



Praying on the way to the Holy Door *2016*



Become merciful as the Father

1. “Don’t be afraid! Open your door to Jesus!”

(in front of the house of the Beco family)

Hymn p 7-8

In the evening of January 15th 1933, the front door of the Beco family remained closed and locked. Mariette was unable to meet the Beautiful Lady, who invited her out with a sign of the hand. Mariette was attracted to the Beautiful Lady, she yearns to go out and meet Her, she passionately wants to see Her, or to see Her again, without knowing why: what is it that this Lady will reveal to her? She doesn't suspect Mary to lead her to a spring representing the heart of Jesus. From this heart, divine mercy flows towards all those who suffer. In this jubilee year we want to set off with the Virgin of the Poor to the Holy Door.

Another fellow joins us, a person who has experienced the divine mercy: the tax collector Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus also went outside, inhabited by a fierce desire: to see Jesus. He would undoubtedly be embarrassed if he was asked to give a specific reason for this desire. What is he looking for? He really doesn't know.

The Gospel according to Luke reads:

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. (Luke 19:1-3)

An invisible attraction is at work: "...no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them." (John 6,65b) Mariette goes to the Beautiful Lady, and Zacchaeus to Jesus.

Hymn p 7-8

Let us turn towards Jesus and ask Him to meet us:

Lector: If we see no future:

All: Jesus, we rely on you: help us on our way again.

Lector: If we lose courage:

All: Jesus, we rely on you: help us on our way again.

Lector: If fear paralyzes us:

All: Jesus, we rely on you: help us on our way again.

Lector: If we do not hear the voice of our hearts:

All: Jesus, we rely on you: help us on our way again.

Lector: If our hearts are frozen:

All: Jesus, we rely on you: help us on our way again.

Lector: If we forget your promise of mercy:

All: Jesus, we rely on you: help us on our way again.

► *Together we pray a decade of the rosary.*

We walk towards the Esplanade without entering the chapel of the Apparitions, as we will go through the Holy Door.

2. “Come unto me ...”

(At the first flagstone)

Mariette was prevented from meeting the Beautiful Lady. On Wednesday, January 18th, Mariette secretly leaves the house. When Mary appears, she leads the little visionary to the spring for the first time and asks her to push her hands into the water.

Zacchaeus is inhabited by the desire to see Jesus, but the crowd prevents from doing so. Smart as he is, our tax collector finds a way to achieve his goal. He precedes the crowd and climbs a sycamore-fig tree. From this high seat, hidden by branches and leaves, he could see Jesus without being seen.

We continue reading in the Gospel:

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” (v. 4-5)

Zacchaeus knows the city like the back of his hand, he knows where Jesus must go along. He recognizes within himself more than a need, more than a desire, but a necessity. It looks as if he wanted to ‘enforce’ a meeting at last. He chooses a spot where Jesus has to pass. In his tree, he feels hidden from the onlookers. He can finally see Jesus.

Surprise! When Jesus approaches the sycamore-fig tree, he looks up. Zaccheus said to himself: "I must see this Jesus!" In the gaze of Jesus, there is something like an answer: "Me too, I must absolutely see you!"

Hymn p 7-8

But the surprise is only just beginning. Indeed, Jesus says: "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." Jesus knows him, since He calls him by his name. He has already known us before we knew Him, He has seen us before we saw him.

"Come down immediately.": Jesus does not want Zacchaeus to remain at a distance: he wants closeness, intimacy; **"I must"**: it is the will of the Father; **"I must stay at your house..."**: it is an everlasting meeting with each of us, that the Lord wants; **"...today."**: means the meeting cannot be postponed until later, it is an urgent necessity.

► *Let's thank the Lord, as we proceed to the second flagstone:*

Chorus: Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

<i>Lector:</i> Lord, you know me and call me by my name.	Chorus
<i>Lector:</i> Lord, you have first loved us.	Chorus
<i>Lector:</i> Lord, you want to be close to us.	Chorus
<i>Lector:</i> Lord, you want to meet me and save me today.	Chorus
<i>Lector:</i> Lord, you want to stay in all of us.	Chorus

3. "Be merciful..."

(At the second flagstone)

The crowd has no understanding for the attitude of Jesus. Zacchaeus is indeed a notorious collaborator and has betrayed the Jewish people. People fail to understand how it is possible that Jesus invites himself to such a public sinner.

We continue reading the Gospel:

So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." (v. 6-7)

We are dealing here with a regular response to the goodness adopted by Jesus towards sinners who come to Him. "This is not fair!" Because Jesus knows Zacchaeus, He must know that he is an unjust man who has done evil. "This man is a sinner."

Jesus is well aware of that, but he looks beyond. Beyond all evil he sees a man who is able to do good. And he dares to trust the goodness which he has observed in the heart of Zacchaeus. This well-intentioned gaze of Jesus awakens the good that lies dormant in the tax collector.

Jesus is aware of the double standards: the measure of righteousness and that of mercy (cf. Lk 6.16-42). The measure of righteousness is summarized by two words: to judge and to condemn. Evil deeds are punished, even if this entails sending the perpetrator to prison. But does that truly help to overcome evil?

The measure of compassion is characterized by two quite different verbs: to give and to forgive. What is there to be given? A new chance to the wrongdoer, with the conviction he can change and even become a benefactor. The recommendation of Jesus is very clear: judge and condemn not, but forgive and give generously! "Give, and it will be given to you. (...) For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Lk 6,38) Be ye therefore merciful!

► *Let us ask for forgiveness:*

Lector: Jesus, You did not come to judge people.
 whereas we tend to judge and condemn others:

Chorus: A pure heart create for me, o God.

Lector: Jesus, You are gentle and humble of heart, whenever we think we are superior, whenever we are hard and unforgiving: **Chorus**

Lector: Jesus, You are patient and you give everyone time to repent, whenever we are lacking patience and confidence: **Chorus**

Lector: Jesus, You have forgiven those who have done evil, whenever we dream of revenge and want to repay evil with evil: **Chorus**

► *We go to the spring in silence...*

4. "Be merciful as the Father"

(at the spring)

The rest of the story shows us that Zacchaeus has become a new man; the mercy of Jesus has changed him and turned him into a merciful man. Zacchaeus had become rich. He collaborated with the Roman occupiers and abused the power he had received from them by extorting money from the taxpayers. Zacchaeus was one of those whom Pope Francis calls "the corrupt ones". But the goodness of Jesus has radically changed him deep down in his heart.

We continue reading in the Gospel:

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." (v. 8)

Until now, Zacchaeus was only concerned about his personal wealth. Suddenly he has a genuine concern for the poor. He recognizes the harm he has done and wants to make up for it. After the experience of mercy he becomes merciful in his actions himself. He performs deeds of mercy. He is as generous as a spring!

A spring is generous: it gives all the water and does not keep a single drop to itself. It is the image of the heavenly Father: the mercy flowing from the heart of the Father is infinite and inexhaustible...

► *We now go to the spring and draw from it the mercy of the Lord: may He turn us into merciful women and men.*

Hymn p 7-8

5. I shall always sing the mercy of the Lord

(on the way to the Holy Door)

► *Let us now make our way to the Holy Door, praying and singing and confessing the Lord's mercy: (Psalm 86)*

Chorus: Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo.

Hear me, Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.
Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who relies on you.
Chorus

**You are my God; have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long.
Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you. Chorus**

You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.
Hear my prayer, Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. **Chorus**

**When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me.
Among the gods there is none like you,
Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. Chorus**

All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.
For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God. **Chorus**

**Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness;
give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. Chorus**

I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.
For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths,
from the realm of the dead. **Chorus**

**Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me
they have no regard for you. Chorus**

(or a decade of the rosary.)

6. At the Holy Door:

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."
Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together.
That is where the tribes go up - the tribes of the Lord -
to praise the name of the Lord according to the statute given to Israel.
(Ps 112,1-4)*

The encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus was necessary: such is the will of the Father. Mission accomplished: for Zacchaeus became a new man.

We continue reading in the Gospel:

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (v. 9-10)

► *We now go through the Holy Door and sing our joy, with Zacchaeus and with all who, by the goodness of the Lord, have repented.*

Hymn p 7-8

Closing prayer:

You are the source of all goodness, and all mercy comes from You, Lord: let your Holy Spirit transform us with his gifts and may our hearts become truly loving hearts, in accordance with your will, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing:

May by the intercession of the Virgin of the Poor, the Lord encourage us to believe in the mercy of the Father. **Amen.**

May Jesus Christ give us the grace to live of His Mercy. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit strengthen us to bear witness to His Mercy. **Amen.**

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

► *We conclude our prayer track by singing of the Salve Regina:*

**Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.**

Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Evae.

**Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.**

Eia, ergo, advocata nostra,

illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte;

**et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exilium ostende.**

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

Intention: Pope Francis writes: *“May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.”* (Misericordiae Vultus, 14)

Incentives to translate the mercy into concrete actions, are made visible on the images under the arcades. They represent the corporal and the spiritual works of mercy.

Hymns :

What a friend we have in Jesus

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.
2. Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
3. Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge;
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield thee;
thou wilt find a solace there.

Amazing grace

Amazing grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come,
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand
years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

**Do not be afraid,
for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by your name;
you are mine.**

1. When you walk through the waters ,
I'll be with you;
you will never sink
beneath the waves.
2. When the fire is burning
all around you,
you will never be consumed
by the flames.
3. When the fear of loneliness
is looming,
then remember I am at your side.
4. When you dwell in the exile
of a stranger,
remember you are precious
in my eyes.
5. You are mine, O my child,
I am your Father,
and I love you with a perfect love.

As I kneel before you

As I kneel before you,
As I bow my head in prayer,
Take this day, make it yours
and fill me with your love.

***Ave Maria,
Gratia plena,
Dominus tecum,
Benedicta tu.***

All I have I give you,
Every dream and wish are yours,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of mine,
present them to my Lord.

As I kneel before you,
And I see your smiling face,
Ev'ry thought, ev'ry word
Is lost in your embrace.

“O PUREST OF CREATURES HYMN”

Lyrics:

O purest of creatures, sweet Mother, sweet Maid,
The one spotless womb wherein Jesus was laid,
All lost in the darkness we call upon thee,
And look to thy shining, bright Star of the Sea.

O fairest of virgins, sweet Mother, sweet Maid,
The God in His goodness with beauty arrayed.
He lovingly chose thee His mother to be;
He shone in thy shining, bright Star of the Sea.

Oh, may thy pure light on our souls ever shine;
And keep them unsullied and sinless as thine,
Till after this exile united we be,
Through ages unending, in glory with thee.