

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Message to Celebration of Year of Mercy in the Americas

### Pope Francis

Church leaders might have great plans and theories, but if they lack mercy, their “pastoral work will be cut off midway,” Pope Francis told bishops of the Americas. In religious education programs, seminaries, parishes, bishops’ conferences, clergy meetings “and even our way of doing theology,” he said, “it is about learning to show mercy.” In a 28-minute video message broadcast Aug. 27 to church leaders from South and North America meeting in Bogota, Colombia, for a continental congress for the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis told them that “mercy is

*“Any treatment lacking mercy, however just it may seem, ends up turning into mistreatment.”*

learned from experience — in our own lives first.” He said, “It is learned from sensing that God continues to trust in us and to call us to be his missionaries, that he constantly sends us forth to treat our brothers and sisters in the same way that he has treated us.” Pope Francis added, “Our peoples already have enough suffering in their lives; they do not need us to add to it.” Being merciful is not about being generically nice, Pope Francis added, but is about looking for specific ways to help individuals recognize their sins and accept God’s mercy. In showing mercy to sinners, God shows he trusts that they will change, the pope said. “Far from a mere beautiful word, mercy is the concrete act by which God seeks to relate to his children,” he added. The pope spoke in Spanish; a Vatican translation of the message follows, copyright © 2016 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

■ welcome the initiative of the Council of Latin American Episcopal Conferences (CELAM) and the Pontifical Commission on Latin America, in association with the bishops of the United States and Canada — this makes me think of the synod on America — to make possible this continentwide opportunity to celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy. I am pleased to know that all the countries of America have been able to take part. Given the many attempts to fragment, divide and set our peoples at odds, such events help us to broaden our horizons and to continue

*continued on page 226*



### contents

- 225 Message to Celebration of Year of Mercy in the Americas  
*by Pope Francis*
- 228 USCCB Labor Day Statement  
*by Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski*
- 231 Q&A on Criminal Charges Being Dismissed Against Archdiocese  
*by Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda and The Catholic Spirit*
- 233 Personal Thoughts on the Months Ahead  
*by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput*
- 234 Abide in Christ: Faithful Citizenship  
*by Archbishop John C. Wester*
- 236 Back-to-School Mass  
*by Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl*
- 237 Shameful That Clean Water Is Not a Priority  
*by Cardinal Peter Turkson*
- 238 Joint Declaration on Promotion of Culture of Encounter, Dialogue and Peace  
*by U.S. Catholic and Iranian Muslim Leaders*
- 240 Datebook and On File

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