



DIOCESE OF BUFFALO

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP



November 25, 2015

Dear Fathers:

As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving tomorrow, let me thank you for all that you do for the people, institutions and organizations of our diocese.

In two weeks, we will begin the [Jubilee Year of Mercy](#). I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about plans for our diocesan observance of this Jubilee as discussed with the Presbyteral Council. I know that we already have many programs and that many of you are understandably overwhelmed. Most of the suggestions below are not intended to add to your responsibilities, but rather to supplement and refocus what is already in existence in your parish and your ministry.

We will begin our diocesan observance of the Jubilee Year on **Sunday, December 13th at the 10:30 am Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral**, which will include the Opening of the Door of Mercy. In addition to the Cathedral, the following churches will have a Door of Mercy:

- ❖ Our Lady of Victory Basilica ~ Lackawanna
- ❖ St. Leo the Great ~ Amherst
- ❖ St. Hyacinth Church, Blessed Mary Angela Parish ~ Dunkirk
- ❖ St. Mary of the Angels ~ Olean
- ❖ Our Lady of Mercy ~ LeRoy
- ❖ Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima ~ Youngstown
- ❖ Corpus Christi ~ Buffalo (*limited dates – Palm Sunday through Corpus Christi Feast*)

Please encourage your parishioners to embark on pilgrimages to these churches as a means to reflect on and experience God's Mercy. I know that pastors of the churches listed above have begun to plan various celebrations and events. Please be in touch with those pastors who are closest to you to see how you can collaborate with them.

The official closing ceremony of the Jubilee Year for our diocese will take place at St. Joseph Cathedral at 3 pm on Sunday, November 6th, 2016. For the six churches listed above, this conclusion will occur on Tuesday, November 1st ~ the Solemnity of All Saints.

Besides your involvement on a local level, I request that we do the following throughout the Diocese during this Jubilee Year:

- **Use the Corporal and Spiritual Mercy** as a reference in personal prayer and prayer before meetings and gatherings

- CORPORAL: To feed the hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Clothe the naked, Welcome the stranger, Heal the sick, Visit the imprisoned and Bury the dead
 - SPIRITUAL: To counsel the doubtful, Instruct those lacking knowledge, Admonish sinners, Comfort the afflicted, Forgive offenses, Bear patiently those who do us ill, and Pray for the living and the dead.
 - Let this reflection lead us to action and help us to evaluate how we are putting these works of mercy into practice in our individual and collective lives.
- **Use the [Prayer for the Year of Mercy](#)** – this prayer could be used at the conclusion of the Prayer of the Faithful (see abbreviated version on page 4 of this letter). This prayer could perhaps be imbedded in bulletins or made prominent on parish websites.
 - Teach and sing the [Hymn of Mercy](#)
 - **More frequent celebration of Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation I and II**
 - **More frequent celebration of the Masses for Various Needs and Occasions** (found in the back of the Roman Missal; please see the regulations at the beginning of that section to determine when Masses can be celebrated):
 - For Refugees and Exiles
 - For Those Suffering Hunger
 - For the Forgiveness of Sins
 - For Our Oppressors
 - For Those Held in Captivity
 - For Those in Prison
 - For the Sick
 - For the Dying
 - **More frequent celebration of the Votive Mass for The Mercy of God**
 - [The Light is On for You](#) during Advent and Lent
 - **Encouragement of Devotions and Pious Practices:**
 - Reading of the Sacred Scripture
 - Stations of the Cross
 - Pilgrimages to both Station Churches and Shrines in the diocese
 - Visits to cemeteries on both Memorial Day and All Souls Day
 - Visits to Baptismal font where one was baptized or station church and reflect on one's baptism and baptismal promises
 - Divine Mercy Chaplet and Novena
 - Rosary
 - Fasting

In his Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, [Misericordiae Vultus](#), Pope Francis has specifically requested a celebration of **24 Hours of Mercy** to take place in every diocese around the world on March 4 and 5th. Here in the Diocese of Buffalo, this celebration will take place at the churches with Doors of Mercy, so please plan to collaborate with the pastor of the designated church in your local area.

Besides all of these things, the **Liturgical Year** provides many opportunities for the celebration of and reflection on God's Mercy. Some of these dates are:

- Ash Wednesday ~ February 10th, 2016
- Holy Week 2016
- Chrism Mass ~ March 22nd, 2016
- Good Friday ~ March 25th, 2016
- Divine Mercy Sunday ~ April 3rd, 2016
- Corpus Christi ~ May 26, 2016
- Feast of the Sacred Heart ~ June 3, 2016
- Exultation of the Holy Cross ~ September 14, 2016
- Our Lady of Sorrows ~ September 15, 2016

There are many **Year of Mercy resources** that are being made available. One of them is the USCCB's Meditation on Mercy, which I sent to you on Monday. I was able to provide you with the entire year's meditations, but these will be available on a monthly basis at this [website](#). These reflections can be used for personal or small group prayer.

I know that many parishes give away books for Christmas or provide prayer cards and various materials to the faithful. Feel free to use these various resources within your parishes according to your customs, needs and inclinations.

Know that you and your parishioners and ministries will be very much in my prayers as I celebrate Mass on Thanksgiving Day. As we begin the season of Advent this Sunday, I pray that this time of preparation will lead us ever closer to Our Lord and His abundant Mercy.

Yours fraternally in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Richard J. Malone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Richard J. Malone
Bishop of Buffalo

YEAR OF MERCY PRAYER

Revised for use after the Prayer of the Faithful

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.

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.