

INTRODUCTION



Pope Benedict has aptly reminded us, “We must trust in the mighty power of God’s mercy. We are all sinners, but his grace transforms us and makes us new.” Our call to transformation by the power of God’s love and mercy has been made newly apparent to us in the last century. Through the diary of St. Faustina Kowalska, the installation of Divine Mercy Sunday by our beloved St. Pope John Paul II, and again through the Jubilee of Mercy announced by Pope Francis, there is a thematic continuance that is as modern as it is spiritually essential: to pull away from sin, grab hold of the loving mercy of the Lord, and rest in the peace that only he can give. Even the recent reemergence of the devotion to Our Lady Undoer of Knots, made popular by Pope Francis, reminds us that, through the help

of Our Lady, the Lord's mercy is always at work: forgiving trespasses, healing wounds, repairing hearts, and undoing life's snags that are inevitable through our human frailty.

In fact, Fr. Philippe delves deeply into the role of Mary as a conduit for God's mercy. He tells us that her role is "discreet" yet vital, as the Mediatrix of All Graces and the one who understands God best. Her role, ever in the background, is to impress a mother's compassion upon her children, and nothing makes her happier than to see God's mercy bestowed and accepted.

And this is the key: Because of our freedom we must not only recognize God's mercy but accept it. Fr. Philippe focuses on acceptance (or trust), because we so often lack humility, self-forgiveness, and self-abandonment to his love, the portals to the flow of God's endless mercy.

As we work on becoming People of Mercy, accepting God's flowing graces and bestowing our own mercy on others, the sacrament of reconciliation continues to play a pivotal role in this exchange of love between God and man. As

Fr. Philippe says, “Every time that Jesus looks at us, he sets us free, he gives us a new life. Let us allow Jesus to look at us.” Confession is an intimate conversation between the loving God and his child, during which he sets his gaze on our bowed heads seeking humility and forgiveness. The more we accept his healing gaze, the more we can come to know and love him. What a precious gift, not to be forgotten or tucked into the corners of our daily existence!

This book is a gift. We are invited by the Lord to explore the depths of his mercy through the wisdom and keen spiritual sense of Fr. Philippe. Let us all accept Jesus’s look of merciful tenderness as he “opens us up to a path of life.”



Chapter One



MERCY AND THE MOTHER OF GOD

*A homily given on December 8, 2015, at Thomas More
College, Merrimack, New Hampshire*

Today, on December 8, we are entering into the Year of Mercy. Pope Francis wanted this year to begin on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. On this day we celebrate her beauty, her purity, and her freedom from every form of sin, a sign of God's victory.

Pope Francis included this sentence in his Bull: "The mystery of the Immaculate Conception shows that the mercy of God will always be greater than the sin of men." This is a statement

of hope. The mercy of God will always be greater than our sins, and this is what we contemplate in the mystery of the Virgin Mary.

For this reason, the Virgin Mary can help us to receive all of the graces of this year. This is what I'm going to try to share with you in a simple way. Many doors in churches and cathedrals will open in the coming days throughout the world. Millions of people will cross these thresholds, and this will be a great grace. There will be many healings and conversions, many graces of repentance, peace, and consolation.

GOD'S MERCY

We need to give thanks to God for this year. Mary herself is the door of mercy because through her the mercy of God entered into the world. We can say that Jesus is the mercy of the Father in person, because through the person of Jesus, the merciful love of the Father was revealed in order to reach everyone—in their sin, their wounds, and their weakness.