



DIOCESAN YOUTH APOSTOLATE  
ST. THOMAS SYROMALABAR DIOCESE OF CHICAGO



"That they  
may be one,  
just as We are."  
~John 17:11

YOY

YEAR OF  
YOUTH  
Newsletter

March 2017 | Issue 3

## Healing Through Mercy

What does "Year of Youth" mean to me? Is it about doing a whole bunch of youth activities in the church for a year? Is it a year for youth to step into the roles that parish elders have been taking care of until now? Or is it about the youth leading 'perunnal' for the church this year? Or it may you have something different from any of the above in your mind. None of these are wrong, but if we limit our vision of the Year of Youth to ONLY these things, we are already far off course.

We should focus this year on **things that will change the face of our church forever**, not just this one year of youth. As Catholics, we should start a culture among ourselves that spreads like wildfire, a **culture of love**.

For this month's reflection, let us focus on two words - "**mercy**" & "**healing**". To reflect on the Mercy of God, let us use the incident from the bible when Christ invited himself to the house of Zacchaeus. "**Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house tonight.**" Jesus disregards Zacchaeus' reputation as an unjust, unfair and selfish man. Zacchaeus- a man who stole from regular working-class people using force as well as his power as a tax-collector; who was hated because he abused his power and used others to his own advantage (Luke 19: 1-10). Through this action of inviting himself into the house of Zacchaeus, Jesus is showing His mercy to Zacchaeus. Through this encounter with Jesus, who is the personification of mercy, Zacchaeus' life had changed forever.

We can see the process of healing beginning in the life of Zacchaeus from this encounter- "**Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.**" Zacchaeus gives back to the people from whom he had been stealing.

He is no longer worried about his power, wealth or status, but he is overtaken by God's mercy in his life, which in turn he shows to the people around him. **Jesus did not choose to go to Zacchaeus' house because Zacchaeus had already repented or changed his life** but rather because '**... this man too is a descendent of Abraham.**' (Luke 19:8) - In other words, he is **just another man God has created**. The Mercy of Jesus is not earned, but freely given to everyone, even to the person whom we think is not deserving of it. This is the model of mercy that Jesus has given us.

Can we model this mercy to people around us, especially in the context of our local SyroMalabar church? Are we able to show mercy to

- kaikkarans or other church leaders who were unkind to you or seem to have a grudge against you?
- others in the community who may have gossiped about you and/or your family?
- a fellow parish council member or other Church admin who is not very supportive of your ideas?
- a peer, classmate, youth or older adult or others who offended us in church?
- the CCD teacher who got you in trouble for talking and disturbing the class?
- the local parish priest whom you may have a problem with?

May our encounter with Jesus lead us to be an instrument of God's mercy to the people in our church and may that spirit of mercy and healing spread like wildfire especially during this Year of Youth. As Pope Francis once said "**If evil is contagious, so is good: therefore, we must allow good to abound in us, more and more; let us be infected by goodness, and let us spread the good contagion.**"

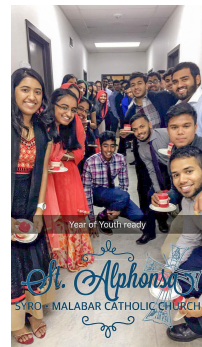
# Year of Youth- March Newsletter

## Words of Wisdom from Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati

"But the purpose for which we have been created shows us the path along which we should go, perhaps strewn with many thorns, but not a sad path. Even in the midst of intense suffering it is one of joy."



Hiking trip with the youth of St. Thomas Parish of San Francisco, CA



St. Alphonsa Parish of Coppell, TX is YOY ready with Bishop Joy!



## Suggested Activities of the Month

### Youth, Young Adults + Older Adults

1. Who is the Zacchaeus in your life? **Write down names** of those at your parish who might have hurt you (parents, youth, ministers, etc.) in preparation for receiving Christ's healing mercy.
2. **Attend a healing adoration** offering up those things on your list.
3. Complete a **thorough examination of conscience**, asking God for His mercy in your own failures.
4. Extend mercy in a tangible way by reaching out and **calling or messaging a friend** who hurt you.
5. Lent is a great time to strengthen your prayer life and to reflect on the Mercy of God! **Pray a Divine Mercy Chaplet** and offer it up for the intention of your own/someone else's healing.

### Achans

1. Consider preaching on the effects of un-forgiveness and the importance of healing and mercy.
2. Work with Parish coordinators to hold a healing adoration, invite surrounding parishes to join.

### Kaikkarans, Parish Council Members, and Other Parish Admin

1. **Organize a retreat for all parish admin** (including trustees, Parish council, etc.), with a focus on building open communication and on healing divisions within these groups – we are all working for the same goal!
2. **Prayerfully discern** how to help heal the divisions in our communities that are due to politics and gossip

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"... Let us be infected by goodness, and let us spread the good contagion ..."