

At the foot of the cross, Jesus said to his beloved disciple, St. John: "Here is your Mother," and he said to Mary: "Here is your son" (Jn 19:27). Mary was able to stand firm at the foot of the cross—a merciful love is a strong love! Merciful love is capable of withstanding the cross; capable of withstanding difficulties and challenges. How many times in our lives are we in need of that firm and strong love of Mother Mary?

"This is your son," Mary is given her mission: to form the image and likeness of Christ in each of her children. In some ways, the mercy she shares with us is to help form the face of Christ in us. It helps us to imagine a mother's womb. What is a mother's womb? It is the place where new life grows, where the growing child is nourished, nurtured and protected. Mary, our Mother, desires that the life of Christ grows in us, his divine life in us grows and becomes strong. When we come to Mary, Mother of mercy, when we ask for her help, what is it for? Is it to help the life of Jesus grow in us? Is it so that we can become more Christ-like?

The desire of Mother Mary is to see that each one of us grows up as her children: growing up in faith, growing up in charity. If we draw close to her, she will teach us how to be more mature in our following Christ.

Jesus gives us a commandment: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." We are called to be instruments of God's mercy, revealing the power of God's mercy in our lives. It is not only to experience mercy, but that others can experience his mercy through our lives. Do people experience God's mercy through you? We need to see others with the eyes of mercy. We know that Jesus looks at us with eyes of mercy. But how do we look at others? With eyes of revenge? With eyes of envy and jealous? With eyes of prejudice? Do we see them with the merciful eyes of Jesus? When you look at others, what do you see? Do you see Christ? If you see Christ, why do you so easily get angry with others? Even the children experience this anger; so many times they are shouted at!

Let us not be discouraged by any situation. Instead, let us rely, more and more, on God's mercy, believing that Christ's merciful love is powerful. May we be thankful that we have a God who loves us so much, being able to say "thank you" for his great mercy! In French, the word for "thank you" is "*merci!*" So, we are able to say "*merci!*" for God's mercy, to say "thank you" to our Lord for the gift of our Mother, our Mother of mercy, who desires that Christ's love be mature in us.

As we kneel before the Blessed Sacrament let us now give thanks to Jesus, who asks us to be merciful to others. He desires that we be as good as we can be, that we try to love each other as much as we can. He does not want us to become discouraged by our limitations, but rely, more and more, on the merciful love of Christ, which he has for each one of us. Amen.