [Misericordia et Misera](#).

There, Pope Francis said that “Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the church” (MM, I) but must form the very heart of life in Christ.

After a personal encounter with the merciful gaze of Christ, we are enriched as women and men of faith and we become what the Pope called a missionary of mercy.

This week, I would like to invite you to that personal encounter with Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I am confident that after your encounter, you will want to return over and over again to meet Christ face to face and to experience God’s merciful love. It is not difficult; all we have to do is make some space in our lives and Jesus will do the rest.

Let us pray for each other this week and for the attentiveness to hear the Lord’s call in each moment of our lives. Let’s also pray for the courage to respond to God’s call with an emphatic “yes”, not just at the important moments, but in every moment of our lives.

All mercy and peace to you,

+Anthony