

**The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy
2015-2016**



A MEDITATION PILGRIMAGE

An introduction to the Meditation Pilgrimage walk booklet

As you read the booklet called “**The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy 2015-2016 A Meditation Pilgrimage**” you will see that undertaking the meditation walk means spending time at a number of “Stations”. These stations begin outside the Cathedral and conclude with an invitation to take in the Cathedral interior as a whole.

At each Station you are invited to experience various steps such as **reading, reflecting** and **experiencing**. At the conclusion of each Station you are also invited to record your thoughts and feelings in the space provided. For those steps inviting silence and reflection you are encouraged to do these seriously and leave the business of the everyday behind and focus on the Station itself.

- If you are undertaking the walk as part of the Archdiocesan organization on Saturday mornings it is recommended you allow 45 to 50 minutes to do complete all 5 stations. We suggest you arrive at the Cathedral precinct at 10.30am.
- If you are under time pressures and unable to complete the walk on a single occasion, to gain maximum benefit, it is desirable to allocate 10 minutes for each station.

The final Station is designed as a culmination and, if you are undertaking the walk in separate stages, you might want to include this at each stage.

Irrespective of how you are completing the walk, there are some ideas that are significant and to keep before you as you undertake the walk. Consider these ideas from Pope Francis’ Papal Bull and from the Gospel of St Luke.

During this Jubilee Year of Mercy Pope Francis asks us to live Jesus' words **“Be merciful just as your Father is merciful”** (Lk 6:36). He calls for **listening** to the Word of God, value **silence** and **meditation**, and **practice pilgrimage**. (cf. MV 13; 14) and invites us to **allow** ourselves to be **surprised** by God. (MV 25)

We want to live this Jubilee Year in light of the Lord's words: *Merciful like the Father*. The Evangelist reminds us of the teaching of Jesus who says, **“Be merciful just as your Father is merciful”** (Lk 6:36). It is a programme of life as demanding as it is rich with joy and peace. Jesus's command is directed to anyone willing to listen to his voice (cf. Lk 6:27). (MV13)

The practice of *pilgrimage* has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a *viator*, a pilgrim travelling along the road, making his way to the desired destination. (MV 14)

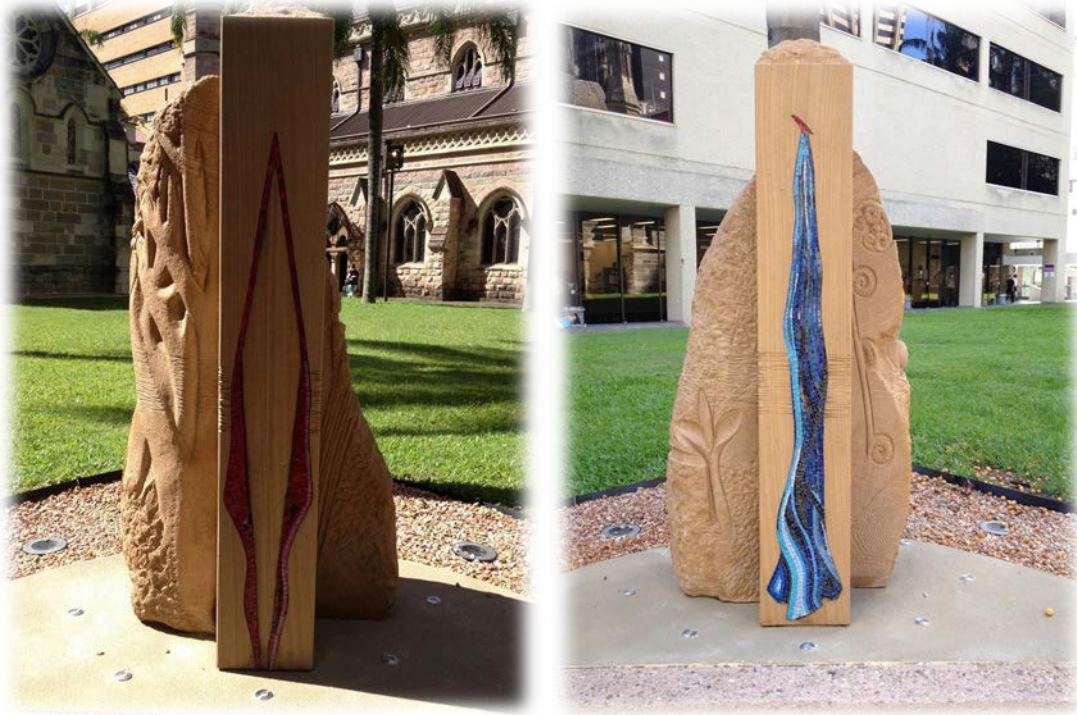
In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us. (MV 25)

As you prepare for this pilgrimage in the mother church of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Cathedral of St. Stephen, it is desirable to keep these points in focus.

In order to encourage a listening silence of mind and body:

- *Walk slowly between the stations*
- *Allow the scripture, art, liturgical places to unfold God's mercy in your life*
- *Ask yourself how you are the face of God's mercy*
- *Look at the familiar with new eyes; listen to the familiar with new ears*
- *Take your time; go slowly.*
- *Above all, allow yourself to be surprised by God.*

STATION 1: THE MONOLITHS OF THE PRECINCT



Introduction:

Rhyl Hinwood carved these two monoliths called Blood and Water, with Mosaics by Scott Harrower (Archbishop Mark Coledrige's motto). In Scripture they are both images of life. Blood and water flowed from the side of Christ on the cross and in this we see the birth of the Church, Baptism, and a new creation.

The images of local flora and fauna remind us that all creation comes into being through Jesus Christ and through his resurrection he is the crown of creation. If Mercy is at the heart of the Holy Trinity (MV 1), creation itself is caught up in the continual outpouring of Divine mercy.

Texts:

**For great strength is always present with you;
who can resist the might of your arm?
Indeed, before you the whole universe is like a grain from
a balance,
or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth.
But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things;
and you overlook sins for the sake of repentance.
For you love all things that are
and loathe nothing that you have made;
for you would not fashion what you hate.
How could a thing remain, unless you willed it;
or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you?
But you spare all things, because they are yours,
O Ruler and Lover of souls,
for your imperishable spirit is in all things!
(Wisdom 11:21-12:1)**

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with
God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the
beginning. Through him all things were made; without
him nothing was made that has been made. In him was
life, and that life was the light of all humankind. The
light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not
overcome. (Jn. 1:1-3)**

**We are encouraged to constantly contemplate the mystery
of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace.
Our salvation depends on it. 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. (MV 2)**

Reflection:

As you set out on this pilgrimage of mercy, who would you wish to carry with you in your heart on this journey?

Our whole life – family, friends, dwelling, workplace, church – is imbedded in God’s creation. How do you experience God’s loving mercy through creation?

God has entrusted this created world into our care, how can your love and compassion reach out to care for creation?

Action:

Walk around the monoliths. Touch them: texture, warmth. Look at them with the texts in mind.

When you are ready walk slowly to the Second Station: The Door of Mercy. As you walk, think of the words of Psalm 136: “His mercy endures forever”

Your thoughts:

*Record: Your feelings;
 Insights you have gained;
 Ideas you would like to share with others*

STATION 2: THE DOOR OF MERCY



Introduction:

In union with the whole church, the Cathedral has opened a Door of Mercy so that every church participates in living out this Holy Year. This door invites us to contemplate the Father who from the beginning has offered mercy, forgiveness and love to all. Jesus is the living Mercy of God. We pass through this door sure of receiving Divine mercy and receiving the gift of being Divine mercy to all

We enter the Cathedral which is symbolic of the Holy One who dwells in our midst. Jesus is the door reminding us that all creation is created in Christ. We do not leave the world; we bring it with us in prayer.

Action:

Look through the door.

Cross the threshold through the Door of Mercy and realize that the physical act of passing through the door provides the opportunity for us to open our heart to the Father's Mercy.

Quietly gaze around. Sense and feel the power of this space.

Texts:

**How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord Almighty!**

**My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.....**

**Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you. (Ps. 84:1-4)**

I tell you solemnly I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands: but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate: anyone who enters through me will be safe and will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. (Jn. 10:7-9)

On that day, the Holy Door will become a *Door of Mercy* through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instils hope.....“Patient and merciful.” These words often go together in the Old Testament to describe God's nature. His being merciful is concretely demonstrated in his many actions throughout the history of salvation where his goodness prevails over punishment and destruction. (MV 3)

Reflection:

Christ is the door of the sheepfold, what does it mean for you to step into Christ, the Mercy of the Father, he who seeks out the lost sheep?

How do you trust in the safety of his love and forgiveness?

In trust carry into this sacred space your hopes, joys, concerns and the people you have invited into your heart.

How do you experience God's mercy?

What does it mean for you to be a gateway to the sheepfold?

How do you feel about this? How do you live it in your daily life?

Action:

Sit quietly; reflect.

When you are ready, slowly walk to the apse – the Baptismal font; Blessed Sacrament and Reconciliation rooms.

Your thoughts:

STATION 3: MISSIONARY DISCIPLES & RECONCILIATION



Sitting in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Introduction:

The curtain of glass bears the symbols of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation – through which God gifts us to be missionary disciples. It enfolds the tabernacle reminding us that the Eucharist nourishes and sustains our lives as missionary disciples through the abiding presence of Christ, the Mercy of the Father.

The translucent glass allows the city to enter into our prayer reminding us of the flow of prayer – we pray for the world and the concerns of the world inform our prayer.

Always standing in need of God's mercy, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is God's gift to us to renew our love through forgiveness. As you enter the reconciliation room the pattern on the door appears to be discordant; as you leave the room notice the pattern on the door showing harmony and peace. The story of the Forgiving Father summarises for us God's mercy freely given. In Reconciliation God runs out to meet us as the father does in the parable.

Texts:

**By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept,
remembering Zion;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung up our harps.**

**For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.
'Sing to us,' they said,
'one of Zion's songs.'**

**O how could we sing
the song of the Lord
on alien soil?
If I forget you, Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!**

**O let my tongue
cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
above all my joys! (Ps 136)**

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

“ ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ” (Lk. 15:11-32)

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:27-29)

In the parables devoted to 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. We know these parables well, three in particular: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the father with two sons (cf. Lk 15:1-32). In these parables, God is always presented as full of joy, especially when he pardons. In them we find the core of the Gospel and of our faith, because mercy is presented as a force that overcomes everything, filling the heart with love and bringing consolation through pardon. (MV 9)

Reflection:

Read Luke 15, the story of the "Forgiving Father", 'lost son' or 'prodigal son'. Read it as an ordinary family with all the dynamics of an ordinary family. What would you do if you were the parent? How would you behave if you were the elder son, serious, reliable and worthy? If you were the 'shiftless' son, how would you feel having to admit you were wrong? Think of the speech you would give to your family.

How does this story shed light on your own family and relationships? With whom do you need reconciliation?

As a baptised missionary disciple, how does your prayer reflect the concerns for the world which is loved by God?

Pray to deepen your gratitude for all God's gifts to you.

Action:

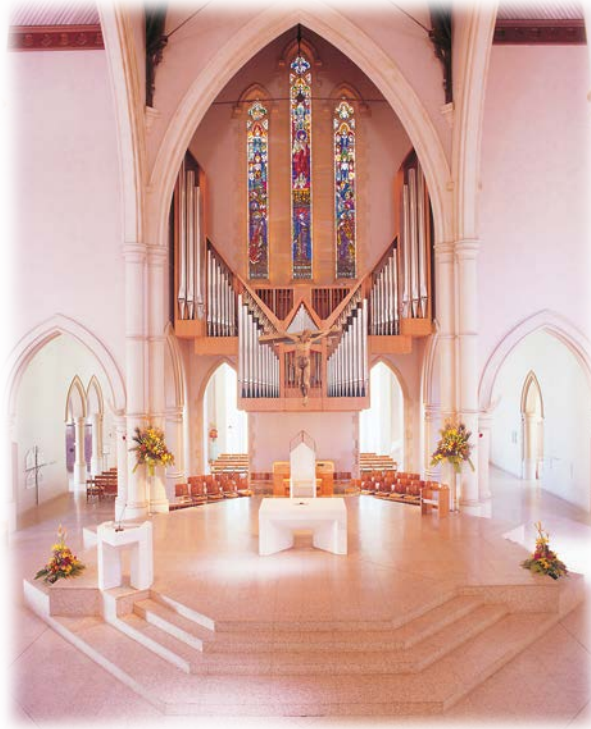
If possible (outside times for Reconciliation), walk into the Reconciliation area; look at the doors; gaze at Rembrandt's painting of the "Prodigal Son".

Sit quietly and allow the curtain of glass with its symbols of Christian Initiation evoke gratitude for the call you received in Baptism. Allow your prayer to extend out to the city and the world.

When you are ready walk quietly and come to sit in front of the Sanctuary.

Your thoughts:

STATION 4: THE SANCTUARY



Sitting in front of the Sanctuary

Introduction:

As the community of faith who are missionary disciples we gather around the sanctuary to offer the great liturgy of thanksgiving. The shape of the ambo from which sacred scripture is read, reminds us of God's word which is alive and active, thrusting out into the community to transform us into Christ. The altar is a table of communion and of sacrifice – the smooth surface of the Carrara marble symbolises the meal and the rough scoring of the surface suggests sacrifice and suffering. As a community we gather around the shepherd – the archbishop – who teaches and pastors the Church of this diocese. We are the Church. Gathered together we make the building the sacred place. Gathered together we celebrate the great mystery of mercy – the Eucharist and the Word.

Gazing at the sanctuary crucifix we see the great act of loving mercy – Jesus' dying and rising – that has gifted us with such dignity and mission.

Texts:

**As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Is. 55:9-11)**

**Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses
who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my
Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the
bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world.”
“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”
Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever
comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes
in me will never be thirsty. (Jn 6:32-35)**

**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only
Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but
have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the
world to condemn the world, but to save the world
through him. (1 Jn. 3:16-17)**

**With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze, we
experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity. The mission
Jesus received from the Father was that of revealing the
mystery of divine love in its fullness. “God is love” (*1
Jn 4:8,16*), John affirms for the first and only time in all
of Holy Scripture. This love has now been made visible**

and tangible in Jesus' entire life. His person is nothing but love, a love given gratuitously. The relationships he forms with the people who approach him manifest something entirely unique and unrepeatable. The signs he works, especially in favour of sinners, the poor, the marginalized, the sick, and the suffering, are all meant to teach mercy. Everything in him speaks of mercy. Nothing in him is devoid of compassion. (MV 8)

The appeal Jesus makes to the text from the book of the prophet Hosea – “I desire love and not sacrifice” (6:6) – is important in this regard. Jesus affirms that, from that time onward, the rule of life for his disciples must place mercy at the centre, as Jesus himself demonstrated by sharing meals with sinners. Mercy, once again, is revealed as a fundamental aspect of Jesus' mission. This is truly challenging to his hearers, who would draw the line at a formal respect for the law. Jesus, on the other hand, goes beyond the law; the company he keeps with those the law considers sinners makes us realize the depth of his mercy. (MV 20)

Reflection:

As missionary disciples we are called to ‘proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes’ (1 Cor. 11:26). In Word and Eucharist Christ gives himself to us and so transforms and nourishes us for this mission of saving mercy.

Do you sometimes take the celebration of the Eucharist and Scripture for granted because it is so familiar? Can you allow this familiarity to deepen your love?

Which text of Scripture particularly nourishes you? How?

Which text of Scripture particularly challenges you? How?

In your daily life how can you use these texts to help you become the merciful face of the Father?

In Word and Eucharist 'Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy' (MV 1) how am I 'Word' and 'Eucharist' for others?

Action:

Slowly walk around the sanctuary looking at the crucifix from different angles.

Your thoughts:

STATION 5: THE RETURN



Standing in the middle of the Cathedral

Introduction:

Look around the Cathedral, particularly the windows. They tell our story – the story of Redemption in Christ who is the Mercy of the Father enfleshed. They also tell the story of the Communion of Saints - our sisters and brothers in the Universal Church and the Church of Brisbane. Look around at the people sitting in the seats of the church who may have shared the Eucharist. They too are our sisters and brothers in the Body of Christ. We have a true and deep relationship with each other and with all who have gone before us in the faith.

Texts:

Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. (Lev. 25:10-12)

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

**“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”**

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked. (Lk 4:14-22)

The Church sensed a responsibility to be a living sign of the Father’s love in the world. (MV 4)

Jesus affirms that mercy is not only an action of the Father, it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who his true children are. In short, we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us. Pardoning offences becomes the clearest expression of merciful love, and for us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. (MV 9)

At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully. Let us therefore heed the Apostle’s exhortation: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph 4:26). Above all, let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of

life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (*Mt 5:7*): the beatitude to which we should particularly aspire in this Holy Year..... As we can see in Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God’s action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviours that are shown in daily living. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other. (MV 9)

The Church lives within the communion of the saints. In the Eucharist, this communion, which is a gift from God, becomes a spiritual union binding us to the saints and blessed ones whose number is beyond counting (cf. *Rev 7:4*). Their holiness comes to the aid of our weakness in a way that enables the Church, with her maternal prayers and her way of life, to fortify the weakness of some with the strength of others. Hence, to live the indulgence of the Holy Year means to approach the Father’s mercy with the certainty that his forgiveness extends to the entire life of the believer. To gain an indulgence is to experience the holiness of the Church, who bestows upon all the fruits of Christ’s redemption, so that God’s love and forgiveness may extend everywhere. Let us live this Jubilee intensely, begging the Father to forgive our sins and to bathe us in his merciful “indulgence.” (MV 22)

Reflection:

As one who is living as a member of the Body of Christ, think of how you may find new ways of being the Mercy of the Father to family, friends, colleagues – a Missionary of Mercy?

In practical terms, think of one action or attitude that you can nurture in order to *be* mercy to others.

Jubilee is a joyful celebration of freedom for captives, resting of the land, and return to one's home. Where is your heart's home? In the merciful heart of the Trinity?

Action:

Walk slowly through the Cathedral looking at the windows, the Stations of the Cross, the Saints. Know yourself as one with this story of God's mercy. Is there one window where you would place yourself?

As you leave the Cathedral, look around at the precinct, the city and in your imagination, your home, the world. Ask the Father's blessing of mercy upon all.

Your thoughts:

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.
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 His 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 NICENE CREED

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was
incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was
conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.**

Additional texts for each Station

Introduction:

In order to be capable of mercy, therefore, we must first of all dispose ourselves to listen to the Word of God. This means rediscovering the value of silence in order to meditate on the Word that comes to us. In this way, it will be possible to contemplate God's mercy and adopt it as our lifestyle. (MV 13)

In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us. (MV 25)

Station 1: The monoliths in the precinct:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Gen 1:1)

“But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;
or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of all humankind. (Job 12:7-10)

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and

in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Col. 16:15-21)

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Rom 8:22-25)

“It is proper to God to exercise mercy, and he manifests his omnipotence particularly in this way”.^[5] Saint Thomas Aquinas’ words show that God’s mercy, rather than a sign of weakness, is the mark of his omnipotence. For this reason the liturgy, in one of its most ancient collects, has us pray: “O God, who reveal your power above all in your mercy and forgiveness ...”^[6] Throughout the history of humanity, God will always be the One who is present, close, provident, holy, and merciful. (MV 6)

Station 2: The Door of Mercy

Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—
a place near your altar,
Lord Almighty, my King and my God. (Ps 84)

In a special way the Psalms bring to the fore the grandeur of his merciful action: “He forgives all your iniquity, he heals all your diseases, he redeems your life from the pit, he crowns you with steadfast love and mercy” (*Ps* 103:3-4). Another psalm, in an even more explicit way, attests to the concrete signs of his mercy: “He executes justice for the oppressed; he gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners, he upholds the widow and the fatherless; but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin” (*Ps* 146:7-9). Here are some other expressions of the Psalmist: “He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds... The Lord lifts up the downtrodden, he casts the wicked to the ground” (*Ps* 147:3, 6). In short, the mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality with which he reveals his love as of that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that this is a “visceral” love. It gushes forth from the depths naturally, full of tenderness and compassion, indulgence and mercy. (MV 3)

Station 3: Missionary Disciples and Reconciliation

On that day
they will say to Jerusalem,
“Do not fear, Zion;
do not let your hands hang limp.
The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.” (*Zeph* 3:16-17)

“Come now, let us settle the matter,”
says the Lord.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.
If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the good things of the land;
but if you resist and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword.” (Is. 1: 8-20)

We recall the poignant words of Saint John XXIII when, opening the Council, he indicated the path to follow: “Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up arms of severity... The Catholic Church, as she holds high the torch of Catholic truth at this Ecumenical Council, wants to show herself a loving mother to all; patient, kind, moved by compassion and goodness toward her separated children”.^[2] Blessed Paul VI spoke in a similar vein at the closing of the Council: “We prefer to point out how charity has been the principal religious feature of this Council... the old story of the Good Samaritan has been the model of the spirituality of the Council... a wave of affection and admiration flowed from the Council over the modern world of humanity. Errors were condemned, indeed, because charity demanded this no less than did truth, but for individuals themselves there was only admonition, respect and love. Instead of depressing diagnoses, encouraging remedies; instead of direful predictions, messages of trust issued from the Council to the present-day world. The modern world’s values were not only respected but honoured, its efforts approved, its aspirations purified and blessed... Another point we must stress is this: all this rich teaching is channelled in one direction, the service of mankind, of every condition, in every weakness and need” (MV 4)

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. (Mt. 18:22)

Station 4: The Sanctuary

You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.
Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.
This will be for the Lord’s renown,
for an everlasting sign,
that will endure forever.” (Is. 55:12-13)

But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (Jn 6:36-40)

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of

me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. (Jn 6:53-59)

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval. So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are

judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world. So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. (1 Cor. 11:17-34)

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hb. 14:12-13)

Jesus, seeing the crowds of people who followed him, realized that they were tired and exhausted, lost and without a guide, and he felt deep compassion for them (cf. Mt 9:36). On the basis of this compassionate love he healed the sick who were presented to him (cf. Mt 14:14), and with just a few loaves of bread and fish he satisfied the enormous crowd (cf. Mt 15:37).

What moved Jesus in all of these situations was nothing other than mercy, with which he read the hearts of those he encountered and responded to their deepest need. When he came upon the widow of Nain taking her son out for burial, he felt great compassion for the immense suffering of this grieving mother, and he gave back her son by raising him from the dead (cf. Lk 7:15). After freeing the demoniac in the country of the Gerasenes, Jesus entrusted him with this mission: "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (Mk 5:19). The calling of Matthew is also presented within the context of mercy. Passing by the tax collector's booth, Jesus looked intently at Matthew. It was a look full of mercy that forgave the sins of that man, a sinner and a tax collector, whom Jesus chose – against the hesitation of the disciples – to become one of the Twelve. Saint Bede the

Venerable, commenting on this Gospel passage, wrote that Jesus looked upon Matthew with merciful love and chose him: *miserando atque eligendo*. This expression impressed Pope Francis so much that he chose it for his episcopal motto. (MV 8)

In the Gospel of Luke, we find another important element that will help us live the Jubilee with faith. Luke writes that Jesus, on the Sabbath, went back to Nazareth and, as was his custom, entered the synagogue. They called upon him to read the Scripture and to comment on it. The passage was from the Book of Isaiah where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those in captivity; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Is 61:1-2).

A “year of the Lord’s favour” or “mercy”: this is what the Lord proclaimed and this is what we wish to live now. This Holy Year will bring to the fore the richness of Jesus’ mission echoed in the words of the prophet: to bring a word and gesture of consolation to the poor, to proclaim liberty to those bound by new forms of slavery in modern society, to restore sight to those who can see no more because they are caught up in themselves, to restore dignity to all those from whom it has been robbed. The preaching of Jesus is made visible once more in the response of faith which Christians are called to offer by their witness. May the words of the Apostle accompany us: he who does acts of mercy, let him do them with cheerfulness (cf. *Rom 12:8*). (MV 16)

Station 5: The Return

The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. (Lev. 25:11-12)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 Jn 4:7-12)

At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully. Let us therefore heed the Apostle's exhortation: "Do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26). Above all, let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7): the beatitude to which we should particularly aspire in this Holy Year. (MV 9)



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