

MISGUIDED IMAGES OF GOD

The situation of today's world shows us how urgent it is to give witness to a true understanding of God's relationship with the universe and humanity. So many people still keep God at a distance from their real life. Instead of finding strength in their belief in God at a time of pain and distress, often people even blame God for their worries and sorrow. Time and again, their experience of God is not a source of support and happiness, but of anger and aversion. By doing so, they increase their own suffering.

Today, also, there are people, who for the sake of the glory of God's name, feel entitled to oppress and persecute their fellow human beings, to terrorise and maltreat them, and even to torture and kill them. There are people who consider themselves representatives of God when sentencing to death anyone who, according to their opinion, violates the rules of divine law. That happened in the past as

well as in the present.

Moreover, in today's society so much suffering is caused by human crimes, often committed by people who believe that God is on their side. Even people calling themselves Christians or Catholics are often involved in wars, unjust behaviour, greed, and the destruction of the natural environment. And there are still believers, including Christians, who tend to look at natural disasters or tragedies in their personal life as punishments of God for people's sins.

Therefore, by living a spirituality of the heart, we should be committed to spreading a true understanding of God's presence among humankind, as revealed by Jesus. Not a belief in a divine presence that creates self-righteousness, while alienating believers from non-believers, but a belief that generates humility and solidarity.

—Hans Kwakman msc

*You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by
God.*

*Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with His anointing,
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the
poor;
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,
and restore sight to the blind.*

—From the prayer for the year of mercy.