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From the President

# SEE HOW THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER

*“Moved with pity, He stretched out His hand and touched him and said to him, I will; be clean” (Mark 1:41).*

**T**HROUGHOUT JESUS’ MINISTRY, He had pity or compassion on people with a variety of ailments both physical and spiritual. The Greek word for “pity” or “compassion” is *splachna*, which refers to the bowels or the inner being of a person. In English, an expression that is similar is “to have butterflies in the stomach.” *Splachna* does not refer to “butterflies” or nerves, but to the deep ache and hurt that a person has for another person. Quite literally, your guts can hurt for another person.

Jesus used this sort of expression to communicate the compassion that the Lord God feels for His people. Jesus has compassion on people that no one else would have compassion for. Jesus has compassion on people (including you and me) who do not deserve to be shown compassion. Jesus’ compassion begins with the forgiveness of sins and extends to the entire person. All illness, disease and other physical necessities are the result of sin in the world. Jesus’ compassion, best shown by His death on the cross, ultimately undoes the result of sin and on the day of His return will bring about the restoration of all creation in the new

heaven and the new earth.

In the meantime, the Church and individual Christians who are forgiven show mercy and compassion to each other and to their neighbor near them. Christians show mercy to others because Christ has first loved them. The ancient pagans remarked of Christians, “See how they love one another.” The love and concern Christians showed to each other also extended to their neighbors in need. The acts of mercy individual Christians show to their neighbor is a powerful witness to the world about the love of Jesus.

This issue of the *Journal of Lutheran Mission* focuses on the topic of mercy. Most of these papers were presented at the International Disaster Conference held at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind., in September 2014. The conference provided a forum for international Lutheran church leaders to consider both the theology of mercy and the practical

implications for implementing it in their churches.

May these articles also help you consider the role of mercy and human compassion in the mission of the Church.

*Sub cruce,*

President Matthew C. Harrison

The acts of mercy individual Christians show to their neighbor is a powerful witness to the world about the love of Jesus.