**Catholic Education Week Prayer for Monday, May 2, 2016**

**Catholic Education: Opening Doors of Mercy**

**Mercy that Welcomes**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Leader:** Each year, our Catholic schools engage in a week-long celebration of the unique identity and distinctive contributions of Catholic education during Catholic Education Week. At the beginning of Catholic Education Week, we gather as a community of faith in the midst of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, which began on December 8th when Pope Francis opened the Holy Door at the Vatican in Rome. Let the opening of the Holy Door be for us an experience of God’s mercy, so that we may open the doors of our hearts to others, especially those in need.

In this place, gathered in God’s name, we become quiet and still in God’s presence to think about mercy that welcomes.

Let us begin our prayer with the sign of our faith.

**All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Jesus, Son of God, we read in the Gospel how you welcomed a foreigner, a Samaritan woman, and shared the Good News with her. In recognizing her as a person and a believer, you changed her heart and her life. May we be like you, and welcome others, especially those who are not familiar to us, and share what we have with those in need. We ask this grace in your name.

**All: Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE – John 4.5-10, 19-24 (You may want to check for the passage in the *Sunday Book of Readings – The Lectionary Adapted for* Children)**

**Reader:** A reading from the Gospel of John.

**All: Glory to you, Lord.**

**Reader:** So [Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

7A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. 8(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)\* 10Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**REFLECTION**

**Leader:** Why were the disciples so shocked that Jesus was speaking with the woman? In Jesus’ day, a man did not speak to a woman who was not a relative and no one spoke to anyone who looked different or had different beliefs than they did. This woman had made some bad choices and people didn’t like her because of this. But Jesus chose to speak with this woman, accept her and get to know her. Jesus welcomed her. We are to follow Jesus’ example and that of his mother Mary, who welcomed the message from the angel and accepted the invitation to be the mother of God’s son. Let us pray to Mary, our Mother of Mercy…

**All: Hail Mary…**

**Leader:** As we go through our day, let us be sure to welcome one another. Let us make an effort to greet each other by name, and welcome them with a smile, especially the ones who need it most.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Merciful God, source of all life,
Bless each of us as we say yes to your invitation

to open wide the doors to the mercy of Jesus.
Make the doors of our hearts,
our homes and communities
big enough to receive
all who need welcome.
Let us welcome each other,
because when we do we welcome Jesus.
We make this prayer in his name.

**All: Amen.**

**Catholic Education Week Prayer for Tuesday , May 3rd, 2016**

**Catholic Education: Opening Doors of Mercy**

**Mercy that Loves**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Leader:** Good morning. Today is the second day of our celebration of Catholic education Week.

In this place, gathered in God’s name, we become quiet and still in God’s presence to think about mercy that loves

Let us begin our prayer with the sign of our faith.

**All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Merciful God, you call us to love one another as your Son, Jesus loved us. This isn’t always easy to do especially if it is someone we don’t like or who has hurt us. Help us to remember that Jesus, out of love, was willing to sacrifice his life for us and that we are called, in love, to love each other. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, who loved us even to his death.

**All: Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE (John 13:34-35 taken from the Book of Weekday Readings-The Lectionary Adapted for Children)**

**Reader:** A reading from the Gospel of John.

**All: Glory to you, Lord.**

**Reader:** Jesus said to them: “I am giving you a new commandment: love one another. You must love one another as I have loved you. Everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**REFLECTION**

**Leader:** I’m sure that all of you have heard of the ten commandments. These were given by God the Father to Moses and every person in Jesus’ day, including Jesus, would have known them and followed them. In today’s gospel, Jesus gives his disciples-and we are all Jesus’ disciples or followers-a new commandment. We are to love one another as Jesus loved us. In fact, Jesus says that everyone will know that we are his followers if we love one another. At times loving others can be easy especially if they are people we like or who treat us well like our family and friends. At other times, loving others is hard especially if they are people we don’t like or who have been mean to us. At these times, love becomes a sacrifice. During Lent, you probably made a sacrifice by giving up something that you liked. Well, doing something that you don’t like but you know is the right thing to do is also a sacrifice. Jesus was willing to sacrifice his own life so that everyone could experience his love and mercy. Let us now ask Mary, the Mother of Mercy, to pray for us that we could follow her Son’s example and make the sacrifice to love everyone we meet.

**All: Hail Mary…**

**Leader:** As we go through our day, let us be sure to love one another. Let us make an effort to kind and loving to everyone in both our words and our actions.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Merciful God, source of all life,
Bless each of us as we say yes to your invitation

to open wide the doors to the mercy of Jesus.
Make the doors of our hearts,
our homes and communities
big enough to receive
all who need welcome.
Let us welcome and love each other,
because when we do we welcome and love Jesus.
We make this prayer in his name.

**All: Amen.**

**Catholic Education Week Prayer for Wednesday May 4th, 2016**

**Catholic Education: Opening Doors of Mercy**

**Mercy that Forgives**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**Leader:** As we reach the middle of Catholic Education week, our Gospel reading today reminds

 us of our need to let go of our selfishness and accept God’s forgiveness and to reach

 out and give that forgiveness to others. Pope Francis tells us in this Holy Year of Mercy

 that God’s merciful forgiveness is the most important teaching of Jesus. Jesus came to

 show us how wide and deep and big is God’s merciful forgiveness. Let us open the

 doors of our hearts to allow God’s merciful forgiveness to change us from people who

 make hurtful choices into people who make choices that bring healing.

 In this place, gathered in God’s name, we become quiet and still in God’s presence to

 think about mercy that forgives.

 Let us begin our prayer with the sign of our faith.

**All:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

**OPENING PRAYER:**

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, the religious leaders during your life, gave you a hard time when you were

 willing to forgive sinners and eat with them. So you told them the beautiful story of the

 selfish son and the forgiving Father. Help us to be like the younger brother who was

 not afraid to return home to ask for his Father’s forgiveness. May we be as forgiving of

 others as God is with us. We ask this grace in your holy name. Amen

**SCRIPTURE –Luke 15: 11-32**

**Reader:** A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All**: **Glory to you, O Lord**

**Reader:** One day Jesus told this story. There was a man who had two sons. The younger son

 said to his father, “Give me my half of all the family property, all that would be mine

 after you die.” So the Father divided everything he owned between his two sons. A few

 days later, the younger son packed up all his things and left home to live in a far away

 country. But he wasted all of his money living a wild life. After he had spent

 everything, there was a bad famine in that country and he became very hungry but

 could not buy any food. He went to work for a farmer who sent him out to feed the

 pigs. The young man was so hungry that he could have eaten the food the pigs ate, but

 no one offered him even that. At last, he came to his senses and said to himself, “The

 people who work for my father have more than enough food to eat, and here I am

 starving to death. I will go back to my father and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have

 sinned against God and against you; I am no longer good enough to be called your son.

 Treat me like one of your workers.’”

 So the young man started home. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw

 him coming and ran out to meet him. He took his son in his arms and kissed him. The

 young man said, “Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer

 good enough to be called your son.” But his Father said to the servants, “Quick! Bring

 out the best clothes and put them on him. Get our best calf and prepare a feast. Let’s eat

 and celebrate because my son was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and

 have been found!” And they began to celebrate.

 The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

 **REFLECTION:**

**Leader:** Who is the most important person in this story? *(The father because he is like God the*

 *Father who shows merciful love and forgiveness)*

 What does the line in the story AT LAST HE CAME TO HIS SENSES… mean? Why

 is it so important? ( *It shows awareness of his sin and his sorrow for his selfish and*

 *careless choices –it was the moment he had a big change of heart and realized what he*

 *had done.)*

 Do you think in the future the selfish son who was forgiven would forgive others who

 might hurt him in the future? *(We have been forgiven a lot so we too need to forgive*

 *others. We cannot receive God’s mercy that forgives without being merciful to others*.)

 Mary had to forgive the people who crucified her son Jesus. It must have been very

 hard. Let’s ask her to help us to seek God’s merciful forgiveness and share that same

 merciful forgiveness with others.

**All: Hail Mary…**

**Leader:** As we go through our day let us think of and pray for someone we have a hard time to

 forgive asking Jesus to bless them. If they are someone in our school try to do

 something kind for them, showing them the kindness God gives to you.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**Leader:** God your mercy that forgives is greater than the stars of the universe and bigger and

 deeper than the ocean. Help us never be afraid to go to you when we have sinned

 knowing that you are mercy that forgives. And give us merciful hearts so we can

 forgive others in return. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen

**Catholic Education Week Prayer for Thursday, May 5, 2016**

**Catholic Education: Opening Doors of Mercy**

**Mercy that Grows**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Leader:** Today is World Catholic Education Day. We pray with Catholic schools around the world. Pope Francis has called on the church, during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. When we practice the works of mercy, we grow closer to Jesus and closer to each other. The gift of Catholic Schools helps us to grow into the people God created us to be.

In this place, gathered in God’s name, we become quiet and still in God’s presence to think about mercy that grows.

Let us begin our prayer with the sign of our faith.

**All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Lord Jesus,

 you called Zacchaeus by his name

and helped him to grow.

We ask you to enter our lives

in a new way this day

that we may grow

in wisdom and grace

to be the people you call us to be.

Help us to follow you more closely,

in order that we may live in such a way

that we bring life to others.

No one is small in your eyes;

let no one be small in ours.

We ask this in your most holy name.

**All: Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE – Luke 19.1-10 (You may want to check for the passage in the *Sunday Book of Readings – The Lectionary Adapted for* Children)**

**Reader:** A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

**All: Glory to you, Lord.**

**Reader:** Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. 2A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. 3He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. 4So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. 5When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.’ 6So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. 7All who saw it began to grumble and said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.’ 8Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, ‘Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.’ 9Then Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. 10For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**REFLECTION**

**Leader:** When a seed is put in the ground, it breaks out of its shell and begins to grow and as it grows, it changes. We are the same. When Zacchaeus met Jesus, it made him think about the kind of life he was living and the kinds of choices he was making. When he felt Jesus’ mercy and acceptance, he felt the need to change. Whenever we change, we grow. We become somebody new. Sometimes it’s hard and sometimes it hurts, but that’s part of being a disciple. Zacchaeus had the strength to change because Jesus called him by name. Jesus also calls us by name and calls us to grow.

**LITANY OF MERCY**

**Leader:** We will now pray a special prayer called a Litany.

The response is: ***May we be merciful like the Father.***

**All: *May we be merciful like the Father.***

**Leader:** You welcome us in mercy. Teach us to welcome others. We pray…

**All: *May we be merciful like the Father.***

**Leader:** You love us in your mercy. Teach us to love others. We pray…

**All: *May we be merciful like the Father.***

**Leader:** You forgive us in your mercy. Teach us to forgive others. We pray…

**All: *May we be merciful like the Father.***

**Leader:** You help us to grow in your mercy. Teach us to become holy people. We pray…

**All: *May we be merciful like the Father.***

**Leader:** Your mercy brings us joy. Teach us to bring joy to others. We pray…

**All: *May we be merciful like the Father.***

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**Leader:** Let us pray together in the words that Jesus gave us.

**All: Our Father …**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Merciful God, source of all life,
Bless each of us as we say yes to your invitation

to open wide the doors to the mercy of Jesus.
Make the doors of our hearts,
our homes and communities
big enough to welcome, love, forgive,

and grow in your mercy.
We make our prayer in Jesus’ name,

**All: Amen.**

**Catholic Education Week Prayer for Friday, May 6, 2016**

**Catholic Education: Opening Doors of Mercy**

**Mercy that Rejoices**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Leader:** Here in this place, we are gathered in God’s name. As we come to the end of Catholic Education Week, we become quiet and still in God’s presence to think about mercy that rejoices.

Let us begin our prayer with the sign of our faith.

**All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Jesus, Son of God, as we serve each other in a spirit of charity and mercy, help us to recognize you in our brothers and sisters. Bless us with your love and teach us to show mercy to one another with joyful hearts. We ask this grace in your name.

**All: Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE *(Matthew 25:45-50 CEV)***

**Reader:** A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.

**All: Glory to you, Lord.**

**Reader:** Jesus said to his disciples: “The king will say to those on his right, ‘My father has blessed you! Come and receive the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world was created. When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me, and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in jail, you visited me.”

 Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask, “When did we give you something to eat or drink? When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear or visit you while you were sick or in jail?”

The king will answer, “Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**REFLECTION**

**Leader:** Sometimes, when we think of the word mercy, we picture someone throwing themselves on their knees before a cruel villain, pleading to be spared some punishment. This is not how we understand God’s mercy. God loves to love us! When we call on God to have mercy, we are calling on God to be with us and to help us. And God always does so faithfully, and with great joy.

We are called to show mercy to others in the same way, by helping them, by being with them, and by doing so with joy. During this special Jubilee Year, Pope Francis asks us to “take up the joyful call to mercy”. When we offer mercy to others, by feeding the hungry, by visiting the sick, by comforting those who are sad, by praying for others, we do so with joyful hearts, and that we serve God as we serve those around us.

**All:** **Hail Mary . . .**

**Leader:** As we go through our day, and as we continue onward in this Jubilee Year of Mercy, let each of us make a special effort to bring mercy to others with joyful hearts. Let us pray.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Merciful God, source of all life,
Bless each of us as we say yes to your invitation

to open wide the doors to the mercy of Jesus.
Make the doors of our hearts,
our homes, and communities
big enough for us to reach out through them

in order to serve our brothers and sisters with gladness.

Help us to show mercy to those around us with joyful hearts!

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, our brother,

who leads us by example.

**All: Amen.**

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**