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Jubilee audience: mercy is inclusive

The final Saturday Jubilee audience was dedicated to an important aspect of mercy: inclusion, which reflects the action of God, Who does not exclude anyone from His loving plan of salvation, but instead wishes to include all people. “We Christians are invited to use the same criterion”, said Pope Francis. “Mercy is that way of acting, that style, with which we seek to include others in our life, to avoid becoming wrapped up in ourselves and our selfish insecurities”.

It is the invitation Jesus made in the Gospel of Matthew, read this morning before thousands of faithful in St. Peter’s Square: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest’. No-one is excluded from this appeal, because Jesus’ mission is that of revealing to every the Father’s love to every person. It is up to us to open our heart, to trust in Jesus and to welcome this message of love that has enabled us to enter into the mystery of salvation”.

Francis explained that this aspect of mercy is expressed by opening our arms to welcome all without exclusion, “without classifying others on the basis of social condition, language, race, culture, religion: before us there is only a person to love as God does. The person I find in the workplace, in my neighbourhood, is a person to love, as God loves him or her. ‘But he is from that country, that other country, this religion, another one… He is a person who God loves, and I must love him’. This is including, and this is inclusion”.

“How many weary and oppressed people we meet today too! On the street, in public offices, in medical clinics. Jesus’ gaze falls on every one of these faces, also through our eyes. And our heart, what is it like? Is it merciful? And our way of acting, is it inclusive? The Gospel calls on us to recognise in the history of humanity the plan of a great work of inclusion, that fully respecting the freedom of every person, of every community, every people, calls on all of us to form a family of brothers and sisters, in justice, solidarity and peace, and to form part of the Church, which is the body of Christ”.

“How true Jesus’ words are, when He invites those who are weary and burdened to go to Him to find rest! His open arms on the cross show that no-one is excluded from His love and His mercy, not even the greatest sinner: no-one! We are all included in His love and mercy. The most immediate expression by which we feel welcomed and integrated in Him is His forgiveness. We all need to be forgiven by God, and we all need to meet brothers

and sisters who help us to go to Jesus, to open ourselves to the gift He made to us on the cross. Let us not obstruct each other! Let us exclude no-one! On the contrary, with humility and simplicity, let us be an instrument of the inclusive mercy of the Father. The Holy Mother Church extends in the world the great embrace of the dead and risen Christ. This square too, with its colonnade, expresses this embrace. Let us take part in this movement of the inclusion of others, to be witnesses to the mercy with which God welcomed and welcomes each one of us".