

The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy

8 December 2015 – 20 November 2016



In Lent of this year, Pope Francis announced that a Jubilee Year of Mercy would begin on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December 2015, and conclude on the Feast of Christ the King, 20 November 2016. Jubilee years were celebrated every seven years in Old Testament times. During these years the land was allowed to rest, debts were forgiven and slaves were set free. In more recent times, jubilee years are announced every twenty-five to fifty years and they are seen as times when we can become more aware of God's blessing and pardon and when sins are forgiven. The last great jubilee year was in 2000.

Every pope has the power to decide to hold an Extraordinary Jubilee Year when he wants to draw our attention to something important. Pope Francis has constantly stressed God's mercy throughout his short time as pope, and so he has decided to declare a year when we remember that our God is a God of mercy, a God of love and compassion, a God who forgives all and always forgives. Pope Francis said when he announced the Year of Mercy that *God's mercy is for everyone; no one is excluded*. During this special year we are invited to explore what that means for each one of us as a member of God's family.

The **motto** for this Jubilee of Mercy is 'Merciful Like the Father'. Pope Francis said that this *serves as an invitation to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure*.

The **logo** for the Jubilee of Mercy is an image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, carrying a lost person or soul on his shoulders, just as the good shepherd carries the lost sheep. The image, by Jesuit Fr Marko Rupnik, is drawn so that Jesus and the lost person he carries share an eye, showing us that we see with the eyes of Jesus and he sees with our eyes.

Holy Doors in a Jubilee Year

Holy Doors are found in each of the four main churches or basilicas in Rome: St Peter's, St John Lateran's, St Mary Major's and St Paul's Outside the Walls. Traditionally, Holy Doors are bricked up at the end of the jubilee year. The unblocking of the Holy Door in St Peter's began on 16 November 2015, so that it was ready for Pope Francis to unlock on 8 December 2015.

*'It's a door that opens
in the Church in order
to reach out to those
who, for many reasons,
are far away.'*

Pope Francis



The Holy Door of the Papal Basilica of St Peter in Rome, with panels showing stories from the Bible



Holy Doors in Dioceses all over the World

During this Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis asks that bishops open a Holy Door in the cathedral and other churches of their dioceses. This is the first time that this has happened during a jubilee year.

Check with your diocese to see where the Holy Door has been opened.

Prayer for the Jubilee Year 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.

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 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

Adapted from Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Mercy