



Jubilee Year of Mercy

Tues, Dec 8, 2015 - Nov 20, 2016

Bull of Indiction “*Misericordiae Vultus*”:

*“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy.”**

Pope Francis stated, “I am convinced that the whole Church can find in this [Extraordinary] Jubilee [of Mercy] the joy to rediscover and make fruitful the mercy of God, with which we are all called to give consolation to each man and each woman of our time.

We entrust it to the Mother of Mercy, so that She may turn towards us Her gaze and watch over our path.”

The Jubilee Year of Mercy begins on the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. On March 13, 2015, Pope Francis stated: “This is of great significance, for it impels the Church to continue the work begun at Vatican II”.

WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF MERCY:

CORPORAL & SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY:

Practice the Works of Mercy on your own or in a group, by participating in Outreach Ministries in our parish and local community and donating to the quarterly collections for the needy - live out the Corporal Works of Mercy daily! At the Cathedral, we will highlight special ways to live out the works of Mercy during Lent, as well as special ways to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

CATHEDRAL LENTEN CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

Each year, our parish devotes the season of Lent to various Works of Mercy. During this Year of Mercy parishioners are encouraged to take part in Works of Mercy all year round. Visit our website’s Outreach Ministry page.

DIOCESAN ACTS OF MERCY:

The Diocese is inviting every parishioner and parish family to take part in Works of Mercy during this Year of Mercy. Look for details in our weekly bulletins, and on their website, www.dioshpt.org.

#52weeksofmercy: Every Tuesday the diocese will promote a new Work of Mercy to be completed that week. Visit the Diocesan facebook page. Invite family and friends to join you in acts of mercy each week.

Mercy in Action: Each month the Catholic Connection will feature an individual/parish’s efforts in the Spiritual/Corporal Works of Mercy.

PARABLES DEVOTED TO MERCY:

*“In these parables, God is always presented as full of joy, especially when He pardons.”**

In the parables exemplifying mercy, Jesus reveals the nature of God as that of “a Father who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy.” Take time to read three parables in particular, Luke 15:1-32: the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the father with two sons. Why are we called to show mercy? Because mercy has first been shown to us! Even when it might be difficult to forgive, joyful living comes when we let go of anger and revenge.

BEATITUDE OF MERCY:

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” (Mt 5:7)

Aspire to live by this beatitude during the year.

MOMENTS OF MERCY WITH POPE FRANCIS:

Throughout the year, Pope Francis will do Jubilee signs of mercy; consider ways to practice these signs of mercy and invite family members, friends and your small groups to join you. Look for more details to come as our Pope gives us guidance. There will also be short monthly suggestions on www.usccb.org for ways to make merciful acts a part of your every day (coming in December). Their website also includes monthly scriptural reflections / meditations on mercy. Reflect more deeply on God’s call to mercy and consider ways to show mercy by reaching out to the handicapped, elderly, hungry, and homeless, on your own, with your family and friends or within small groups. Special outreach programs will be planned throughout the year.

*“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. Mercy: the
fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks
sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life.*

*Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to
the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.”**

MERCY IN SCRIPTURE:

*God declares to Moses that He is “merciful and gracious, long-suffering
and abounding in goodness” (Ex 34:6)*

*Indeed, God is merciful in His forgiveness, His treatment towards the
people of Israel, just as Jesus is merciful to those who cry out to Him
seeking assistance and compassion, “...be merciful to me a sinner” (Lk 18:13).*

“Be merciful just as your Father is merciful... (Lk 6:36)

In order to be capable of mercy, we must first listen to the Word of God and then meditate on the Word. Only then can we adopt God’s mercy as our lifestyle.

MERCY IN THE EUCHARIST:

Penitential Act: *May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.*

Option B: *Have mercy on us, O Lord ... Show us, O Lord, your mercy ...*

May Almighty God have mercy on us ...

Kyrie: *Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*

Rite for the Blessing & Sprinkling of Water: *Grant, O Lord, in your mercy,
that living waters may always spring up for our salvation; Lord our God, in
your mercy, be present to your people’s prayers ... You also have made water
the instrument of your mercy ...*

Gloria: *... you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us ...you are
seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us ...*

Lord’s Prayer: *... graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your
mercy, we may be always free from sin ...*

Fraction of the Bread: *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us ...*

PSALMS TO LIVE BY:

*“He forgives all your iniquity ... He crowns you with steadfast love and
mercy” (Psalm 103:3-4)*

Consider ways to show mercy in a concrete way by letting it flow naturally, as you show tenderness and compassion to others.

LEARN FROM THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS:

“I forgive ...”

Saint Maria Goretti is a wonderful example of mercy, and also the youngest canonized saint in the Church who died at the age of eleven at the hands of an attacker. On her deathbed, her last words were, “I forgive Alessandro Serenelli ... and I want him with me in heaven forever.”

** Misericordiae Vultus*

www.sjbcathedral.org/year-of-mercy-at-the-cathedral/

PORTA SANCTA

Walking through the HOLY DOOR

*"We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy." **

CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN BERCHMANS - HOLY DOOR PILGRIMAGE SITE:

In the Diocese of Shreveport, the Cathedral has been designated as a place of pilgrimage with a Holy Door during the Year of Mercy.



Left: Bishop Michael Duca formally closing the Holy Door, Wednesday, August 12, 2015, in anticipation of the Holy Year.

Bishop Duca celebrated the Opening of the Holy Door on Sunday, December 13, 2015.

Consider your options for a pilgrimage during this year. Each time you travel, locate the Cathedral and other holy places designated with a Holy Door and plan a visit!

Avail yourself of the blessings and indulgences offered from the treasury of God's infinite graces by walking through the Holy Door at the Cathedral of St. John Berchmans. Traditionally, only the four major basilicas of Rome had Holy Doors. But Pope Francis has rewritten the rules and said that every Catholic cathedral in the world may designate a Holy Door to be open for the Jubilee Year, which Bishop Duca has done. In effect, Pope Francis has designated our Cathedral to be a site of pilgrimage during this Holy Year.

"God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." (Jn 3:17) It is only through him that we can enter into salvation. There's the whole biblical idea behind the pious act of passing through a holy door as a prayerful, penitent pilgrim to profit from and take advantage of the special graces and blessings of the Jubilee Year, knowing salvation is only possible through Him who said: "I am the gate, whoever enters through me will be saved." (Jn 10:9) The door itself confers nothing. It is a metaphor for Christ; it is a metaphor for change, for transformation; it is a way for pilgrims to acknowledge to themselves & to everyone that they really are on a spiritual journey and are taking a step toward something new in their lives.

Prayerfully prepare yourself to humbly walk through the Holy Door to receive a plenary indulgence. Remember, the forgiveness received by going to confession applies to the guilt of yourself; there may still be consequences of your sin that you may have to pay for in this life or in the life to come. An indulgence is a way to lessen that penalty. For example, if someone commits a crime, he may be sentenced to jail-time as a punishment. Though he may be sorry for his crime and truly apologize, he must still serve his sentence and deal with the consequences of his crime. (Read more about indulgences in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 1470 ff.)

Let me suggest the following:

1. Form an intention to receive the plenary indulgence, to be applied to yourself or to another person, living or deceased.
2. Leave home as if on a pilgrimage. Turn the radio off or listen to religious music or pray the rosary as a penitent pilgrim.

3. Approach the Holy Door, as Pope Francis says, with "the deep desire for true conversion," and stand before it, mindful of your intention, and pray, for example, the prayer composed by Pope Francis himself (see below).
4. Walk through the Holy Door, praying the same prayers our Bishop prayed when he solemnly opened and then entered through the Holy Door:

"Open the gates of justice, we shall enter and gives thanks to the Lord." (Ps 118:19)

"I am the gate, says the Lord, whoever enters through me, will be saved; he will enter and go out and find pasture." (Jn 10:9)

"This is the Lord's gate: let us enter through it and obtain mercy & forgiveness."

5. Go to confession (before or after walking through the Holy Door).
6. Receive the Holy Eucharist "with a reflection of mercy."
7. Pray for the pope and for his intentions. For example, pray the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be.

We who are quick to ask for our Heavenly Father's mercy must be quick to show mercy to others:
Be merciful like the Father.

Expect extraordinary conversions in the course of this Holy Year: worldwide, in our own city, in our own parish and family.

Expect extraordinary graces! Prepare for them!

Father Peter

PRAYER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.

Show us your face and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;

the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.

Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God!"

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 its 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.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.