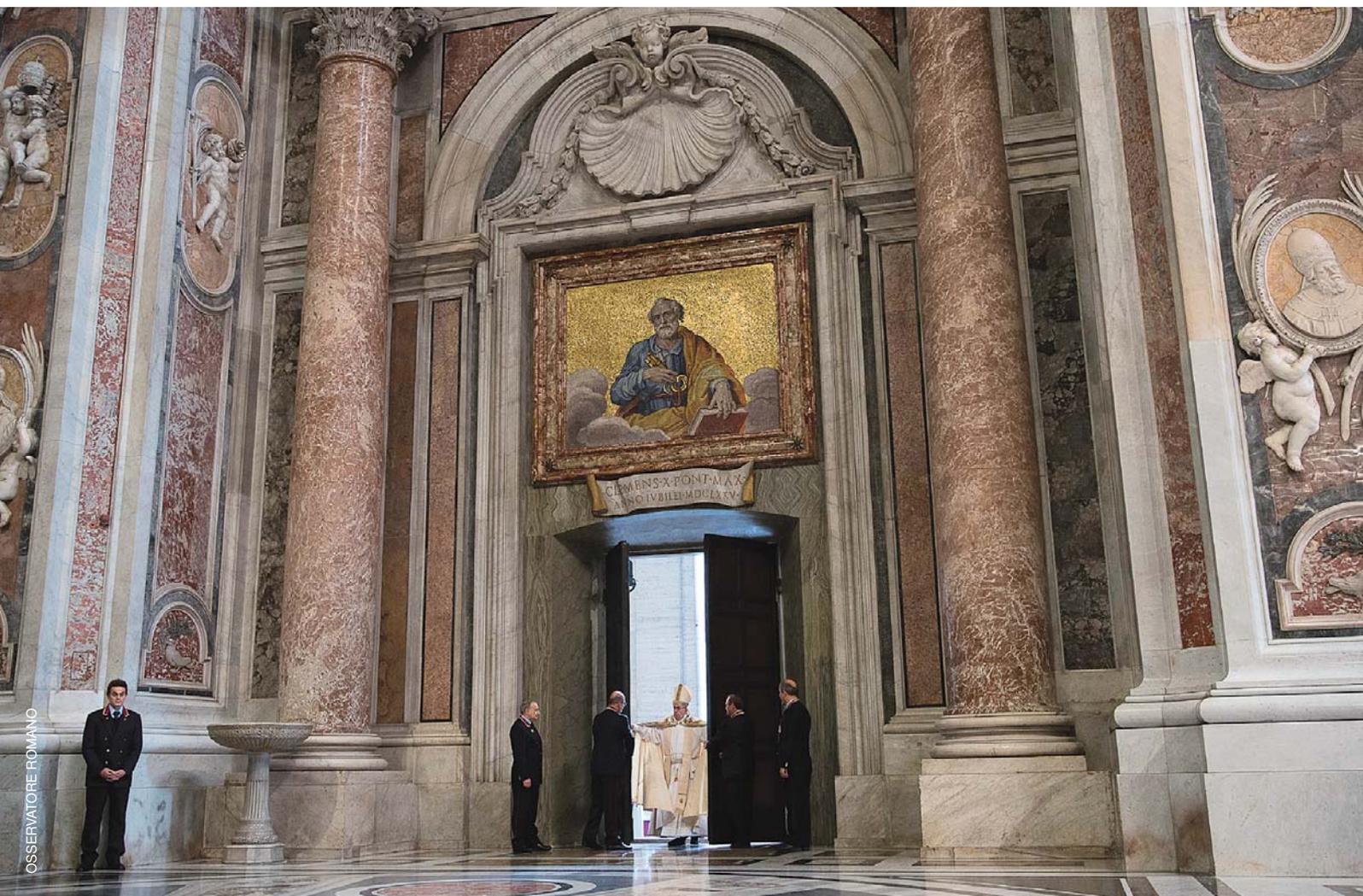


THE ORDER IN UNION WITH THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

JUBILEE OF MERCY

A New Future Offered to Mankind

Traditionally, every 25 years the Pope proclaims a holy year. The next one was scheduled for 2025... However, during the “24 Hours for the Lord” penitential celebration on Friday March 13, 2015, the Pope surprised us all: on the occasion of the second anniversary of his papacy, he announced an extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Opened on December 8, this event will go until November 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King.



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Pope Francis' Prayer for the 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 for ever and ever.
Amen.*

The Jubilee celebrates the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, as the Year of Faith (2012-2013) marked the 50th anniversary of its opening. From Pope Benedict XVI to Pope Francis, the Catholic Church speaks with one voice to proclaim the Gospel in a new language, as initiated by the Council Fathers and prompted by the Holy Spirit a half century ago.

The address by Pope Paul VI, during the last general meeting of the Second Vatican Council on December 7, 1965, giving the Good Samaritan as the model for the renewal of the Church, is an important

After passing through the Holy Door, the Holy Father was followed by his predecessor. This common experience is a sign of their deep unity at the service of a Church that is "open to the world", 50 years after the close of the Council pope emeritus à Pope Emeritus participated in as a young theologian.

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reference for understanding the meaning of what we experience during the Holy Year. “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (*Luke* 6:36): each of us needs to personally obey Christ’s call and live accordingly, together as a missionary people proclaiming God’s love and tenderness. In this perspective, the Pope hopes that this Jubilee is also occurring in local Churches, in a decentralized manner, and that initiatives are complementary. Therefore, each diocese has had the opportunity of opening a Door of Mercy, particularly in Marian Shrines.

Regarding the Roman Calendar (see www.im.va), in addition to the major events planned such as the one for volunteers actively involved in the works of mercy on September 4 or for detainees on November 6, the Pope plans to symbolically visit the “existential peripheries”, hoping that bishops and priests will do the same throughout this Holy Year, to witness the spiritual conversion through gestures of forgiveness, support, help and love. This will also be an invitation to Judaism and Islam to

“ We all have the opportunity to give up the certainty of feeling ‘just’ and constantly judging others, to abandon the pride that pushes us to always be right, to love and forgive generously ”

continue discussions on the common basis of mercy.

Citing a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness (*Exodus* 34:6), the Hebrew Bible uses the word “rahaimim”, which evokes the maternal womb, the place from which life comes. The Hebrew word “hesed” is also used in the scriptures to express other aspects of merciful love, faithfulness, kindness, goodness and solidarity.

“Making space for the Lord so that he can come and change me”

The love of God is inexplicable, “it is something that no theologian can explain. One can only feel and cry with joy,” said the Holy Father during a morning Mass, emphasizing the Gospel of the day, which described the healing of the royal official’s son. This man believed that Jesus had the power to heal his son and set out to find God. Faith means “creating a space for love” that is the power of God, Pope Francis added brightly: “it’s

“The Church is called to reach people wherever they are, in order to bring the joy of the Gospel to them...”

December 8 marked the 1,000th day of Pope Francis’ papacy. Saint Peter’s Square was cordoned off by police, yet the faithful, who arrived at dawn, were able to be present in large numbers at the opening of the extraordinary Holy Year on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The beauty of the celebration opened our hearts to the promise of renewed life.

The weather, cloudy at first, cleared up as usual when the Pope appeared, as he would soon open the “Holy Door of Mercy”. “We carry out this act, so simple yet so highly symbolic, in the light of the word of God which we have just heard. That word highlights the primacy of grace,” he explained during his homily, commenting on the visit made to Mary by the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation.

“When Gabriel entered her home, even the most profound and impenetrable of mysteries became for her a cause for joy, faith and abandonment to the message revealed to her. The fullness of grace can transform the human heart and enable it to do something so great as to change the course of human history,” Peter’s successor emphasized, encouraging us to reaffirm our confidence in God’s love “which precedes, anticipates and saves.”

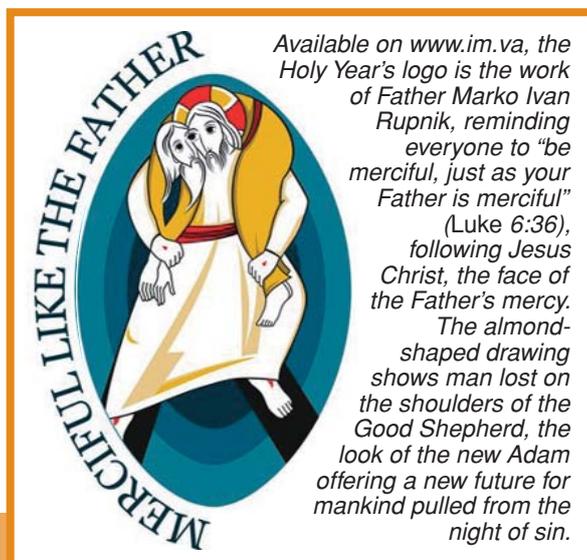
“Yet the history of sin can only be understood in the light of God’s love and forgiveness. Sin can only be understood in this light. Were sin the only thing that mattered, we would be the most desperate of creatures. But the promised triumph of Christ’s love enfolds everything in the Father’s mercy”.

The Immaculate Virgin stands before us as a

the power of the one who loves me, who is in love with me and who wants to rejoice with me.” “This is faith,” he concluded, “making space for the Lord so that he can come and change me”. We will first experience this in the sacrament of reconciliation, in the heart of all our tears, on the occasion of the Holy Year of Mercy, to then become humble and joyful witnesses.

During the great persecution of the Christ’s Church in many countries from Pakistan to Nigeria through Libya, Syria and Iraq, Saint Peter’s successor will feed his sheep in many tribulations. May this Jubilee “bring comfort to every man and woman of our time,” as Pope Francis wants, recalling that “God forgives all, and God forgives

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Available on www.im.va, the Holy Year’s logo is the work of Father Marko Ivan Rupnik, reminding everyone to “be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36), following Jesus Christ, the face of the Father’s mercy. The almond-shaped drawing shows man lost on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd, the look of the new Adam offering a new future for mankind pulled from the night of sin.

always.” (homily of March 13, 2015).

Let us henceforth entrust this Year to the Mother of Mercy, “that she turn her gaze upon us

and watch over our journey: our penitential journey, our year-long journey with an open heart, to receive the indulgence of God, to receive the mercy of God.” More broadly, we all have the opportunity to give up the certainty of feeling “just” and constantly judging others, to abandon the pride that pushes us to always be right, to love and forgive generously. As Pope Francis said in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, *Misericordiae Vultus* (no. 20), based on Psalm 50: “God’s justice is his mercy”.

Emmanuel Nayev

“privileged witness of this promise and its fulfillment”.

Pope Francis urged us to pass through the Holy Door knowing that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love. “Let us set aside all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. Instead, let us experience the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things”, he continued.

The Ave Maria of Lourdes set the tempo of the mass, in an atmosphere of intense prayer. Francis’ predecessor, Benedict XVI, followed him through the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica, showing their deep unity in service to a Church “open to the world”, 50 years after the closing of the Second Vatican Council, in which Pope Emeritus took part as a young theologian.

“A genuine encounter between the Church and the men and women of our time. An encounter marked by the power of the Spirit, who impelled the Church to emerge from the shoals which for years had kept her self-enclosed so as to set out once again, with

enthusiasm, on her missionary journey. It was

the resumption of a journey of encountering people where they live: in their cities and homes, in their workplaces. Wherever there are people, the Church is called to reach out to them and to bring the joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis explained, talking about a “missionary drive”, and that the Jubilee causes this openness “in the spirit which emerged from Vatican II, the spirit of the Samaritan”.

“May our passing through the Holy Door today commit us to making our own the mercy of the Good Samaritan,” he concluded, eager to lead the whole People of God in an evangelical renewal movement, expressed in concrete gestures of solidarity.

Borrowing the words that the Pope used during the Angelus, let us pray and ask every day of the Holy Year that “through the intercession of Immaculate Mary, may mercy take possession of our hearts and transform our whole life.”

F.V.

LIVING THE JUBILEE OF MERCY IN THE HOLY LAND

Our readers will soon be able to download a spiritual aid that will be available on our website (info.oessh.va). It was made possible by the Communication Services of the Order in Rome, in coordination with Msgr. Fortunato Frezza, biblical scholar and Master of Ceremonies of the Order, and is intended to accompany the Jubilee journey in the Holy Land, mainly in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. This booklet may also help to nourish prayer there, where everyone is connected in communion with our brothers and sisters who live in the lands of the Bible. For those who have the opportunity of visiting the Holy Land, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has opened various “Holy Doors”, which we describe to you below.

On Sunday, December 13, in the Basilica of the Agony at Gethsemane, Msgr. Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, opened the Holy Year of Mercy in Jerusalem. Two other Holy Doors allow pilgrims to live the Jubilee: one that was opened in Bethlehem on December 24, at the Latin Church of St. Catherine – beside the basilica which was built on the site where Jesus was born – and the other in Nazareth on December 27, the Feast of the Holy Family, at the Basilica of the Annunciation. Other Jubilee Doors are also open in the Holy Land, dedicated more closely to the local communities. In particular, with regard to Catholics belonging to the Latin Rite, Msgr. Twal opened the Holy Door in Gaza on December 20 at the Church of the Holy Family, while in Amman, Jordan, the Holy Door was opened on December 12 at the Church of St. John the Baptist de la Salle.

