

Forgive, Forgive, Forgive

By: Jessica Mendez

A great saint once said, "Forgive as though your life depends on it, because it does it does." The same saint also said, "Hell is filled with the stench of unforgiveness."

As an Ambassador of the Flame of Mercy, my job is to constantly seek ways to reconcile others to God through forgiveness. That can become difficult, especially when someone does something against one of my children. Recently one of my sons was attacked by one of his classmates. As you can probably imagine, I was not very happy. I was ready to press charges. My son, on the other hand, remained calm and seemed to be at peace with it all. As I watched him, I could feel my anger begin to go away until I found out that other people were there and didn't help. Grrrrr...I spent an entire day wallowing in revenge. It wasn't until my husband and I listened to Father Jonathan Meyer's homily on *Returning to the Lord*, that I realized that I was not acting like an Ambassador of Mercy, I was acting like a normal human being.

The next morning, the Holy Spirit lead me to God's word to visit the Garden of Gethsemane. As I was there, I was reminded of my cousin who was in a similar situation, however in his case he died a week later from the severity of the injuries. The Holy Spirit then helped me to see that my son could have easily been severely injured, but instead suffered no injuries besides a sore shoulder. I was able to realize that God had sent his angels not only to protect my son, but also the young man from injuring him as this could have gotten him into more trouble. I was reminded of St. Pope John Paul the Great, who was able to visit and forgive the man who shot him, and because of this encounter the shooter became a Christian. I thought of St. Josephine Bahkita who when asked what she would do if she ever encountered the people who enslaved her, she said that she would kiss their hands because if it wasn't for them she would have never come to know Jesus.

The story of King David came to my mind, from 2 Samuel 16: 5-12. Saul's son, Zeruah, came out to curse David, calling him a murderer. David's soldiers were ready to cut his head off, but instead David said, "Leave him alone and let him curse me because the Lord told him to do this. Maybe the Lord will see my misery and repay me with something good for Shimei's curses today!" David knew that ultimately God is in control of all things and that if he could be patient now, God would remember this later.

Finally, I was taken to the crucifixion. Jesus, after being severely beaten, whipped, and finally crucified, still asked His father to "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." At this image, I could not hold back my tears. I began sobbing like a little baby at the understanding that I had allowed myself to be swept up in my anger and revenge. I then saw a vision of myself taking lunch to this young man.

I encountered his father after school and he came up to me and hugged me. I could see the hurt and pain in his eyes and the Lord allowed me to share in that suffering with him. He asked forgiveness for his son's actions and I told him that it was

forgiven. He told me the consequences that this young man was facing. He was to be placed in an in-school-suspension for the rest of the year, would not be able to represent the school in any way, and was not going to be able to go on their trip that the class had been fundraising for for 4 years. Not only was the young man suffering, but his parents were also suffering the consequences.



Later that evening, I messaged the young man's mom and asked what was his favorite lunch. Naturally, she asked "Why?" I told her that God had put it in my heart to bring lunch to him. She proceeded to tell me how sorry she was for what had happened and I told her that it was forgiven. I also let her know that I was praying that both boys would learn something from this and that ultimately their relationship with God would grow from this.

The next day, I went to see this young man. When he saw me he jumped back a little, but then I said, "I want you to know that you are forgiven. I know that you made an emotional decision, but I also know that you have a good heart. We don't think less of you and we still love you. On behalf of me and my family, you are forgiven." All this young man could do was say, "Thank you," as we hugged and cried together.

Out of the corner of my eye, I could see the school counselor who was also crying. As I was leaving, she expressed how touched she was by this act of forgiveness. I left the school in a full-blown sob, because I had finally experienced true forgiveness from the heart.

Later that evening, I saw the superintendent of the school at a meeting and she came up to me and thanked me for showing mercy and forgiveness. With tears in her eyes she expressed how this had inspired her and how grateful she was for the heart that God had given me. This one act of forgiveness had a ripple effect. It not only effected me, but those around me as well. God is so good. I could have never known how one act of forgiveness from the heart could effect so many people.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, what situations in your life have caused you to hold on to unforgiveness and bitterness in your heart. I invite you to visit your Garden of Gethsemane to see what God has for you there. You will be amazed at the level of healing one act of forgiveness can bring. I ultimately understood that God is in control of EVERYTHING; even those things that the enemy has tried to use against us. I invite you to recall that Jesus also loves those people who offended you and that He died for them too. Forgive as though your life depends on it, because it does.



IMPORTANT NOTICE!

As the COVID-19 virus continues to spread, our primary concern here at the Ambassadors of the Flame of Mercy is to protect your health. In this light, each upcoming event will be reviewed to determine if we need to cancel.

Due to this health risk we have cancelled the remaining retreats in March and April (the Marriage Retreat 3/27/20, the Houston 1-Day Healing Retreat 4/4/20, and the Self-Image Retreat previously scheduled for 4/17/20).

The May Macho Men of God retreat is still currently scheduled for May 1-3, and we will continue to monitor this national health crisis.

In the meantime we are working to make some retreats available online and updates will be posted on our website at www.flameofmercy.com.

Louis Life Center: April Update

Kitchen

Back area framing: Rest Rooms and Storage



Front area: Conference Room

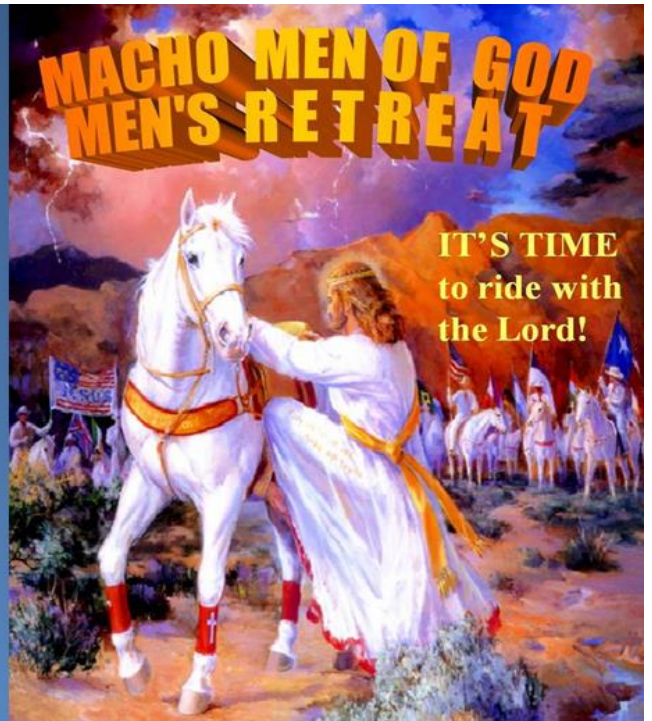
Framing and the installation of electricity has started within the building. During the month of April we should be completing the building siding and start the installation of the basic internal wiring along with ceiling lights.

The Ambassadors are hoping to hold its first retreat in the building on the weekend of September 4, 2020, which will be the Macho Men of God Retreat. Your financial support is needed to meet this goal. And as always, keep us in your prayers.

92nd Men's Retreat

May 1-3, 2020

- Accepting the Purpose for Who God Created Me to Be
- How to Recognize a Wounded Family & Bring Healing
- Getting out of Desperation
- Is Your Addiction Leading Your Life?
 - Overcoming Your Physical Sickness with God's Mercy
 - Is Your Sickness Running Your Life?
 - Overcoming Addictions
 - Come Experience God's Love



**Join us
For a weekend
that will
change your life!**

Women of Power Retreat

An Instrument of God

May 15-17, 2020

Possible Topics Include:



- What Keeps Me from Being God's Instrument?
- The 3 Pillars of Faith
- An Attitude of Gratitude
- Words that Heal or Destroy
- Healed in Body & Spirit
- How to Forgive & Live Again
- Healing from the Spirit of Grief
- Understanding & Supporting My Husband's Mission in our Family

Featured Speakers Include:



Mary Constancio



Jessica Mendez



Brenda Garcia



Corina Constancio



Carolyn Huntzinger



Kathy Gloria

A NOTE FROM THE AFM GIFT SHOP
 Don't Forget! Our wonderful candles, oils, and other handmade products from the garden are still available and can be such a blessing while you are homebound. Place your orders early for Easter. You can Call Mary at 806-473-9563 if you'd like something special for a loved one or just for you.



2020 RETREAT SCHEDULE

RETREAT CANCELLATIONS

- **Marriage Retreat (March) CANCELLED**
- **Houston Mission CANCELLED**
- **Self Image Retreat CANCELLED**

- **Macho Men of God Retreat**
May 1-3, 2020
- **Women of Power Retreat**
May 15-17, 2020
- **Celebration of the Feast of the Assumption**
August 14-15, 2020 (No charge to attend)
- **Macho Men of God Retreat**
September 4-6, 2020 (Labor Day Weekend)
- **Women of Power Retreat**
September 18-20, 2020

Retreat Registration Fee: \$175.00

Register today online: www.flameofmercy.com, Email: Admin@flameofmercy.com,
 or call the office at 806-832-4243

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