

The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes ... It is an attribute to God Himself; and earthly power doth then show likest God's when mercy seasons justice.

William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice

“When mercy seasons justice”! I have been reflecting on the apparent desperate need for mercy and justice in our world today. They are both God-qualities. Might this be one of the reasons that mercy and justice seem so absent in many places? God is the essential center so often neglected or else used to falsely legitimize cruelty, prejudice and other immoral ways of thinking and acting. Basic sensitivities seem to be lacking. The human spirit risks being in crisis and many people have grown immune to the cruel words and actions of others.

Like you, I have been horrified to watch the plight of millions of migrants all over the world. One news report told of migrant children, women and men being ‘dumped’ in the Sahara desert without food or water. We’ve witnessed the scenes of children being separated from their families. And even with the reversal of policy, reunification may be possible but what of the harmful effects on the innocent victims caught in what they will never understand. Not even we adults can comprehend the heartlessness of some policies and actions.

In the middle of everything, where people seem focused on safety and getting rid of the unwanted in their midst, a core reality is utterly forgotten. Most of the men, women and children are fleeing horrendous situations in their home countries where rape, murder and other forms of brutality are common every day occurrences. What is being done to eradicate these horrible living conditions? The majority of the world’s population lives in

environments that are unsafe and unsanitary. Yes, numerous attempts are made to improve conditions but at the same time we hear that we don’t want to be ‘infected’ by ‘those people’. ‘Those people’ are not just faceless individuals. We need to get close enough to look into the haunting eyes of a person who has risked everything and endured rejection all just to find a peaceful home. “Those people’ are our brothers and sisters. Aren’t we called to be our sisters’ and brothers’ keepers? We hear about crimes. I don’t know what the percentage of migrants would be who do harm in the receiving countries but I’d like to hazard a guess that the vast majority are decent human beings looking for safety, work and security. If they have resorted to crime, how much responsibility do governments and organized crime leaders bear?

I’m pointing fingers outward and I know that I need to also point back at myself. What am I living that speaks against the above inhumanity? What prejudices do I nurture against others? How are mercy and justice lived out in my everyday life?

**Dear Lord, may mercy and justice rain down upon us all!
We are in desperate need!**

Sr. Teresa Morrison, CPS

