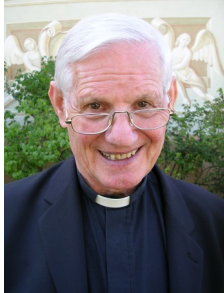


GROWTH

Christmas
Rome 2024

Volume XL I



Christmas—A Feast of Mercifulness



Christmas can have so many meanings for us, since it is the feast of the celebration of the incarnation of the Word of God. Human language can never express the richness of the Word of God. The Word of God has so many connotations that we can never exhaust them. In this article I would like to focus on the mercifulness of God. In Jesus God's mercifulness took on human flesh. Mercy is a characteristic of God. It means not being punished for what we deserve. Christ died for us and because of his sacrificial death, God shows mercy to us Christians by not punishing us for our sins.

Mercifulness is a divine quality which we all need to cultivate as it is lacking in our time in which many people are craving for revenge and 'justice done'. How often do we hear and read: "Finally justice was done" or "Justice must be done." "It is my right." Rarely do we come across the word mercy, mercifulness or 'I have forgiven him/her for the hurt he/she inflicted upon me'. Of course, justice is important for our human condition, but even more important is mercifulness. There seems to be an overemphasis on justice in our society. We are not aware how we all depend on mercifulness. What would have happened to us when we were naughty, if our parents did not balance justice with mercifulness? Mercifulness is essential for human society to survive.

A Greek proverb says: "Mercy is better than vengeance." Revenge is the opposite of mercifulness. Fostering feelings of revenge and hatred is highly destructive of our health and may lead to harmful thoughts, words and actions which we may later regret. Revenge makes us hard and creates negative energy in us.

Who would survive, if God would have this attitude towards us? Would human kind not have long ago been annihilated, if God did not show mercifulness? A family or a society built purely on justice is on the brink of be-coming inhuman. The soul of the person dies slowly or is destroyed. Pope John Paul II was aware of this and dedicated the Second Sunday of Easter to the Divine Mercy. He breathed his last, infact, on the eve of that Sunday.

Pope Francis initiated a Year of Mercy. The Church makes us aware that we are in need of forgiveness, although the sense of sinfulness may have disappeared in many people. At the beginning of each Mass we pray: "Lord, have mercy!" This shows that we are aware of the need for God's mercy. Moreover, the church also encourages us to receive the sacrament of reconciliation, in which our sins are forgiven.

Mercifulness is an aspect of love. It contains two important elements: A readiness to help those in need and a readiness to forgive and be reconciled where possible.

Mercifulness is an aspect of love. It contains two important elements: A readiness to help those in need and a readiness to forgive and be reconciled where possible. We speak of the seven Corporal Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, or sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the imprisoned and burying the dead.

There are also seven Spiritual Works of Mercy: admonishing the sinner, instructing the ignorant, counselling the doubtful, **P.T.O**



**Happy Christmas
May Peace reign
in our Hearts and
Hope abound
in our World
in 2025**



Continued comforting the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving all injuries, and praying for the living and the dead. It is good for us to be reminded of these corporal and spiritual works of mercy. As we see, we have plenty of opportunity to practice these during the Year of Mercy. We can ask ourselves, how many of these works of mercy do I practice? Which ones could I learn to implement in my life to become more merciful?

I would like to mention one, which I think is so important for us that every effort is worthwhile to make it part of our nature and that is forgiving injuries and hurts inflicted upon us. Our Lord is clear about how often we have to forgive. The answer is again and again. It would be a wonderful result of the Year of Mercy, if we would become forgiving persons, forgiving families, a forgiving nation. How different would our personal life, our family life, the life of our nation be?

Forgiving is challenging. It requires much effort, particularly going beyond intentional forgiveness to emotional forgiveness. It is a process that goes on in us. True forgiveness fosters good physical, psychological and spiritual health and wellbeing. I often say: "I can't afford not to forgive, because I would get sick." I also want to become Christ-like in his supreme act of forgiveness on the Cross. Forgiveness leads to inner peace and happiness and it is the prelude for reconciliation where possible.

How can I become a more forgiving person? I need to reflect why I want to become a more forgiving person. Once I am motivated, I identify the wounds of my past life and forgive one at the time starting with the least difficult to forgive. I also practice forgiveness day by day as I get hurt. Slowly I will find it easier to forgive as I keep on practicing it so that I reach a stage where I can also forgive my worst enemy.

Let us become preachers, practitioners and lovers of mercifulness. Let us foster this attitude of mercifulness. We pray that Pope John Paul II may intercede for us that we may become more merciful as Our Heavenly Father is merciful. Let us also become more aware that without mercy, we will never find happiness and fulfilment. Let us also become more aware how this attitude and practice of mercifulness will change our lives in our families, religious communities and in our society as a whole. If we refuse mercy in this life, we have to expect justice in eternity. *Len Kofler MHM*

An article written by Fr. Len which we felt was worth sharing again.
May this coming Christmas and New Year 2025 help us all to become more merciful and forgiving. This is our prayer for each of us.



Fr. Len Kofler MHM
12-04-1935 to 28-04-2024 RIP
Forever in our Hearts



Institute of St. Anselm

1985 to 2025 40th Jubilee

**We will celebrate this great occasion in Rome on the
12th May 2025**

**We wish to use this opportunity to make the
important and valuable work of Fr. Len Kofler MHM better
known. Over 7500 participants have profited from the
programmes of St. Anselm's. If you would like to send in emails
with comments as to how your time in the
Institute of St. Anselm has helped you in your ministry over the
years we will bring them together in a leaflet.**

You may also like to send pictures .

**Len would have been 90 on the 12th April and I am sure
will be with us for the celebration whilst enjoying
eternal rest which he so richly deserved.**

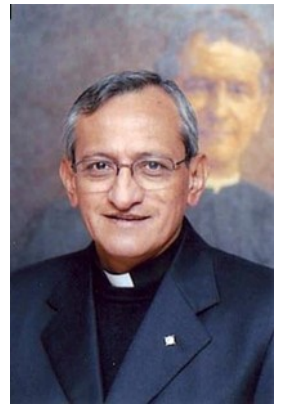
Please send to: 40Jubilee@st.anselm.org.uk





Men and Women of Hope

"Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful." (HEB 10:23)



Being Men and Women of Hope requires our ability to have a positive outlook, precisely the fruit of hope, which is not the psychological attitude of those who see the glass half full and say "I still have half a glass of water", but a theological virtue, the one that makes us believe in the diffusive force of good and leads us to grow where we have been planted, and to hope, always hope.

That is why Pope Francis in delivering the Bull of Indiction for Jubilee 2025, on 9 May 2024, the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to Heaven, concluded by saying, "Brothers and sisters, may the Lord, risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, grant us the grace to **rediscover hope** - rediscover hope! - -, to **proclaim hope**, to **build hope**."

It is an urgent call not to surrender to the night and therefore not to allow space for bitter, obscure thoughts. This world is the first miracle God made, and God has placed the grace of new wonders in our hands. Faith and hope go forward together. Believe in the existence of the loftiest and most beautiful truths. Trust in God the Creator, in the Holy Spirit who moves everything towards the good, in the embrace of Christ who awaits every man and woman at the end of their life. The world walks thanks to the gaze of many men and women who have opened up breaches, who have built bridges, who have dreamed and believed, even when they heard derisive words around them.

Therefore, never think that the struggle we engage in here on earth, especially in the field of evangelisation, is completely useless. Evangelisation, like education, is a generator of hope because it proclaims "beautiful and good news" oriented to the formation of the human person, the citizen, the professional, and is therefore called to renew the social fabric with ever new generations of men and women capable of creating an alternative culture, increasingly more human, more inclusive, more supportive, more committed to the common good.

This is why we must love people, especially the young, respect everyone's journey, be it linear or troubled, because everyone has their story to tell. And above all, dream! Do not be afraid to dream. Dream of a world which cannot yet be seen, but which will surely arrive. Hope leads us to believe in the existence of a creation which expands until the definitive fulfilment, when God will be everything in everyone. Men and women capable of imagination have given humanity scientific and technological discoveries. They have sailed the oceans; they have tread on lands on which no one has ever set foot before. The men and women who have sown hope are also those who have conquered slavery, and brought about better living conditions on this earth. Think about these men and women.

If first of all, to be '*builders of hope*' you need to be people of hope, educating to hope today involves knowing who the *enemies of hope* are. Because hope, like all good in this world, has its enemies: resignation, pessimism, despair, false optimism.

Let us remember, therefore, the myth from Prometheus to Pandora.

Following the Prometheus episode who stole the fire, Zeus decides to take revenge not only on Prometheus but on mortals as well:

Pandora's box.



The father of all gods makes his move and gives Pandora a container inside which he has locked all the evils that could befall mortals, to protect them, at least so it is thought.

The myth of Pandora sees the protagonist promising to keep the jar closed until the end of her days. However, very soon this promise is broken, due to her curiosity.

At the bottom of the jar: hope.

Pandora tries to close the container, leaving just one thing inside. This is **hope** – which the Greeks call "*elpis*" – which remains locked in there.

The world changes forever, the condemnation of humanity is marked until the day Pandora decides to reopen the jar and finally give hope back to the world. And this is precisely the moment to “rediscover hope, proclaim hope, build hope”.



Christian hope reminds us that God has entrusted man with a mandatory task: to make this world the beginning of a new world, because the created universe is destined for salvation. The eschatological perspective inherent to Christian hope leads everything beyond, because the new heavens and the new earth that the Christian awaits are not primarily the work of his hands, but a gift from God, and, at the same time, summon and challenge his commitment and responsible actions so that the seeds of the future world may already mature in the present. The Christian therefore lives an ethic of hope, with a focus on the ultimate, but with the awareness that the penultimate is the preview, the foreshadowing, and the prophecy of the ultimate.

To act ethically while oriented to the *eschaton* means being to a future of fullness in view of which one can work towards the transfiguration of the world that must reach the extra-human world, the entire cosmos, so that God may be all in all things (I Cor 15:28).

Let us entrust ourselves to Saint Mary of the Sabbath, She who continued to believe and hope while seeing her son crucified, dead and buried, so that she might be the one to educate us in hope and to teach us how to educate to hope. While it was Mary's first beatitude, the “beatitude of faith”, we can also speak of a “beatitude of hope”, the one brought together in her “*Magnificat*” through which she contemplates history with eyes of faith and sees that the fulfilment of God's marvellous plan has already begun and glorifies the Lord who never disappoints our hope!

Father Pascual Chávez, SDB

RIP We remember all those who have been involved in or followed a programme at St. Anselm's and have died during the year. Those we know of and those we do not know about. May they enjoy their home coming, eternal rest and peace with the Lord after finishing their life's mission here on earth. We remember in particular

Fr. Leonhard Kofler MHM

Who is sorely missed but working with us to ensure the Institute goes forth to a strong future of service for the Church.

We also remember

Mrs Mary Godden a guest lecture our first years in Cliftonville.



St. Leonhard



The Institute offers a 1 year programme from September to May for Formators and Leaders those who have potential for these roles or who are in them or who have come out of them. A practical and experiential programme teaching the 'how' to be a formator/leader.

**Institute of St. Anselm, c/o Il Carmelo,
Via Doganale 1, Ciampino,
00043 Rome, Italy**

For further information please contact us:

☎ +44 (0)1843 234700 or +39 0694803855

Email director@st.anselm.org.uk

Email office@st.anselm.org.uk

Website: www.st.anselm.org.uk

A Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered in England Company no. 2010021

Registered Charity no.294625.

Italy: Legal Entity AI N.1262/2018 CF. 90088730586