**"Is Mercy over?"**

A few months ago we celebrated the closing of the Year of Mercy in the Church. Many may think that at the close of this extraordinary year of mercy, we can no longer have the grace to receive the mercy of God in our lives. That is why I want to reflect on the Apostolic Letter ***Misericordia et Miseria*** that our Holy Father wrote at the end of the year of mercy.

Pope Francis always insists that the Church should be an instrument of the grace of God especially in teaching and giving Mercy to all who seek it from the heart. In this Apostolic Letter, Pope Francis invites us to live this Mercy of God in our lives and in our communities. "Mercy must always be lived and celebrated in our communities." Here I want to invite you to reflect on how mercy is experienced in your community. *How do I experience the mercy of God in the ministry to which I belong in my parish? Am I an instrument of mercy in my family and parish community?* I invite you to ask these questions with a sincere heart, and if we have not been instruments of mercy in our families and parishes ask God's forgiveness and ask for the grace to experience the mercy of God and thus be able to share it with others wherever we meet.

Pope Francis invites us to be even more merciful because if the church and the parish communities do not experience mercy, then the mission of the Church is lost. "Mercy is not a parenthesis in the life of the Church, mercy in the very existence of the Church." This lets us know that although the year of extraordinary mercy is over, now the task and mission continue of bringing the mercy of God to all people and places where we go. Let us carry with our witness of faith what the mercy of God has done in our lives, and le tus be living instruments of this mercy of which the world is so in need. Let us imitate our Lord Jesus Christ who was always an instrument of mercy for all who met Him and as revealed in the Gospels. Pope Francis tells us: "Forgiveness is the most visible sign of the love of the Father, which Jesus has wanted to reveal throughout his life."

Brothers and sisters, the mercy of God is not over; let us take advantage of this spiritual gift as beautiful as the mercy of God, not only in our own life but also in the life of our parishes and ministries so that we may be living instruments of the compassionate love of God both among us who believe and with those who do not share what we believe. May the Holy Spirit enlighten and inspire us to open our hearts to the mercy of God. "Nothing of what a repentant sinner places before the mercy of God remains without the embrace of his forgiveness."