Excerpts from Bishop Douglas Crosby's Christmas Message 2016:

This past year the Holy Father gave us the gift of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, choosing as its motto "Merciful like the Father" (Misericordes sicut Pater). In March, on the Feast of Saint Joseph, he joined this gift with another, Amoris Laetitia, the Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family, tying it closely to the theme of the Jubilee, both by inviting Christian families to live in the daily spirit of forgiveness and by encouraging us to be signs of God's mercy and closeness "wherever family life remains imperfect or lacks peace and joy" (no.5).

In Canada, 2016 was a year in which the term mercy took on heightened significance apart from the inspiration of Pope Francis. It was the year when Parliament, provincial legislatures, and physicians' colleges set policies that would permit physicians to help patients end their own lives under the misperception of mercy-as-compassion. It was also the year when Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission would release its findings and calls to action, expressing the suffering felt within Indigenous communities, thus prompting Canadians to reflect on what mercy-as-forgiveness ultimately means.

The mystery of the Incarnation is essentially the mystery of God's compassion. Through Christ, God became like us in all things but sin (Hebrews 4.15), that by his suffering and death on the Cross he might win for us the reward of eternal life (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 457). In this way, we were taught that Christ's new commandment, to love one another as he has loved us (John 13.34-35), had virtually no limits in the ordinary run of life.

Our experience of remorse following sin, the brokenness that disrupts our families, the suffering of loved ones who have lost hope in life, the failures for which we must seek pardon and those of others we are asked to pardon, each evoke a different aspect of what it means to be merciful like the Father. It is my prayer that this Christmas we might all find room in our lives to adore the infant Christ, seeing in him the face of God's mercy, and be moved to radiate his love for humanity to those around us.

To him be honour and glory forever.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/statements-a-letters/4639-christmas-message-2016

Dear Parishioners: Merry Christmas! A warm & hearty welcome to all – families, friends & neighbours – who have joined together today at St. Boniface & St. Peter’s to celebrate the birth of our Saviour. The wonder of the Word-made-flesh is both a remedy & an inspiration for our troubled world: as the poet W.H. Auden asks, “How could the Eternal do a temporal act/The Infinite become a finite fact”? In the manger of Bethlehem, we do indeed see Almighty God become one with our little, struggling humanity – Alleluia! While the news seems to paint a bleak picture each day, the goodness of the Incarnation reveals a deeper truth: the love of God – and the grace God offers humanity – is truly the greatest power the world has ever seen! When I look at the confusion & violence of our world, I marvel at the simple goodness that people are capable of: from daily small acts of kindness & faithfulness to life-changing, heroic deeds – like the coming of the El Mohammed Family among us. I cannot put to words how pleased & proud I am of our parishes, our local Churches & our wider community’s response to our new friends who have escaped a war on the other side of the planet. This remarkable family continues to bring out the best in us – I pray the Holy Family of Bethlehem & Nazareth will continue to touch, bless & transform us each day of our lives. God bless you this Christmas & always! Fr. Matt

For the Time Being

Alone, alone, about a dreadful wood
Of conscious evil runs a lost mankind,
Dreading to find its Father lest it find
The Goodness it has dread is not good:
Alone, alone, about our dreadful wood.

Where is that Law for which we broke our own,
Where now that Justice for which Flesh resigned
Her hereditary right to passion, Mind
His will to absolute power? Gone. Gone.
Where is that Law for which we broke our own?

The Pilgrim Way has led to the Abyss.
Was it to meet such grinning evidence
We left our richly odoured ignorance?
Was the triumphant answer to be this?
The Pilgrim Way has led to the Abyss.

We who must die demand a miracle.
How could the Eternal do a temporal act,
The Infinite become a finite fact?
Nothing can save us that is possible:
We who must die demand a miracle.

W.H. Auden
“For the Time Being”
Collected Longer Poems
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