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“Implore divine mercy”

For each one of us, as for Lazarus, it was really a *veni foras* - come out - which got us moving. How sad it is to see those who are still dead and do not know the power of God's mercy! Renew your holy joy, for opposite the man who is decomposing without Christ, there is another who has risen with him. (The Forge, 476)

4 December

It is good for us to consider the wiles of these enemies of the soul: the disorder of sensuality and easy-going superficiality, the folly of reason that rejects God, the cavalier presumption that snuffs out love for both God and creatures. All these obstacles are real enough, and they can indeed cause us a great deal of trouble. For these very reasons the liturgy invites us to implore divine mercy: "To you, o Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust, let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me" [1], as we prayed in the introit. And in the offertory we shall go back to the same idea: "Let none that wait for you be put to shame."

Now that the time of our salvation is approaching, it is consoling to hear from the lips of St Paul that "when the goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not by the works of justice which we

have done, but according to his mercy" [2].

If you leaf through the holy Scripture, you will discover constant references to the mercy of God. Mercy fills the earth [3]. It extends to all his children [4], and is "all around us" [5]. It "watches over me" [6]. It "extends to the heavens" [7] to help us, and has been continually "confirmed" [8]. God in taking care of us as a loving father looks on us in his mercy [9] — a mercy that is "tender" [10], welcome as "rain-clouds" [11].

The life of Jesus Christ is a summary and compendium of the story of divine mercy: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" [12]. And on another occasion our Lord said: "Be merciful, therefore, even as your Father is merciful" [13]. (Christ is passing by, 7)

[1] Ps 24:1-2

[2] Tit 3:5

[3] Ps 32:5

[4] Sir 18:12

[5] Ps 31:10

[6] Ps 58:11

[7] Ps 33:8

[8] Ps 116:2

[9] Ps 24:7

[10] Ps 108:21

[11] Sir 35:26

[12] Matt 5:7

[13] Luke 6:36

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