



# PARISH LINK



The Newsletter of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice Issue 14, May 2015

## Summary of Pope Francis' Papal Bull of Indiction: Misericordiae Vultus (The face of Mercy)



God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones (cf. Ez 37:1-14). ... Let us be renewed by God's mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish.

- Pope Francis, Easter *Urbi et Orbi* message on March 31, 2013

## **INTRODUCTION BY LEELA RAMDEEN, CHAIR, CCSJ**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this issue of CCSJ's Parish Link, we share with you a summary of Pope Francis' Papal Bull /bull of indiction or proclamation of the extraordinary Holy/Jubilee Year of Mercy: *Misericordiae Vultus* (The face of Mercy). The CCSJ welcomes the Holy Father's declaration, made during a penitential service in St. Peter's basilica on March 13 – the second anniversary of his pontificate – of a “Jubilee Year of Mercy”.

The Year will commence with the opening of the Holy Door in St Peter's on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 2015, and will conclude on November 20, 2016 – the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. The opening will coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of the Vatican II Ecumenical Council.

The Year is to be celebrated in all Dioceses across the world. Pope Francis sees this as a way for the church to “make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy.”

Read the full Papal Bull on:

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/papa-francesco\\_bolla\\_20150411\\_misericordiae-vultus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html)

The Summary in this Newsletter is taken from:

<http://thedinemeracy.org/news/story.php?NID=6281>

As Catholic News Service stated: “Extraordinary holy years, like the Holy Year of Mercy...offer opportunities for spiritual growth.” On “announcing the publication of the papal bull, the Vatican press office also explained how formal papal documents came to have that name: ‘The term bull -- from the Latin 'bulla' meaning 'bubble' or, more generally, a rounded object -- originally indicated the metal capsule used to protect the wax seal attached with a cord to a document of particular importance to attest to its authenticity and, as a consequence, its authority.

““Over time, the term began to be used first to indicate the seal, then the document itself, so that nowadays it is used for all papal documents of special importance

that bear, or at least traditionally would have borne, the pontiff's seal,' the statement said.

“The papal bull for a holy year, it said, indicates its opening and closing dates and ‘main ways in which it will be implemented.’ It is considered the primary document for understanding ‘the intentions and the outcomes hoped for by the pontiff.’”

The Bull, which comprises 25 sections, outlines the key features of Mercy. Pope Francis reminds us in the Papal Bull that “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life.” (No.10).

St Thomas Aquinas defined the virtue of “mercy” as “the compassion in our hearts for another person’s misery, a compassion which drives us to do what we can to help him” (*Summa Theologiae*). If we recognise that Jesus is all that our “hungering” spirits need, then we must learn to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful (Luke 6:36).

You will recall Pope Francis’ plea in his 2015 Lenten Message: “How greatly I desire that all those places where the Church is present, especially our parishes and our communities, may become *islands of mercy* in the midst of the sea of indifference!”

This plea should resonate with us since we are people of the Beatitudes. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus’ 5th Beatitude states: “Blessed are the merciful; they shall have mercy shown them” (Mt 5:7). God has shown us mercy by sending his only Son, Jesus, to save us. “*He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy*” (Titus 3:5).

Sadly, as Pastor John Ritenbaugh states: “Mercy is not a quality we expect to see much these days. Instead, our eyes, ears and emotions are assaulted daily; even hourly in the case of radio and TV news items, by violence, injustice, willful stubbornness, intransigence, bigotry, scams, prejudice and intolerance... We need to remind ourselves from time to time that the Beatitudes represent signs of those who are truly Christ’s disciples...”

“The world from which we have all come...is unmerciful. The world prefers to insulate itself against the pains and calamities of others. It finds revenge delicious

and forgiveness tame and unsatisfying...Recognising God's mercy is a key element in motivating our expressions of mercy...God is our model of mercy, and we are to reflect His mercy in our actions toward fellow man." Robert Moynihan's insight is noteworthy: "What Pope Francis is doing by calling for this Jubilee Year of Mercy is to offer to all Christians the blessing of obtaining mercy by having and showing mercy to others."

To be authentic witnesses, let us demonstrate mercy and act on Archbishop Harris' request made at the Charismatic Congress in January 2015. He said: "I want every Catholic family in Trinidad and Tobago to have a missionary project...I want you, every family, to adopt a family. Have a missionary project and teach your children from now what it means to be a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, somebody sent by the Father, so that others can experience the tremendous love and mercy of Almighty God... people would know the God of mercy by *our love*...Your home has to be a school of authentic gospel living."

Pope Francis urged us on New Year's Day 2015, to recognise that: "This is the time of mercy. It is important that the lay faithful live it and bring it into different social environments. Go forth!" In each section of the Bull there are nuggets of wisdom from the Holy Father. Let us not forget the words of Saint John of the Cross: "as we prepare to leave this life, we will be judged on the basis of love."

As Pope Francis says in the Bull: May our Church "never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort. May the Church become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: 'Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old (Ps 25:6).'"

*Leela, Chair, CCSJ*



# Summary of the Papal Bull

**Title of the Papal Bull: Misericordiae Vultus**

**Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy**

**“Here's how the Pope opens the bull:**

Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him.

## **Reason for proclaiming Jubilee Year of Mercy**

We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. ... At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church; a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective.



*Pope Francis blessing a life-size Vilnius Divine Mercy image*

## **Reason for starting the Jubilee Year of Mercy on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.**

The Holy Year will open on 8 December 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. This liturgical feast day recalls God's action from the very beginning of the history of mankind. After the sin of Adam and Eve, God did not wish to leave humanity alone in the throes of evil. So he turned his gaze to Mary, holy and immaculate in love (cf. Eph 1:4), choosing her to be the Mother of man's Redeemer. When faced with the gravity of sin, God responds with the fullness of mercy. ... I have chosen the date of 8 December because of its rich meaning in the recent history of the Church. In fact, I will open the Holy Door on the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. The Church feels a great need to keep this event alive. ... We recall the poignant words of Saint John XXIII when, opening the Council, he indicated the path to follow: "Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up arms of severity."



### **Mercy as a key word that indicates God's action toward us.**

As we can see in Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God's action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviours that are shown in daily living. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of

Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other.



**Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life.**

Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.

The Pope draws from John Paul II's encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (*Rich in Mercy*):

Let us not forget the great teaching offered by Saint John Paul II in his second Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*, which at the time came unexpectedly, its theme catching many by surprise. There are two passages in particular to which I would

like to draw attention. First, Saint John Paul II highlighted the fact that we had forgotten the theme of mercy in today's cultural milieu: "The present-day mentality, more perhaps than that of people in the past, seems opposed to a God of mercy, and in fact tends to exclude from life and to remove from the human heart the very idea of mercy." ... Furthermore, Saint John Paul II pushed for a more urgent proclamation and witness to mercy in the contemporary world: "It is dictated by love for man, for all that is human and which, according to the intuitions of many of our contemporaries, is threatened by an immense danger. The mystery of Christ ... obliges me to proclaim mercy as God's merciful love, revealed in that same mystery of Christ. It likewise obliges me to have recourse to that mercy and to beg for it at this difficult, critical phase of the history of the Church and of the world." This teaching is more pertinent than ever and deserves to be taken up once again in this Holy Year.

### **The Church's call during the Jubilee Year of Mercy:**

The Church makes herself a servant of this love and mediates it to all people: a love that forgives and expresses itself in the gift of one's self. Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy.



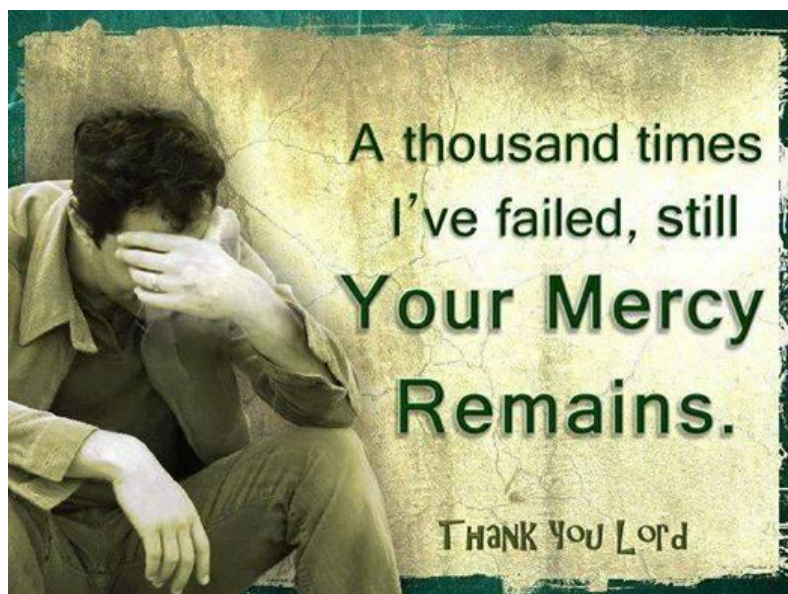


**Key scripture for the Jubilee Year: "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36).**

We want to live this Jubilee Year in light of the Lord's words: Merciful like the Father. The Evangelist reminds us of the teaching of Jesus who says, "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). It is a programme of life as demanding as it is rich with joy and peace. ... Merciful like the Father, therefore, is the "motto" of this Holy Year. In mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always, freely, asking nothing in return. He comes to our aid whenever we call upon him

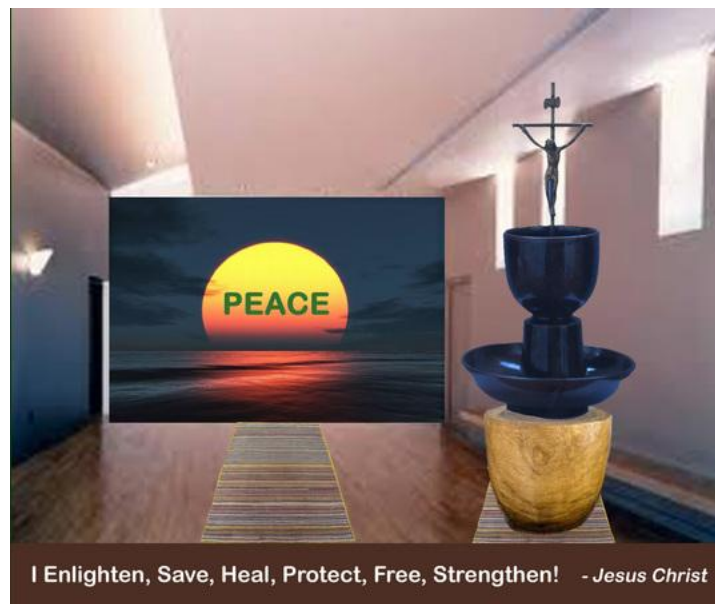
**Pope's burning desire that during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.**

It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.



**This is to be a "Year of the Lord's favour" or "mercy":**

Luke writes that Jesus, on the Sabbath, went back to Nazareth and, as was his custom, entered the synagogue. They called upon him to read the Scripture and to comment on it. The passage was from the Book of Isaiah where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those in captivity; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Is 61:1-2). A "year of the Lord's favour" or "mercy": this is what the Lord proclaimed and this is what we wish to live now. This Holy Year will bring to the fore the richness of Jesus' mission echoed in the words of the prophet: to bring a word and gesture of consolation to the poor, to proclaim liberty to those bound by new forms of slavery in modern society, to restore sight to those who can see no more because they are caught up in themselves, to restore dignity to all those from whom it has been robbed. The preaching of Jesus is made visible once more in the response of faith Christians are called to offer by their witness. May the words of the Apostle accompany us: He who does acts of mercy, let him do them with cheerfulness (cf. Rom 12:8).



**Missionaries of Peace virtual prayer room**

<http://peacewritings.wikifoundry.com/page/THE+PRAYER+ROOM>

**The season of Lent during this Jubilee Year is to be lived more intensely, with emphasis on the Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

The season of Lent during this Jubilee Year should also be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God's mercy. How many pages of Sacred Scripture are appropriate for meditation during the weeks of Lent to help us rediscover the merciful face of the Father! ... The initiative of "24 Hours for the Lord," to be celebrated on the Friday and Saturday preceding the Fourth Week of Lent, should be implemented in every diocese. So many people, including the youth, are returning to the Sacrament of Reconciliation; through this experience they are rediscovering a path back to the Lord, living a moment of intense prayer and finding meaning in their lives. Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the centre once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God's mercy with their own hands. For every penitent, it will be a source of true interior peace.

**During Lent, Pope Francis will send out Missionaries of Mercy:**

During Lent of this Holy Year, I intend to send out Missionaries of Mercy. They will be a sign of the Church's maternal solicitude for the People of God, enabling them to enter the profound richness of this mystery so fundamental to the faith. There will be priests to whom I will grant the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See, so that the breadth of their mandate as confessors will be even clearer. They will be, above all, living signs of the Father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon. ... I ask my brother Bishops to invite and welcome these Missionaries so that they can be, above all, persuasive preachers of mercy. May individual dioceses organize "missions to the people" in such a way that these Missionaries may be heralds of joy and forgiveness.



## **Goal of conversion in mind for those involved in criminal organizations and in corruption:**

May the message of mercy reach everyone, and may no one be indifferent to the call to experience mercy. I direct this invitation to conversion even more fervently to those whose behaviour distances them from the grace of God. I particularly have in mind men and women belonging to criminal organizations of any kind. For their own good, I beg them to change their lives. ... The same invitation is extended to those who either perpetrate or participate in corruption. This festering wound is a grave sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance, because it threatens the very foundations of personal and social life. Corruption prevents us from looking to the future with hope, because its tyrannical greed shatters the plans of the weak and tramples upon the poorest of the poor.

## **Granting of indulgences for the Jubilee:**

A Jubilee also entails the granting of indulgences. This practice will acquire an even more important meaning in the Holy Year of Mercy. God's forgiveness knows no bounds. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God makes even more evident his love and its power to destroy all human sin. Reconciliation with God is made possible through the paschal mystery and the mediation of the Church. Thus God is always ready to forgive, and he never tires of forgiving in ways that are continually new and surprising. ... To gain an indulgence is to experience the holiness of the Church, who bestows upon all the fruits of Christ's redemption, so that God's love and forgiveness may extend everywhere. Let us live this Jubilee intensely, begging the Father to forgive our sins and to bathe us in His merciful "indulgence."



**Mercy in Judaism and Islam:** There is an aspect of mercy that goes beyond the confines of the Church. It relates us to Judaism and Islam, both of which consider mercy to be one of God's most important attributes. ... I trust that this Jubilee year celebrating the mercy of God will foster an encounter with these religions and with other noble religious traditions; may it open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; may it eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination.

**Towards the end of the bull, Pope Francis turns to Mary, Mother of Mercy:**

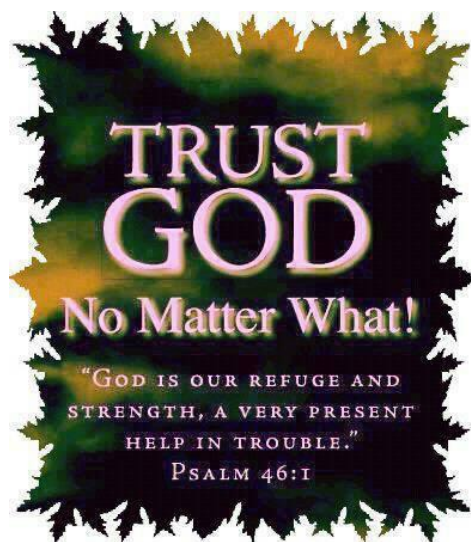
My thoughts now turn to the Mother of Mercy. May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God's tenderness. No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh. The Mother of the Crucified and Risen One has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she participated intimately in the mystery of his love.

**After Mary as the Mother of Mercy, Pope extends his thoughts to the saints and blessed ones who have made divine mercy their mission in life. In this regard, he singles out St. Faustina:**

Our prayer also extends to the saints and blessed ones who made divine mercy their mission in life. I am especially thinking of the great apostle of mercy, Saint Faustina Kowalska. May she, who was called to enter the depths of divine mercy, intercede for us and obtain for us the grace of living and walking always according to the mercy of God and with an unwavering trust in his love.



**How the Pope ends his bull:** In this Jubilee Year, may the Church echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love. May she never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort. May the Church become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: "Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old" (Ps 25:6).”  
<http://thedivinemeracy.org/news/story.php?NID=6281>



## Divine Mercy Litany, from St Faustina Kowalska's Diary

Divine Mercy, gushing forth from the bosom of the Father, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, greatest attribute of God, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, incomprehensible mystery, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, fountain gushing forth from the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, unfathomed by any intellect, human or angelic, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, from which wells forth all life and happiness, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, better than the heavens, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, source of miracles and wonders, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, encompassing the whole universe, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, descending to earth in the Person of the Incarnate Word, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, which flowed out from the open wound of the Heart of Jesus, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, enclosed in the Heart of Jesus for us, and especially for sinners, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, unfathomed in the institution of the Sacred Host, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, in the founding of the Holy Church, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, in our justification through Jesus Christ, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, accompanying us through our whole life, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, embracing us especially at the hour of death, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, endowing us with immortal life, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, accompanying us every moment of our life, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, shielding us from the fire of hell, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, in the conversion of hardened sinners, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, astonishment for Angels, incomprehensible to Saints, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, unfathomed in all the mysteries of God, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, lifting us out of every misery, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, source of our happiness and joy, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, in calling us forth from nothingness to existence, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, embracing all the works of His hands, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, crown of all God's handiwork, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, in which we are all immersed, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, sweet relief for anguished hearts, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, only hope of despairing souls, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, repose of hearts, peace amidst fear, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, delight and ecstasy of holy souls, *I trust in You*  
Divine Mercy, inspiring hope against all hope, *I trust in You*

### Prayer:

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.

## CCSJ RESOURCES

- Take-a-Bite DVD Series:  
Fr. Jason Gordon (now Bishop Gordon): Overview of Social Justice  
Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues: Global Solidarity  
Sr Diane Jagdeo (now deceased): Human Life and Dignity  
Dr John Agard: Stewards of God's Creation  
Ms. Leela Ramdeen: Rights and Responsibilities
- DVD Series of "Ask Why" TV Programme on Social Justice issues
- Responses to 101 Questions on Catholic Social Teaching (KR Himes): \$80.00
- Compendium of The Social Doctrine of the Church (Pontifical Council for Justice & Peace): \$140.00

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