

**Our Lady of the Wayside Parish, Arlington Heights, IL**  
**Homily offered Oct 23, 2016, by Deacon Tom Corcoran**  
**Gospel Reading: Luke 18:9-14**

Today's gospel is a direct continuation of last Sunday's gospel. The main focus of both is God's mercy – what that means to us – and what God expects of us.

Last Sunday we heard the parable of the widow and the unjust judge. The main message was that if we wanted God's mercy, we need to pray always. Today we drill to a deeper level.

At the start of the reading we hear Jesus address this parable to “those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else.”

When Jesus says, *despised everyone else*, He means that the Pharisee believes that he's better than others and sees no need to help them. Jesus tells us that God loves all of His children, and God expects **us to love** others.

Last fall, Pope Francis declared this a “Year of Mercy.” His intent was to have everyone be aware of the importance of God's mercy in our life.

**Mercy** starts with a respect for human life.

October is **Respect Life** Month. The month will soon be ending. The **Year of Mercy** will soon be ending. But the message of both continues throughout our life.

Pope Francis reminds us – that as Catholics – we are a mission people. Every person has a right to dignity and respect. And when we see those rights being abused or neglected we have to address the issue.

One of the major abuses of life is Domestic Abuse. It's a sad commentary on our society that it's so widespread.

Examples of **high profile** domestic abuse are on the news on a frequent basis. We recently heard a New York Giants player admit that for years he's been guilty of abuse and violence against his wife. He was recently arrested and charged. The abuser said that he viewed himself as a god and his wife was his slave. Just like the Pharisee in today's parable – he was unable to see his own sin.

The NFL tried to avoid this issue, but an NFL player brought it to a national focus. He said that he “will continue to speak for the voiceless -- and for his mother ---- who's a survivor of domestic violence.” That player knows the evil of domestic abuse and he is willing to take a stand against it.

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Domestic Abuse is not limited to High Profile cases – it’s all-too-common.  
And we all need to take a stand against Domestic Abuse – and to do what we can to stop it.

It’s prevalent in all segments of our society; --- our youth are especially vulnerable through bullying, dating issues, and social media.

The abuser is often able to hide the abuse. A couple of years ago, when we were forming the Domestic Abuse ministry, some parishioners said to me –

**Oh! We don’t have that here.**

The sad fact is that Domestic Abuse is around all of us. But often we don't **see** it.

Recently I had cataract surgery. I was amazed how much better I could see – Everything was so much brighter – and I could see distance very well.

What happened is that over time-- my eyesight had gradually deteriorated. It was so gradual that I didn’t realize what I was **not** seeing.

And I thought --- that can happen with our spiritual life. We continue doing what we’ve always done – and - it becomes routine.

We don’t **see** what’s happening in our world – what issues need to be addressed. We don’t **see** where we can bring the message of Jesus Christ to our world.

Pope Francis is trying to help us see more clearly. It begins with our **prayer life** and then continues in how we **live** our life.

At times we all can benefit from a -“**spiritual** cataract surgery” - to clear our vision.

How can we get more involved? Fortunately Wayside has many opportunities “**To teach who Christ is.**” Every weekend one of the ministries is present outside of the Gathering Space to give information on their ministry.

There isn’t enough time to properly discuss the many aspects of Domestic Abuse this morning. But if you would like to hear more about it, the ministry is meeting tomorrow night at 7:15 in the Cabrini Room. Please come and talk with members of the ministry.

If **we** ask for God’s mercy, we have to be willing to **give** mercy to people in need. To paraphrase the words of Jesus in the Lord’s Prayer – “Lord, grant us your mercy – as we are willing to show mercy to others.”