

Moved by Mercy

My understanding of the *Year of Mercy* is God's forgiveness, compassion, and love for all. According to Mar Munoz-Visoso's article, from the USCCB website, Pope Francis "has compared the Church to a field hospital that must welcome and tend to the wounded and the dying in the daily battlefield of life." Pope Francis is referring to a battlefield for mercy. Personally, I can take this quote and apply it to my life, due to my pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, where I volunteered for 10 days this summer. Lourdes, France is the place where Mary appeared to Saint Bernadette, telling her to bring the sick to bathe in the springs. There people have been miraculously healed from physical, mental, and spiritual sicknesses. Today people from all over the world who are sick or looking for healing go to Lourdes.

This summer I experienced God's mercy first hand. There I met physically, mentally, and spiritually sick people, many of whom showed me what God's mercy was. While working at the baths, assisting people in wheelchairs and stretchers, another teen and I, made rosaries in between jobs. We handed rosaries to people waiting on the lines, so they could have a rosary to pray with. While we were working, we met two Irish women in wheelchairs. Speaking to us saying they came to Lourdes to receive God's healing, and mercy, and they have been coming for many years. Stating how proud they were seeing us work so hard, they offered to pray for us. Hearing this helped me feel God's mercy through these women. They truly showed me what mercy is- compassion and love for all.

As Pope Francis has said, "we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us." In Lourdes, I was shown mercy by the people I encountered. I was able to act on a corporal work of mercy; by visiting the sick. As well as, two of the spiritual works of mercy; comforting the sorrowful, and praying for the living and dead. What was most rewarding, was

the gratitude we felt from those who were suffering. Many were sorrowful and unhappy upon arrival, and we were able to share with them God's love for all people. In this "battlefield of life" they taught me what mercy is, and how to be merciful. In Lourdes, I was moved by mercy.