



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

ROOTED IN CHRIST

LENT 2022



MERCY *Monday*



A Striking Comparison

In the early hours of the morning of August 31, 1997, the tall and beautiful Princess Diana was killed in a car crash. Her passing captured the attention of the entire world.

Princess Diana's funeral began with the tolling bells of Westminster Abbey,

and 2,000 people attended the ceremony, which included dignitaries, celebrities, and royalty. The British television audience peaked at 32.10 million, one of the United Kingdom's highest viewing figures ever. An estimated 2.5 billion people watched the event worldwide, making it one of the biggest televised events in history.

A few days later, an elderly, shriveled little woman named Mother Teresa of Calcutta passed away at the age of 87, overshadowed by the previous events that had captured the attention of the world.

Mother Teresa died as she lived, humbly and often overlooked. She was honored with only a state funeral in India, carried by soldiers to her resting place in the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity. Her funeral was broadcast here in the United States during the middle of the night, plagued by audio and video problems. The solemn event captured only a fraction of the audience that tuned in to Princess Diana's funeral.

Though they came from very different circumstances and bore no resemblance to one another, both women showed mercy to those in need, and were well known for their ministry to the poor and disenfranchised. Mother Teresa was canonized in St. Peter's Square, at the Vatican, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2016. Princess Diana will be forever in our hearts.

**BLESSED ARE THE
MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL
RECEIVE MERCY.**

Matthew 5:7



The Catechism of the Catholic Church on Mercy

2447. *"The works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

**Question:**

How can Christian theologians say that God is both just and merciful? To be just means to give someone what he deserves, but to be merciful means to give him better than he deserves. Given those definitions, a person could not be merciful without being unjust or be just without being unmerciful.

Answer:

The problem here comes from a confusion about what is meant by the word "just." To do justice to a person, in this context, means to give him at least what he deserves. Thus if I owe a person a favor, it satisfies justice for me to repay him the favor, but this does not stop me from going beyond what justice alone requires and doing him an additional favor.

This has been the standard answer to this question for centuries. St. Thomas Aquinas said, "God acts mercifully, not indeed by going against his justice, but by doing something more than justice; thus a man who pays another two hundred pieces of money, though owing him only one hundred, does nothing against justice, but acts liberally or mercifully."

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Diocese of Scranton
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