

# Catholic Faith Corner

Understanding, Teaching, and Living the Faith

Sea of Galilee at Sunrise



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## Five Ways to Show Mercy

by KATHLEEN GLAVICH, SND on [MARCH 18, 2015](#)  
in [BLOGS](#)



Pope Francis has just declared an Extraordinary Jubilee Year: a Year of Mercy, which will begin on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception this year. We have witnessed and been fascinated by this pope's numerous acts of mercy as he reaches out to the neediest of God's people. Of course, the greatest act of mercy is what we remember and celebrate during this Lenten season: how God reached out to us, his creatures sunk in misery because of sin, and gave us new hope. The death and rising of the Son of God saved us. We usually associate mercy with the corporal (bodily) acts of mercy, such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. But here are some other ways to be

merciful.

1. Have mercy on ourselves. When we make a mistake, we regret it. Our self-esteem shrivels and we feel bad. Sometimes we keep flogging ourselves for our wrongdoing. Dwelling on it casts a black cloud over our days and can even make us ill. Mercy relieves suffering. The Christian thing to do is to forgive ourselves and forget it. As song in the movie *Frozen* urges, "Let it go!" After all, God forgives us. We can also be



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I'm a Sister of Notre Dame, of Chardon, Ohio, the author of eighty-plus books on religious education and spirituality, including a novel, "The Fisherman's Wife: The Gospel According to St. Peter's Spouse." I enjoy giving talks and retreats and was a pastoral associate at St. Dominic Church. I also edit and self-publish books for others.

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merciful to ourselves by not being over-demanding. When faced with a decision like whether to take a day off, indulge in a snack, or go to a movie, we might imagine that a friend is in our position: What would we advise him or her?

2. Stop habits that annoy others. I suppose it's only human to do things that irk others, especially those with whom we live. Maybe we crack our knuckles, leave dishes in the sink, or drive too fast. These habits raise others' blood pressure or at least make them uncomfortable. We can have mercy on them by changing our ways, if it's only when we're in their presence!

3. Avoid saying "I told you so." We disagree on many occasions. We might say that the party is on Friday, and another person might insist that it is on Saturday. When there's been a disagreement and we've been proved right, it's tempting to say "I told you so" and gloat. Likewise, we might predict that something will happen if the other person acts in a certain way. (How often parents say things like, "Stop running. Someone's going to get hurt" and then someone is.) The other person is unhappy to be wrong to begin with, so rubbing it in is like putting salt in their wounds.

4. Offer help. When someone is in a pickle or is need of a helping hand, it's an act of mercy to assist them. Recall how grateful you were when someone changed a flat tire for you or gave you advice for a project you had undertaken. It's an act of mercy to take time to help someone even if you get nothing in return except the warm feeling that comes from doing a kind deed.

5. Don't bring up old failings. When someone has done something wrong, avoid reminding him or her of it over and over. All but one of the apostles deserted Jesus when he was arrested, but when he appeared to them as the risen Lord, he didn't bring this up. He just said, "Peace," even to Peter.

Can you add other ways we can be merciful just as our Father has been merciful to us?

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### About Sister Kathleen Glavich, SND

Jesus ordered us to make disciples of all nations and teach them. Mary Kathleen, a Sister of Notre Dame from Chardon, Ohio, responds to this call through writing, speaking, giving retreats, and teaching. Her motto, adopted from Eddie Doherty's gravesite, is "All my words for the Word!"

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**Mark Misencik** March 18, 2015 at 10:50 am



Hey Sister,

Your topic reminds me of a quote that has been attributed to Plato, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle".

Words to live by.

People tend to think that they are the only ones with problems and their problems are the only ones that matter. We have become self-centered. I hate to say it, but I fall into that category more times than I would like to admit.

Thoughts?

Mark

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** March 18, 2015 at 11:04 am



Mark, my novice directress echoed that quotation. She taught us not to judge others because you never know what burdens they are carrying.

As for being self-centered, welcome to the human race! We are obliged to take care of ourselves and "Love others as you love yourself" assumes that we love ourselves, but carrying that to the extreme where we forget to love others is wrong.

REPLY

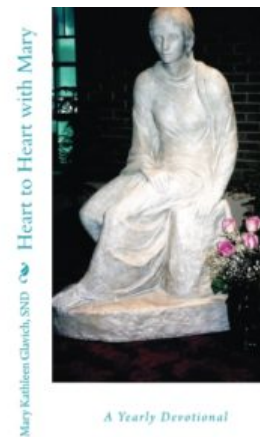
**melannie** March 18, 2015 at 11:21 am



Dear Kathleen,

You've given us five good, practical, and concrete examples. Numbers 1 and 3 struck me today...I also liked Mark's reminder. It's a quote I've used when I give talks and retreats. So thanks to both of you for your words today!

Sr. Melannie



### Newest Book

In "Heart to Heart with Mary: A Yearly Devotional" Our Blessed Mother speaks to us every day of the year and a suggestion is provided for a response. It is similar to the popular book "Jesus Calling" and can be found on Amazon or purchased from me.

### Featured Book

Totally Catholic! A Catechism for Kids and Their Parents and Teachers

Do you wish you had a simple, child-friendly summary of what Catholics believe? This book took first place in the Association of Catholic Publishers awards 2014 in the category of Children's Books. It can be purchased from Pauline Books and Media or from me. (\$14.95)

### A Heavenly Book

Do you believe in angels? Most people do. The Catholic Companion to Angels offers heavenly facts about these majestic creatures, confirming that you can turn to them for help. Uniquely, The Angels comes with three covers (statue, stained-glass, or painting). Choose the one you like best.

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** March 18, 2015 at 11:23 am



You're welcome, Melannie. You made me go back and read #1 and #3!

REPLY

**Gabrielle Renoir** March 18, 2015 at 2:19 pm



I love small acts of kindness that we really don't have to do, but do anyway out of love for God and love for our fellow humans. My life becomes so much richer being on either end. I go to a very large church, one of those where the people sit in a semi-circle, with large grounds, and a lot of members. One day, as I was hobbling up the walk after my accident with crutches (I've now graduated to a cane), a lovely girl of about 15 saw me and waited and held the door for me even though she had to wait about 2-3 minutes and others went in after her, who, presumably, could have held the door, and even though I, myself had a free hand to open one of the doors (they are quite heavy, though). I don't know that girl, but I keep her in my prayers. She was so sweet to wait to help someone she saw was having a bit of a difficult time. She's as beautiful inside as she is on the outside. Another time, right after I had joined that parish, I was at a Mass few people attended. There were far fewer EMHCs than usual, and I got confused about which line to get in and missed taking the Precious Blood of Our Lord. One woman saw that and came to me in the pew as I was praying after receiving Jesus' Body to give me his Blood as well. I was very surprised. I've attended churches where no one would take the time or the trouble to do that. One could see in her face that her whole being glowed with the love of God. I would add: Take to the time to thank someone for the things they do for you. So many people take small - and even large - acts of kindness as their due. If a friend pays for your movie tickets or popcorn, thank him or her for their generosity. If they always bring you coffee or a sweet treat like my favorite - and orange scone - every time they go out, compliment them on their thoughtfulness. Most people don't have to do anything for us, those who do, do so out of love or loving kindness. They deserve our heartfelt thanks.

A lovely post, Sister Kathleen, and lovely ideas, which I will implement, not only during Lent, but all year round, every year.

REPLY

Available from ACTA Publications and me.  
(\$10.00)

### My First Novel!

The Fisherman's Wife is the story of St. Peter's spouse, the long-suffering but delightful woman who puts up with Peter and his obsession with the itinerant preacher named Jesus. Through her we meet Peter, Jesus, and other biblical characters. In Capernaum she witnesses Jesus' healings and hears his words. The book is based on the Gospels, legends, and what is known about first-century Jewish women. The rest is sheer imagination. Order directly from me FOR AN AUTOGRAPHED COPY at [kglavich@ndec.org](mailto:kglavich@ndec.org).

### A Bit of Humor

A Slow Student During indoor recess, the third and fourth graders were playing school. Taking part in the game, the teacher, Sister Janet, sat at a child's desk. Adam, who was playing the teacher, came up to her and asked, "And just how many years have you been kept back?" (from "Why Is Jesus in the Microwave?")

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**Gabrielle Renoir** March 18, 2015 at 2:25 pm



Sister, I love your bits of humor on the site. (My favorite was the poor girl who was mistakenly called "Parthenon!"). My own aunt was instructing her students in making Mother's Day cards on year. After some time during which she left them on their own to do their work, she looked up from her gradebook, picked up a card on the desk and said, "Oh, look at this gorgeous one! Now this is the way to make a Mother's Day card! Whose is it?" The students responded as one, "That's the one you made, Sister Elizabeth!"

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** March 18, 2015 at 2:39 pm



Thank you, Gabrielle, for your insightful comment about kindness and also for letting me know that you read the funny anecdotes on my home page. Any day now I'm expecting to find at my door my latest book called *Why Is Jesus in the Microwave?* It is a collection of these true funny stories from the classrooms of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

REPLY

**Ellen Kolb** March 18, 2015 at 10:17 pm



This particular act of kindness is a challenge for me: listen without planning what to say next. I called a relative yesterday who has just seen her life turned upside down by some unexpected news. I started going into Advice mode: "I've got to tell her about this and that and what I'd do in her place ..." Of course, none of that was what she needed. Something (a mouthy guardian angel, maybe?) told me to shut up and listen - and I did. I should do that more often.

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** March 19, 2015 at 8:39 am



You make a good point, Ellen: showing mercy by being silent. Thank you!

REPLY

## About the Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon, Ohio

The Sisters of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio, belong to an international congregation of more than two thousand apostolic women religious. We are one in mind and one in heart for the transformation of the world in Christ.



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**Fr Jonathan Hill** March 20, 2015 at 7:33 pm



A good post, and beautifully practical. Regarding point No.1, I always remember a priest talking about sin and saying that it is not hard to get forgiveness from God, but it is often hard for us to forgive ourselves.

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** March 21, 2015 at 7:43 am



Thanks for your comment reminding us of God's mercy, Father. Lent is an especially good time to realize this.

REPLY

**Gabrielle Renoir** March 22, 2015 at 10:56 am



Father, your post saying it is not difficult to obtain forgiveness from God but hard for us to forgive ourselves reminds me of Judas (that and the fact that it is Lent, as Sister Kathleen reminded us, and getting very close to Good Friday). I've always seen Judas as a tragic and heartbreaking figure rather than a hated one, though I know many people who hate him, and I'll admit, I do not really understand him. I don't know why he betrayed Our Lord. Surely it wasn't for the money. He would receive no power with his betrayal. He seemed to love the Lord, and Jesus certainly trusted him. After all, he was treasurer for the group. Judas, I feel, did repent his betrayal. He flung the money back at those who had given it to him, and ultimately, he hung himself, from the so-called "Judas tree." The real tragedy of Judas, as I see it, is that he did not ask forgiveness of God. After Jesus had been condemned, Judas could have asked his forgiveness. I'll admit, it would be very difficult to live with oneself after betraying the sinless Son of God and sending him to his death, but in reality, all humans betray God when they lack faith (and with other actions). All humans sin, and it is humankind, collectively, who sent Jesus to the Cross. I believe Judas was truly repentant, and I know if he had been, Jesus would have forgiven him. His repentance and love, and I do believe he loved Our Lord despite his betrayal of him, might have strengthened Jesus during his ordeal on the Cross. The foot of the Cross is where Judas belonged, not swinging from a tree. All of us sinner belong at the foot of the Cross, and I hope all of us will find time to share Jesus' passion in early April.

REPLY

**Mark Misencik** March 22, 2015 at 9:32 pm



Hey Gabrielle,

Nice post.

If I could add my two cents. The one thing we do not know is what Judas did with his last dying breath. I would like to think he asked for forgiveness.

Mark

REPLY

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**Gabrielle Renoir** March 23, 2015 at 1:57 pm



Thank you, Mark. Your two cents are worth millions, and I would like to think that, too.

I wish you a blessed Lenten season and a joyous Easter.

Gabrielle

REPLY

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