

Holy Year "Jubilee of Mercy"

On March 13, 2015, the Second anniversary of his election as the Successor of Peter, Pope Francis announced the Extraordinary Holy Year. This is the first Holy Year to celebrate not an anniversary of some kind, but the attribute of God the Father which is most exalted in both the Old and the New Testaments: His Mercy.

The degree to which mercy occupies a central place in the pontificate of Pope Francis is clear right from his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangeliu Gaudium*, in which the Holy Father writes "The church has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of her own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy" (EG.24)

Pope Francis strongly desires that the upcoming Extraordinary Holy Year be celebrated not just in Rome but in every Particular Church as a sign of unity and Charity.

The call "to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action" (*Misericordiae Vultus, 3, the Bull of Indiction*) must, in fact, be answered in every part of the world. He has asked every Diocese to have at least one "Door of Mercy" if not more, preferably in the Cathedral church. There can be more churches esp. the centers of pilgrimages and places of special devotions. The *Door of Mercy* is a special Door which Pope Francis has asked to be opened on 13th December in every Diocese during the Extraordinary Holy Year in order to allow faithful in every part of the world to experience The Mercy of Father in its Fullness. Pilgrimage to those churches and Shrines with Door of Mercy is encouraged.

As with the opening of the *Door of Mercy*, all of the other initiatives which will be undertaken by the Holy Father in Rome for the Jubilee may be proposed in each Diocese with analogous initiatives and gestures which are just as meaningful but always respecting local customs and traditions. This is particularly true of the Jubilee signs that the Holy Father intends to give by witnessing in the first person to the works of mercy.

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 (M.V.12)

Regarding the organization of the Holy Year the Holy Father has stressed that it is to be celebrated first of all in individual Dioceses as an authentic occasion for the renewal of pastoral life.

The season of grace which is the Jubilee of Mercy will naturally be characterized by the possibility of obtaining the plenary indulgence through pious exercises, including other requirements, culminating through Holy Door of Mercy.

Some of the activities planned for Rome are given below which will help us also plan our own activities

Jubilee for those engaged in pilgrimage work, Ecumenical celebration, witness of the works of mercy, Jubilee for the Roman Curia the Governorate and the Institutions connected with the Holy See, 24 Hours for the Lord with penitential Liturgy, The diocesan day for youth, Jubilee for Catechists, for prisoners etc.

Fr. Sebastian Poomattam