

The boundless limits of God's mercy

Homily by Fr John Corrigan, priest of the Diocese of Ballarat in Australia.

Auschwitz. The most notorious concentration camp in history. The commandant of Auschwitz was Rudolf Höss, who personally perfected the Nazis' mass murder techniques. During his four year leadership at Auschwitz, three million prisoners were killed. Survivors of Auschwitz referred to him as an animal. Not merely an evil man, but an animal.



A year after Europe was liberated, Höss was captured and tried for war crimes. He was sentenced to death, and the court declared Höss should be executed at Auschwitz, where he had killed so many people. Höss was terrified — not of death, but of life in Polish prisons, where he would be at the mercy of guards whose relatives he had killed. He had already endured the cruelty of his British captors. He was convinced that the Poles would torture him. Sure enough, he was placed into the custody of Polish guards who were personally impacted by his crimes. Some of them showed him their Auschwitz tattoo numbers.

His Polish guards, however, treated him well. He was astonished. They showed him mercy. Mercy is the love we know we do not deserve. Höss knew he didn't deserve the guards' respect. Their restraint. Their mercy. But that's what he received. This was the moment of his conversion. Höss was brought up Catholic, but he had renounced the faith when he was a teenager. Now he asked for a priest.

In 1947, however, wounds were still raw. No priest would come. At a human level, it's understandable. Rudolf Höss had the blood of 3 million people crying out to heaven for justice. Not a priest could be found, willing to absolve the animal of Auschwitz. Then Höss requested a priest by name: Father Władysław Lohn, a Jesuit whose community had perished in Auschwitz years earlier. Only Fr Lohn was spared, because he was away at the time of arrest. Upon his return, he had sought the Commandant's mercy, but he was refused and sent packing. Now Höss begged the guards to find him. And they did find him — at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Krakow, where he was chaplain. The priest came and spent several hours with Höss. At the end, Höss received absolution. The animal of Auschwitz was told: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace."

After his death, a letter Höss wrote was published in the country's newspapers. In that letter he wrote:

"In Polish prisons I experienced for the first time what human kindness is. Despite all that has happened I have experienced humane treatment which I could never have expected, and which has deeply shamed me . . .

"I have come to the bitter recognition that I have sinned gravely against humanity . . . I caused unspeakable suffering . . . but the Lord God forgave me. And now I ask the Polish people for forgiveness."

This story is an outstanding example of divine mercy for two reasons:

In the first place, it demonstrates the boundless limits of God's mercy. It doesn't matter what you have done; if you approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation with sincere contrition, God will forgive you.

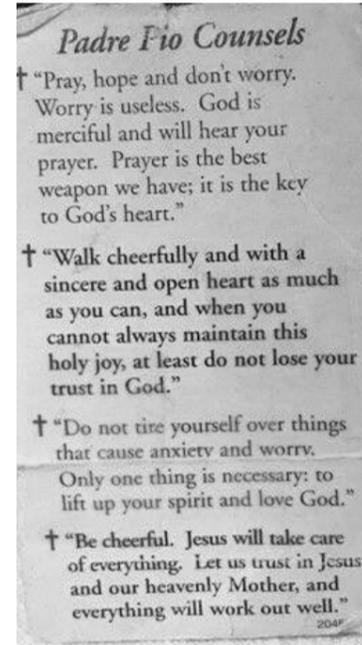
In the second place, it demonstrates the power of mercy to transform people. To change them. That's a power you and I have received from the Holy Spirit. The mercy we show others has the power to transform them.

We can only give what we have received. So let's renew our trust in God's mercy. Let's resolve — especially if it's been a long time — to make a good confession; to receive the Sacrament of Divine Mercy. And then, especially towards those who have hurt us, let's resolve to be ministers of mercy — the love we know we do not deserve.

THE MEMORARAE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you have revealed them who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. In this faith I intend to live and die. Amen.

Act of Hope

O Lord God, I hope by your grace for the pardon of all my sins and after life here to gain eternal happiness because you have promised it who are infinitely powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful. In this hope I intend to live and die. Amen.

Act of Love

O Lord God, I love you above all things and I love my neighbour for your sake because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love. In this love I intend to live and die. Amen.

Forming habits of prayer begins with little evocations of God throughout the day: a fifteen-second morning offering, a five-second prayer of thanksgiving for having been delivered to work safely, a silent petition for a family member who seems troubled. In this way we become accustomed to appealing to the Lord when trouble finds us.

SCOTT HAHN

"Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation for cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness."
~ St. John Chrysostom

NOTICES FOR THE PARISH

Hall Reminder: If you have for any reason taken hand towels from the Hall, please return them. Thank you.

NOTICES FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

Work with Caritas: "Caritas has three vacancies currently being advertised. They are the full time Communications, Marketing & Fundraising Advisor, part time Communications & Marketing Assistant and a short term contract role of Social Justice Week Advocate. If you're interested in joining the Caritas team and contributing to the Church's work in social justice. Please email catharinavossen@micahpartners.co.nz or visit <http://www.caritas.org.nz/get-involved/work-us> for further details."

St Thomas More Parish warmly invites you to join us in celebrating our 35 years as a parish in Glenfield, Auckland. Mass will be celebrated on 6 May 2018 at 10.00 am with Bishop Pat Dunn DD at St Thomas More Church, 336 Wairau Road, Glenfield, followed by morning tea in the parish hall. That evening, a concert will be held at 7.30 pm at Rosmini College Auditorium, 36 Dominion Street, Takapuna. (Doors open 7.00 pm.)

Consultation on the Future of Hato Petera College: Bishop Patrick Dunn, as Proprietor of Hato Petera College, is undertaking a second consultation process about the possible cancellation of the Integration Agreement for Hato Petera College. This consultation process is being undertaken by mutual agreement with the Minister of Education, under section 430 of the Education Act 1989. Following due process, this could ultimately result in the closure of the school. All interested parties are invited to read the 2018 Hato Petera Consultation information available on the Diocesan website www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz and make a submission. Submissions are due by 5pm on 14 May 2018. They must be in writing either via email to hatopeteraconsulting@cda.org.nz or by post to Hato Petera Consultation, Catholic Diocese of Auckland, Private Bag 47904, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144.

Mass of the Neophytes - 5:00pm Vigil Mass of the Ascension, Saturday 12 May, Cathedral of St Patrick and St Joseph, Validated parking available, All are welcome.

The Great Cathedral Quiz Night -28 April 7.30 pm—10.30 pm in Liston Hall at the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Joseph, 43 Wyndham Street, Auckland CBD. Get together a team of 8. Tables of 8 are \$120 and come with complimentary Wine and Pizza. Book now at the Cathedral Office 09 303 4509 or email info@stpatricks.org.nz.

NEXT SUNDAY:

22 April 2018

4th Sunday of Easter (Yr B)

Acts 4:8-12; 1 Jn 3:1-2; Jn 10:11-18;

LITURGY ROSTER

Readers: R. Lopez, C. Tagiilima
Prayers of the Faithful: F. Xavier
Offertory: Cardoza Family
Special Ministers: P. Vernon

CHURCH CLEANING ROSTER

Leaumoana Family

SUNDAY CUP OF TEA ROSTER

School Holidays

FLOWER ARRANGING ROSTER

M. Leaumoana

ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK

15 Apr: James Shaw
16 Apr: Fr Frank McHale, Patrick Jury
17 Apr: John Brown, Vice Michotich
18 Apr: Siu Shiwa Subermani
19 Apr: Jack Bugler
20 Apr: Davina Paterson
21 Apr: Mary Donohue

PARISH FINANCES

Parish	\$ 1,065.33
Priests	\$ 532.67
Total Cash	\$ 1,598.00

Offering Envelopes



Pledge Envelopes - We still have envelopes in the Parish Office waiting for collection.

Donation Receipts: The receipts for donations will be available next Sunday.

Wanting to donate: If you would like to donate to the Parish using the envelope system or through automatic payments.

Please contact Ellen on 8346677
(Tues, Thurs, Fri from 10am till 2pm)

Vocations:

Next Sunday is the World Day of Vocations. In his Letter for this Day, Pope Francis reminds us: 'God comes silently and discreetly, without imposing on our freedom. Thus it can happen that his voice is drowned out by the many worries and concerns that fill our minds and hearts.'

Let us all offer one prayer this week for the young people that we know. Let us pray that they will hear the voice of the Good Shepherd amidst the daily events of their lives.