

Fr. Bill's Online Study

33 Days to Merciful Love by Fr Michael Gaitley

March 12 – Day 1

1/33 today we also begin our "33 Days to Merciful Love" with Fr Michael Gaitley.

Today Fr Gaitley explores the Genesis or root of sin, not only the first sin of Adam and Eve but all sin: a lack of trust/faith in God which results in a choice to be disobedient. Think about it. Reflect on your sins. How many would disappear if we simply trusted the Lord enough to follow His will. I dare say "all of them." What do you think?

Our prayer: "Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy. Help me better to know the great and unsurpassable goodness of God." I also encourage you to offer three more prayers: pray this prayer on every Brad of your Rosary: "Jesus, I trust in you." Second, pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3pm, if possible. Lastly, offer your Mass today for this intention: may we grow in faith.

Let us pray for one another as we begin our journey!

March 13 – Day 2

2/33 today we continue our Lenten journey with Fr Michael Gaitley's book "33 Days to Merciful Love".

Today Fr Gaitley focuses on the Genesis story of Abraham - our father in faith. It is through trust/faith in God that we are able to "trust God's promises" and "hope against all hope" and to withstand the temptations which lead us into sin. God is faithful. God is merciful. God is love!

Our prayer: "Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy. Please give me such trust in God's Word that I might even hope against hope." I also encourage you to offer two more prayers: pray this prayer on every bead of your Rosary: "Jesus, I trust in you." Second, pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy (at 3pm, if possible). Lastly, reach out to someone in need. May God bless you!

March 14 – Day 3

3/33. Today, Fr Gaitley, in "33 Days to Merciful Love", introduces Mary, the mother of faith. He encourages us to contemplate Mary's leap of faith - when the angel proclaimed that she, a virgin, would conceive a child - and not any child - but the Messiah - the Son of God! "She believed God's Word, even when it seemed impossible. She hoped against hope, believing that, as the angel said, 'with God nothing will be impossible.'" What do you think?

Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy. Help me to believe that with God nothing will be impossible.

Please also add a Chaplet or at least pray "Jesus, I trust in you!" On each bead of your rosary. May God bless you!!

March 15 - Day 4

4/33. Today's reading is profound as Fr Gaitley talks about our Blessed Mother's faith during the "hidden years" before Jesus begins his public ministry. It is one thing to have faith when God does extraordinary things, it is quite another to see God in the ordinary events of our life. Often that is the leap of faith we are called to make.

On another note, yesterday's reading needed a bit more clarification. Sometimes we can be too eager in our quest to honor Mary. I don't think it is quite right to say that Jesus is not the supreme model of faith (pg. 31). He is "the way, the truth, and the life" and is the perfect model of faith ... in fact that is the reason He was incarnate ... fully man - he provided the perfect model of how to love Our Heavenly Father and our neighbor. (I mention this only because earlier this week I had to convince a group of children that Mary was not God.)

"Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy. Help me to believe in God and his love for me, even when the darkness surrounds me." Please also pray the chaplet of mercy and "Jesus, I trust in you" each bead of the rosary.

May God bless you!

March 16 – Day 5

5/33 As we continue our journey with Fr Gaitley to our consecration to Divine Mercy on April 23, we are again invited to contemplate our Blessed Mother - this time at the foot of the cross. At some point in our life - all of us will face an hour of terrible darkness when all seems lost such as the death of a loved one or physical or mental calamity. Mary provides an eloquent witness of how to hope against hope when all seems lost.

Not to be too nit picky, but I was concerned with the author's contention in the first paragraph that Mary "had" to be witness and give consent to the death of Jesus. While I can't check Father's source at the present time, it is important to remember that Mary had free will and did not "have" to do anything. She was there by choice ... to lovingly support her Son in His darkest hour. This is an important distinction because in doing so, she provided an important witness of how to be merciful to those in need. Sometimes we don't have to "do" anything. We simply have to be there.

There is no biblical evidence that she "consented" to the Lord's death. The Gospels do not comment on what she thought. Personally, I find the idea that she "consented" to the crucifixion to be absurd. But again, I can't check Fr Gaitley's source at this time.

I was happy the the author confirmed that Mary "did not fully understand" and that she "stood in darkness." I agree 100%! If Jesus prayed "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me" (Mt 27:46) - I'm sure her prayer was the same!!! To have fear or to have doubts doesn't mean you are a bad Christian. It means you are alive and perhaps facing great pain or evil Evil itself.

But ultimately, we must remember that God does love us - no matter what - and is faithful, that He suffered and died or our salvation, and that He will come again in glory!

"Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy. Help me to believe in God and his love for me even when the darkness surrounds me." Please add a Chaplet and "Jesus, I trust in You" on every bead of the rosary.

March 17 – Day 6

6/33. As we begin our sixth day of our "33 Days to Merciful Love", Fr Gaitley presents the relationship between faith or trust in God and His merciful love AND gratitude or thanksgiving AND true joy.

Mary was blessed because she trusted in the words of the angel - that she was chosen to be the mother of our Savior (Lk 1:42) but Mary understood this in context of God's merciful love. This is clear from her response to Elizabeth: a song of praise and thanksgiving - the Magnificat. The Magnificat is the quintessential song of Divine Mercy.

The amazing thing about this. God has the same message for us. Each of us is called to bring Christ into the world - to be a theotokos or God-bearer. We do this through our acts, words, and thoughts of mercy. We are called to share Christ's mercy with others each and every day of our lives. In fact, each moment of our lives! This leads to a song of praise and thanksgiving and ultimately true joy!

Let's again explore the context of the Magnificat. Mary's attentive to the voice of the angel and accepts the promise that she would become the mother of the Messiah. She then immediately leaves to visit Elizabeth ... a great work of mercy and love. When she arrives, Elizabeth confirms the message of the angel with a blessing and Mary responds with her song of praise and thanksgiving - the Magnificat.

Listening to God and accepting his will + share His mercy + offering to Him your thanks and praise = true joy ... here on earth and forever in heaven!

Is it possible to thank God for all things? Yes, if we trust in His mercy. God doesn't cause bad things to happen in our lives but He does use them to make wonderful things. He uses them to help us grow in Spirit, to stretch our hearts so they are larger to receive more graces, to challenge us to become the saints He knows we can become. We simply need to trust in

Him. Ask for Mercy, Be Merciful, and Completely trust in mercy as you offer your song of praise and thanksgiving. The result: true joy for ever with Him in heaven!

"Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy,

Fill my heart with a faith-filled song of praise and thanksgiving, to God for His tender love and mercy!" Also, be sure to pray the Chaplet and if possible pray the Stations of the Cross.

Do an act of mercy! And I also encourage you to pray the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55).

Last but not least, Happy St Patrick 'a Day ... may you listen to the angels as he did, share His merciful love as he did, offer praise to God, and, like Patrick, experience true joy!