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Misericordia et Misera: Apostolic Letter for the Conclusion of the Year of Mercy

Pope Francis

Acknowledging and sharing God's mercy is a permanent part of the Christian life, so initiatives undertaken during the special Year of Mercy must continue, Pope Francis said. "Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the church," the pope wrote in an apostolic letter, "Misericordia et Misera" ("Mercy and Misery"), that he signed Nov. 20 at the end of the Year of Mercy. The Vatican released the text the next day. The Catholic Church's focus on God's mercy must continue

"Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father."

with individual acts of kindness, assistance to the poor and, particularly, with encouraging Catholics to participate in the sacrament of reconciliation and making it easier for them to do so, the pope wrote. Pope Francis said he formally was giving all priests permanent permission to grant absolution to those who confess to having procured an abortion. While many bishops around the world, and almost all bishops in the United States, routinely grant that faculty to all their priests, Pope Francis had made it universal during the Holy Year. The pope also formally extended the provision he made during the Year of Mercy of recognizing as valid the sacramental absolution received by the faithful from priests of the Society of St. Pius X, the traditionalist society founded by the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. Pope Francis also suggested the church mark the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time as the World Day of the Poor. The apostolic letter follows, copyright © 2016 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

TO ALL WHO READ THIS APOSTOLIC LETTER MERCY AND PEACE

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isericordia et misera is a phrase used by St. Augustine in recounting the story of Jesus' meeting with the woman taken in adultery (cf. Jn 8:1-11). It would be difficult to imagine a more beautiful or apt way of expressing the mystery of God's love when it touches the sinner: "The two of them alone

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Dec. 1, 2016
Volume 46
Number 27