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children so as to lead them

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"Go into the whole world and PROCLAIM the GOOD NEWS to all creation" Mark 16:15

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PROCLAIM

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Being merciful is a life-long task



The Jubilee Year of Mercy is coming to an end but 'being merciful' continues! Being merciful is not limited to the year but it is life-long, never-ending task. Mercy, in general, is understood as Kindness that makes you forgive someone, usually someone that you have authority over or Compassion shown towards someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm --- eg: Mercy petition to the President, judge. In the Bible, mercy is 'Compassion towards the miserable'. In Hebrew the word is 'Hesed' (Ex 34.6) – Steadfast love, loving kindness, and in Greek: 'Eleos'-Compassion, pity, to show mercy.

Christmas is the reminder of this fact that when God is merciful we too need to be merciful in our turn. Mercy is God's nature; it is his

essence. Compassion and love are a 'Quality of God', a quality that God requires of his people --- 'I want mercy not sacrifice'.

The event of incarnation is God's great act of mercy. It is rightly described that the face of God is mercy and the babe of Bethlehem – Jesus, the Son of God --- came into the world as that face of Mercy. His mercy towards the sinful world was such that he did not hesitate to make this supreme sacrifice of losing His Son. The Son is 'God's mercy incarnated', who obeys the Father shows infinite mercy by laying down his life to save us all from eternal damnation.

Mercy neither waits for requests nor expects to get anything in return. The concern and love for the one who is in need and difficulty moves a person to sacrifice and love the other. God's mercy is gratuitous and abundant. It is this mercy that we need to imitate; as Jesus puts it, "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful." Pope Francis, a few days after assuming office said, "Feeling mercy changes everything. This is the best thing that we can feel, it changes the world. A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just." (Angelus, March 17, 2013) Mercy makes the world warm and it introduces reconciliation, peace and justice. This only can establish fraternal life.

Pope Francis in his message for World Mission Sunday says: "Go out as missionary disciples, each generously offering our talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family". By virtue of its missionary mandate the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel"

The Church, through its missionary wing called Pontifical Mission Societies, all over the world is able to carry out acts of mercy because of the generous contribution of the Christian faithful like you. Your help has helped millions of children for their education through supporting schools and for livelihood and shelter through orphanages, children's homes. Several hospitals, old age homes, churches, seminaries, formation houses etc. are helped so that missionaries are formed both spiritually and intellectually to do acts of mercy much more efficiently and effectively.

The 'King of Glory', whose feast we celebrate on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, and the Babe of Bethlehem -- 'Prince of Peace' -- may inspire us to be instruments of mercy that help the world to live in peace and justice. We shall all be missionary disciples of mercy.

Fr Faustine L Lobo National Director (PMO-India)