

Mercy Story Five – May

He was furious. If he hadn't been sitting in the middle of the pew in the second row from the front, he'd have stood up and walked out. Or rather, he'd have stomped out. As it was, he made a bee-line for the door as soon as the Funeral Mass was over. He just had to get out of there!

He wouldn't have been there at all if he'd had any choice in the matter. When the CEO dies, after all, the board members are expected to form a guard of honour at his funeral.

It was his first time in a Catholic church, almost his first time in a church of any description. The inside didn't look at all like the outside. He was expecting it to be dull and cold and vertical, but instead it was bright and warm and vertical, as if there was Something Beautiful way up there!

But it was the behavior of the people that got to him most. They weren't just sitting there looking on. They were standing up – and he was expected to stand up with them. They were sitting down – and he was expected to sit down too. They were singing, and he should have been singing too. They even knelt down, twice! And he was expected to kneel down, too! Believe me, he hadn't got to where he was in life by kneeling down to anybody! People bowed down to him!

And all that talk about Mercy, that there is Mercy for “everyone”. As though the CEO needed Mercy now! That's the last thing he'd have asked for. He didn't show it for anyone else, and he didn't expect it for himself. You knew where you stood with him: You produced, or your head rolled. And you don't produce by showing Mercy or tolerating weakness, not for yourself, or for anyone else. The perks in life are reserved for those who claw their way to the top. No one else!

The CEO wouldn't have swallowed all that Mercy garbage. It was inconceivable that he had ever knelt in front of anybody, except maybe his own picture. So why didn't they just dig a hole in the ground and lower him into it? That would have been his way of doing it. None of this nonsense.

The funeral plagued him for weeks. He tried to wash it from his mind. But the sights and sounds and gestures in that church that spelled “Mercy” wouldn't leave him alone. They haunted him especially at night. Was he missing something?

But eventually he was caught up in the whirlwind again. The demands of survival in his world left no room for any misgivings. After all, a man has to be practical. You do what you have to, to get what you want, and you don't look back. And when it's all over, well, you did it your way.

But are you really sure you are not missing something? Something really important?

“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.” “When, Lord, when?”

*“Truly I say to you, as you did it **not** to one of the least of these, you did it **not** to Me.”*