
Most of God's Moments of Mercy Will Not Make It to the Internet

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by Dean Sam Candler**

Tension thickens in our homes. Even the best homes, and marriages, and households, and children, and parents, get bored and irritated. There are moments, each day, when the tension overwhelms our equilibrium, and something snaps. Something boils over. Something uncaring and frustrating just erupts.

In those situations, someone has to play the role of moderator, has to be the one to ease the tension or to add something softer and gentler to the situation. But, after a while, that moderator gets tired of being the moderator. It takes enormous energy to try to add patience and gentleness into tense situations. Give the moderator a break, too.

Lord have mercy! Is there a balm in Gilead? Is there rest for the weary? Is there mercy? Surely, God has delivered that rest and balm for generations. We know that in faith, but we sure don't know it physically or emotionally yet. Our hearts are heavy. Our worries mount.

What to do? One strategy might be to imagine the future, to imagine some scenario when the world is more comfortable, when we are finally at some sort of rest. Where would we be? Would we be free to walk in a park, to gather at a church, to go to a movie or concert? Could we drive to see our children somewhere? Drive to see our parents at the nursing home?

Another strategy is to remember the past. Remember that last family reunion, give thanks for that dinner at a restaurant with friends, even remember the last sports event we attended. Remember that church service or sermon or hymn sing. Remember, too, how naïve we seemed back then. The world was different, and we had no idea what would happen. We were simply unaware of what the future would bring.

Well, that unawareness is exactly where we are now. Though we rarely admit it, being unaware of the future is actually where we are all the time. Even when things are going well, we can never depend upon this moment's reality to continue on. In the same way, we do not need to think that this present, scary, moment will continue either. There will be better moments, because this is the way life is, and because this is the way life in God is: suffering and joy, death and resurrection.

But where is God now? What is God doing in our crisis? My belief is that God is always where the crisis is. God is always where the need is. God is in the truly heroic people who are our health care providers, emergency room workers and nurses and doctors, those risking their health to care for the unhealthy. God is in the grocery store workers stocking shelves for us. God is in the truck drivers and delivery companies, preserving what is left of our nation's distribution systems.

And, God is in that person right next to you. If not in your house, then your neighbor, across the hall, or across the street. We are all feeling alone, even those of us stuck in houses with families—there are moments when we feel alone—but God is in that person with us or near us.

When we have mercy on that person next to us, or when that person has mercy on us, God is in touch with us. In that moment of mercy, we find a moment of rest—a short, simple, moment of relaxation from worry and tension. We might say that those moments of mercy are really moments of salvation.

Lord, have mercy upon us. Have mercy on us through the people we serve, and through the people who serve us. Have mercy upon us through our caregivers and grocery store workers. Have mercy upon us through our

political leaders and our financial institutions. Have mercy upon us through our friends and families.

And, Lord, we pray, be mercy to others through us. Have mercy on others, through us. May we be mercy to those around us. May we be salvation.

Lord, have mercy. Mercy is not magic. Mercy does not simply appear out of the blue. Mercy happens because someone wills it. Someone takes the initiative to have mercy.

There are stories occurring, even now, of mercy. You may not hear of them on the social media outlets, where so much is driven by some breaking urgency or another. (Okay, true: some social media outlets do give time to mention moments of mercy.) But most of God's moments of mercy will not make it to the internet. Most of God's moments of mercy are going to occur locally, in your own community and neighborhood, in your own household, in your own soul.

Yes, in your own soul. Take some time, every day, to have mercy on your self. Give yourself a break. Pause. Take a rest. Have mercy on yourself. Lord, have mercy.

AMEN.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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