



[If you haven't already, begin your meal with meal prayer, then take turns reading these boxes aloud, following the directions where applicable]

Blessed are the Merciful

Recall that before Easter, we were exploring the beatitudes - the attitudes that help us follow Christ and become saints. We last discussed a "hunger and thirst for righteousness," which disciples develop by practicing the first three beatitudes (poverty, mourning, and meekness). Then, thirsty disciples pursue the mercy, purity, and peacemaking of the next few beatitudes (vv. 7-9). This week, we look at verse 7: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy. Mercy is love that sees another's pain and chooses compassion, even though that person deserves a punishment. Mercy is kindness in the face of unkindness. Mercy is letting go of being "right" in order to save a relationship. Mercy is remembering that the person who took the piece you wanted is deeply loved by God. Mercy is keeping your eye on the bigger picture of salvation, and not getting caught up in the daily annoyances. Last Sunday we celebrated Divine Mercy Sunday, where God offers his merciful love to us in abundance. By receiving God's mercy deeply and regularly, we learn what it means to be merciful. We learn the treasure of being forgiven. We, too, are called to practice this merciful love in the way we love others and the way we forgive others abundantly.

Month of the Eucharist

Easter Sunday often falls in April, and when it does fall in March, the Easter season continues on through all of April. In essence, April is a month of Easter, and during the Easter celebration we remember the Eucharistic sacrifice Christ gave us through his death and resurrection. Therefore, April is the "Month of the Eucharist" in the Church. The Eucharist (Holy Communion), simply is Christ's body, blood, soul, and divinity under the appearance of bread and wine. It is not a symbol of Christ, but rather, it is truly and really Jesus Christ! The institution of the Eucharist started at the Last Supper by Jesus Himself. It is in the Most Holy Eucharist that the veil between Heaven and earth is the shortest and we receive Our Lord, Most High. This is why we kneel at Mass during the moments when the bread and wine become Jesus and when the Eucharist is present. Beyond this reverence at Mass, we can improve our devotion to the Eucharist in many ways - learning more about the Mass, saying a special prayer before or after communion, attending adoration, and more!

Discussion

[These questions are a spark for conversation, not a strict outline.]

- What was your experience of Divine Mercy Sunday?
- If someone asked what is mercy, what would you say?
- If the more you give mercy, the more you receive it from God. What do you receive from grudges and bitterness?
- What are ways that you can practice forgiveness? What ways can you show your forgiveness?

Activity & Prayer

[For this activity section, you will need the additional resource provided by the parish. If you don't have it, you can download it on our website]

Spend some time making a list of the ways in which God has been merciful to you or your family, forgiving your sins and showing you abundant kindness. Think of at least one practical way you can be more merciful this week. Optional, play a game of mercy tag (described on the handout).

Review the list of ideas for Eucharistic Devotion and choose one to focus on during the month of April as a family.

End by praying the Beatitudes Prayer

Lord, make me poor spirit, so I can receive the kingdom of heaven.

Lord, when I mourn, help me find comfort.

Lord, make me meek, so that I may inherit the land.

Lord, help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness, so I may be satisfied.

Lord, make me merciful, so I may obtain your mercy.

Lord, make me pure of heart, so I may see you.

Lord, help me to make peace, so I may be called your child.

Lord, when I am persecuted for righteousness' sake, show me your kingdom.

Extras

Just a few examples of items available on FORMED.org about the Eucharist:

Audio talk by Scott Hahn:

<https://watchformed.org/video/s/the-eucharist-by-dr-scott-hahn>

Video Bible Study Series:

<https://watchformed.org/lectio-eucharist-with-dr-brant-pitre>

Video for Children:

<https://watchformed.org/the-eucharist-for-little-children>

Search "Eucharist" on FORMED.org for many more options!

Sacramental Life

This week's journal prompt for first reconciliation/communion: You will be receiving your First Communion next week - what are your thoughts or feelings? How might you prepare well?

This week's confirmation work is: Complete your letter to the Bishop sharing why you wish to be confirmed. Letters need to be turned into the parish office by Friday, April 21. See the website for directions and an outline for the letter.

Looking Ahead

For Next Week, April 26:

- See the parish or website for additional handouts and coloring pages

Upcoming:

- First Communion is the weekend of April 22/23
- Confirmation will be May 7 at 2:00 at St. Augustine

