

# Lenten Reflection

Monday, Second Week of Lent March 13, 2017



By Sister Judy Connor, CDP

In this portion of Luke's Sermon on the Plain, Jesus offers his newly appointed apostles a glimpse of the nature of God as merciful and how, with their lives, they may respond to this mercy.

Unfortunately, what we so often see in our world is women and men chasing after the world's power and often a virtue like mercy is lost in the commotion. Mercy, however, is not a relinquishment of power, but rather an exercise of power for the sake of another. If we can choose mercy, then the choice to be unmerciful must also be an option and therein lies power.

William Shakespeare, in *The Merchant of Venice*, offered this understanding of what it is to be merciful.

*"The quality of mercy is not strained,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore...  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That, in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy..."*

Jesus tells us that, as his disciples, what we do with power is of paramount importance. His dealings with the Pharisees and his words to Pontius Pilate regarding Pilate's own power attest to this. We too have the power to judge, condemn, refuse forgiveness, and we too have the power to extend ourselves in mercy to the world.

Let us pray that acceptance be our scepter, forgiveness our crown, and mercy our throne this day and all days.

