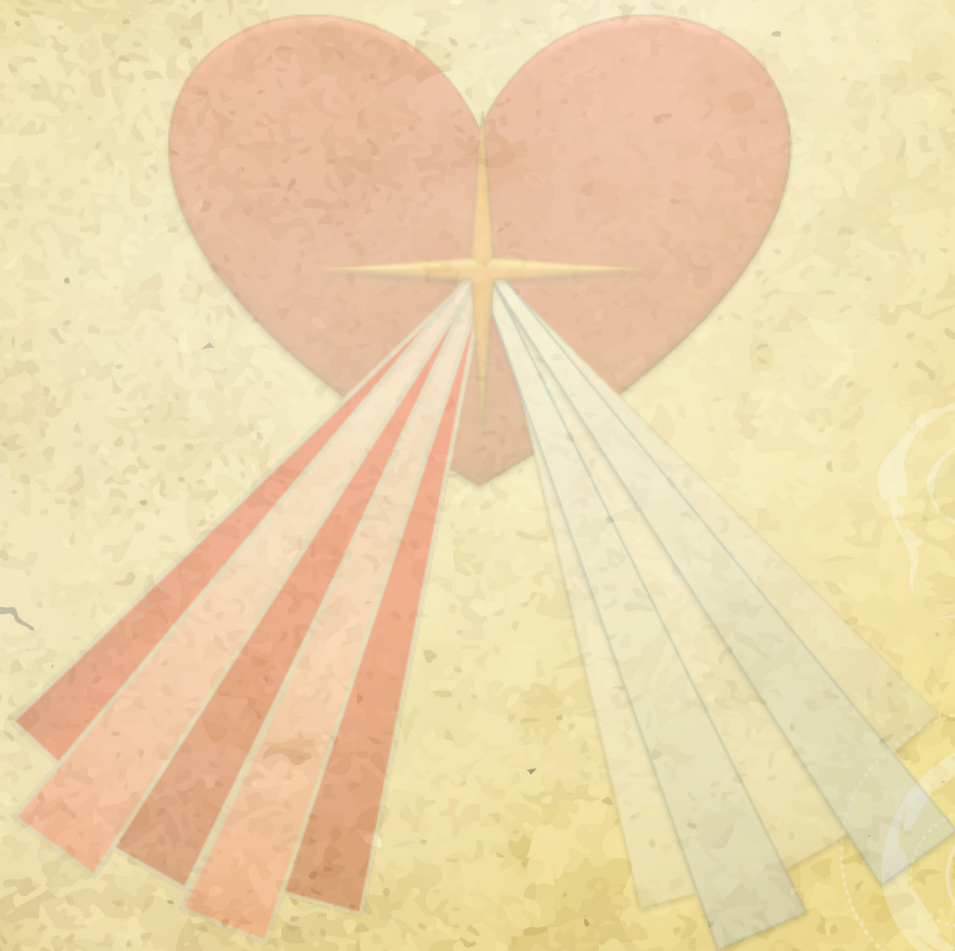


Jubilee Year of

MERCY



“Be **merciful**, just as
your Father **is** merciful.”

(John 6: 36)



Gathering Prayer

Dear Lord and Father,

Thank you that you promise us that where two or three are gathered you are there in the midst.

Lord we welcome You amongst us today and celebrate the gift of life that you have lavished upon each of us.

We ask that You would open our ears so that we may hear your voice.

Open our minds so that we may receive Your eternal wisdom.

Open our spirits so that we may know Your leading and guidance.

And open our hearts so that we may receive Your wonderful love.

We ask all this in the glorious name of Jesus.

Amen.

(Source: http://www.lords-prayer-words.com/times/opening_prayer.html)





Introduction

On March 12, 2015 at St Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis announced there was to be an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. He urged us to open our hearts and become part of the human journey with a renewed spiritual awareness, seeing the goodness and mercy of God, living in everyone.

“Dear brothers and sisters, I have often thought of how the Church may render more clear her mission to be a witness to mercy; and we have to make this journey. It is a journey which begins with spiritual conversion. Therefore, I have decided to announce an Extraordinary Jubilee which has at its centre the mercy of God. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live in the light of the word of the Lord: “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (cf. Lk 6:36). And this especially applies to confessors! So much mercy!...

I am confident that the whole Church, which is in such need of mercy for we are sinners, will be able to find in this Jubilee the joy of rediscovering and rendering fruitful God's mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time. Do not forget that God forgives all, and God forgives always. Let us never tire of asking forgiveness. 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.”

(Homily: Friday, March 13, 2015 St Peter's Basilica)

REFLECTION

What does mercy mean to me?

How can I seek mercy and be merciful?

What needs to die in me for this change to occur?

“Neither do I condemn you;

Go and from now on sin no more.”

(John 8:11)

The Logo and Motto



‘The logo and the motto together provide a fitting summary of what the Jubilee Year is all about.

The motto: Merciful Like the Father (taken from the Gospel of Luke, 6:36) 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 (cfr. Lk 6:37-38).

The logo – the work of Jesuit Father Marko I. Rupnik – presents a small summa theologiae of the theme of mercy. It represents an image quite important to the early Church: that of the Son having taken upon his shoulders the lost soul demonstrating that it is the love of Christ that brings to completion the mystery of his incarnation culminating in redemption. The logo has been designed in such a way so as to express the profound way in which the Good Shepherd touches the flesh of humanity and does so with a love with the power to change one’s life. One particular feature worthy of note is that while the Good Shepherd, in his great mercy, takes humanity upon himself, his eyes are merged with those of man.

Christ sees with the eyes of Adam, and Adam with the eyes of Christ. Every person discovers in Christ, the new Adam, one’s own humanity and the future that lies ahead, contemplating, in his gaze, the love of the Father.

The scene is captured within the so called mandorla (the shape of an almond), a figure quite important in early and medieval iconography, for it calls to mind the two natures of Christ, divine and human. The three concentric ovals, with colors progressively lighter as we move outward, suggest the movement of Christ who carries humanity out of the night of sin and death. Conversely, the depth of the darker color suggests the impenetrability of the love of the Father who forgives all.’

(source: <http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en/giubileo/logo.html>)

The Holy Door

Our Pilgrimage

During the Holy Year of Mercy, we are called to make a pilgrimage, to ask God for forgiveness and renew our faith. In this Year of Mercy, the Pope has called The Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica: The Holy Door of Mercy 2016.

“I am the gate. Whoever enters through me, will be safe. He will go in and out, and find pasture”

(John10:9)



The last door on the right of St Peter's Basilica is the "Holy Door". This door is bricked up on the inside. On the first day of the Holy Year the Pope strikes the brick wall with a hammer, and so opens the door to let in the pilgrims who come to make the most of the indulgence. It will be closed by the Pope himself at the end of the Holy Year. The Holy Door represents Jesus, the Good Shepherd and the gate of the sheep pen: **“I am the gate. Whoever enters through me, will be safe. He will go in and out, and find pasture”** (Jn 10:9)



This door is also called the “Door of the Great Pardon”. Its panels portray scenes of man’s sin and his redemption through God’s mercy:

1. Through disobedience Adam and Eve turned away from God and happiness and were chased from the garden; Mary receives the announcement of salvation from the angel and directs humanity back to God.



The Angel at the Gates of Paradise



The Fall



Mary
The Annunciation



The Angel of the Annunciation

2. Through Baptism, Jesus permits us to join his People; he comes to seek us when we stray from him, as the shepherd goes in search of his lost sheep; he awaits our return and welcomes us at the door, as the father welcomes the prodigal son; he cures those who are paralyzed by sin.



Christ's Baptism in the Jordan



The Lost Sheep



The Merciful Father



The Cure of a Paralytic



3. Jesus opens the door of new life to the woman who is sinful but can love; Jesus tells Peter that one must forgive seventy times seven times. Jesus trusts anew in the man who promises fidelity and then denies him; Jesus opens the door of heaven to the thief who calls on him.



The Woman who was a Sinner



The Need for Forgiveness



Peter's Denial



In Front of the Crucifix
The Good Thief

4. Jesus unlocks the heart of doubting Thomas to the faith; he gives his Spirit to the Apostles to enable them to forgive sins; he tumbles Paul from his horse and suddenly opens up a whole new world to him; he knocks at everyone's door and waits for us to open it.



The Appearance to Thomas



Christ's Appearance to The Disciples



The Conversion of Saul



Opening the Holy Door



Reflection

Those who pass through a Holy Door during this jubilee year will receive a plenary indulgence, which removes all of the temporal punishment for sins committed up to that time – provided they also go to confession, receive Communion, and pray for the pope.

Let us take some time to imagine the ‘pilgrimage’ to St Peter’s Basilica. You are invited to close your eyes to begin this journey where you will walk through the Holy Doors of Mercy and with a guide, learn more about what the Year of Mercy means:

http://ec.libsyn.com/p/7/d/2/7d2d94b795330913/MM_Audio_Eng_2.mp3?d13a76d516d9dec-20c3d276ce028ed5089ab1ce3dae902ea1d06cd8733d1cf5ac485&c_id=10430162





Our Year of Mercy

Beyond the opening of the Holy Doors, there will be monthly events headed by Pope Francis aimed to shine a light on 14 “works of mercy,” acts that are intended to be both penance and charity.

These works of mercy are divided into “corporal” and “spiritual,” and they include feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, sheltering the homeless, instructing the ignorant, and praying for the living and the dead.

What can WE do?

In our local Marist Association community, what can we do
to mirror Pope Francis’ works of mercy?





Year of Mercy Hymn

Misericordes sicut Pater! (Be merciful as your heavenly Father!)

Misericordes sicut Pater! Misericordes sicut Pater! (repeat)

Rendiamo grazie al Padre, perche e buono

Give thanks to the Father, for He is good

in aeternum misericordia eius

Ha creato il mondo con sapienza

He created the world with wisdom

in aeternum misericordia eius

Conduce il suo popolo nella storia

He leads His people throughout history

in aeternum misericordia eius

Perdona e accoglie i suoi Figli

He pardons and welcomes His children

in aeternum misericordia eius

Rendiamo grazie al Figlio, luce delle genti

Give thanks to the Son, Light of the Nations

in aeternum misericordia eius

Ci ha amati con un cuore dicarne

He loved us with a heart of flesh

in aeternum misericordia eius

Da Lui riceviamo, a Lui ci doniamo

As we receive from Him, let us also give to Him

in aeternum misericordia eius

Il cuore si apra a chi ha fame e sete

Hearts open to those who hunger and thirst

in aeternum misericordia eius

Chiediamo allo Spirito i sette santi doni

Let us ask the Spirit for the seven holy gifts

in aeternum misericordia eius

Fonte di ogni bene, dolcissimo sollievo

Fount of all goodness and the sweetest relief

in aeternum misericordia eius

Da Lui confortari, offriamo conforto

Comforted by Him, let us offer comfort

in aeternum misericordia eius

L'amore spera e tutto sopporta

Love hopes and bears all things

in aeternum misericordia eius

Chiediamo la pace al Dio di ogni pace

Let us ask for peace from the God of all peace

in aeternum misericordia eius

La terra aspetta il vangelo del Regno

The earth waits for the Good News of the Kingdom

in aeternum misericordia eius

Gioia e perdona nel cuore dei piccolo

Joy and pardon in the hearts of the little ones

in aeternum misericordia eius

Saranno nuovi i cieli e la terra

The heavens and the earth will be renewed

in aeternum misericordia eius

Closing Prayer

Prayer for the 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.
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 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.

(Pope Francis 2015)



<http://www.drawneartogod.com/>