

MERCY

Edited by

Lisa Cahill, Diego Irarrazaval
and João Vila-Chã

Published in 2017 by SCM Press, 3rd Floor, Invicta House, 108–114 Golden Lane,
London EC1Y 0TG.

SCM Press is an imprint of Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd (a registered charity)
13A Hellesdon Park Road, Norwich NR6 5DR, UK

Copyright © International Association of Conciliar Theology, Madras (India)

www.concilium.in

H
Y
M
N
S
Ancient
& Modern
limited

English translations copyright © 2017 Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored
in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior
written permission of the Board of Directors of Concilium.

ISBN 9780334031451

Printed in the UK by
Ashford, Hampshire

Concilium is published in March, June, August, October, December

Contents

Editorial

Part One: Bible

The Connection with the Mercy and Compassion that Inhabits Us
SOFÍA CHIPANA QUISPE 11

The New Testament and Mercy
TERESA OKURE 21

Part Two: Theology

The Evolution of the Works of Mercy
JAMES F. KEENAN 33

Mercy (Re)forms the Church: a Structural Perspective
STELLA MORRA 44

Compassion for Justice
HILLE HAKER 54

A Field Hospital after Battle: Mercy as a Fundamental Characteristic of
God's Presence
ERIK BORGMAN 65

Manifestations and Scope of God's Mercy in the Qur'an
ROTRAUD WIELANDT 76

Part Three: Signs of the Times

Restorative Justice: The Bonds of Mercy
LINDA HOGAN 89

The Logic of Unconditional Love: Mercy Through the Eyes of Refugees DEOGRATIAS M. RWEZAURA	98
Claiming the Right of Mercy in the Family: Voices of Indian Women ASTRID LOBO GAJIWALA	107
Ecological Works of Mercy DENNIS T. GONZALEZ	117
Part Four: Theological Forum	
Brexit and the Silence of the Church JAMES HANVEY	131
Non-violent Strategies to Reduce Terrorism and Violent Extremism MARIA J. STEPHAN	138
A Theological Forum for Resistance, Hope and Invention LUIZ CARLOS SUSIN	145
Contributors	150

Editorial

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis calls mercy ‘the fullness of justice and the most radiant manifestation of God’s truth’ (no. 311). If the Church is genuinely and truthfully to mediate ‘God’s unconditional love’ (no. 311), then both its theology and its practice must embody mercy as genuine *imitatio Christi*, as compassion and support for the vulnerable, a mercy premised on justice.

Pope Francis was not the first to recognize the priority of mercy, however. Although this issue of *Concilium* assesses his contributions, they will be contextualized by broader biblical, historical, and theological perspectives. The ‘works of mercy’ is given a contemporary interpretation; mercy is compared with compassion and justice; the theological, ecclesial, and pastoral significance of mercy is lifted up; and resources in Islam for the human and divine quality of mercy are explored. Turning to concrete meanings of mercy, authors address urgent problems such as the status of women in marriage and family, restorative justice, refugees, and ecology.

This introduction offers an excellent occasion to commemorate the contributions of Jon Sobrino, S.J., a recently retired long-standing member of the *Concilium* Editorial Board, and author of the pioneering and influential work, *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross* (1994). Sobrino’s celebration of mercy, like his theology as a whole, has been nourished by his daily life in solidarity with the poor of El Salvador, and with his martyred Jesuit brothers (and two women co-workers) of the Universidad Centroamericana. Like Francis, Sobrino holds that the ‘principle of mercy is the basic principle of the activity of God and Jesus, and therefore ought to be that of the church’ (*Principle of Mercy*, 17). Sobrino defines theology as the intellectual understanding of love (*intellectus amoris*), and thus of the praxis of God’s compassion, mercy and justice in a suffering world, especially the world of the poor (27-46). Theology in fact begins with the reality of God’s presence in history,

confronting and transforming suffering with faith, hope, compassion, love, and justice.

The Theological Forum included in this issue turns to recent events appropriately viewed through the lens of mercy. A first essay takes ‘Brexit’ as an illustration of new ‘populist’ yet anti-democratic trends gaining force in Europe and beyond. Another on the 2016 World Social Forum identifies planetary consequences of political and economic neoliberalism and capitalism, and considers the future of social movements of resistance. A third examines the significance for the struggle against extremist violence of Francis’s 2017 World Day of Peace Message, which commends active non-violence as a ‘style of politics for peace.’

‘Mercy’ is a keynote of the pastoral, theological, and ecclesial approach of Pope Francis, who declared 2016 to be the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Announcing the Jubilee in *Misericordiae Vultus*, he called mercy ‘a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace’ (no. 2), identified mercy as qualities of God and Christ, called mercy ‘the very foundation of the Church’s life,’ and summoned the whole Church ‘to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters’ in mercy. Mercy is ‘the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope’ (no. 10). We hope this special issue of *Concilium* will help many understand the centrality of mercy in our relation with God and in the renewal of life in the church.

Lisa Cahill, Diego Irarrazaval, João Vila-Chã