

Date: November 21, 2015

Dear Fathers/Brothers/Sisters/People of God,

Sub.: **Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy**

Motto: **'Merciful like the Father'**

I am extremely happy to draw your kind attention towards *Misericordiae Vultus*, the 'Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy' by our beloved Pope Francis promulgated on April 11, 2015, the Vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday at St. Peter's. The Holy Year will be open by opening the Holy Door, the **Door of Mercy** by Pope Francis on December 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. On the following Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent, December 13, 2015 the Holy Door of the Cathedral of Rome – that is the Basilica of Saint John Lateran – will be opened; and on the same Sunday, the Pope will announce that in every local Church, at the Cathedral or any other church of greater importance, a **Door of Mercy** will be opened for the duration of the Holy Year.

In the very first line of *Misericordiae Vultus* Pope Francis says, "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy..... Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him. The Church, being bride of Christ, has an endless desire to show mercy. So he says, "The Church's credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love". December 8, 2015 the day chosen to open the Holy Door because the day is marked as the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Pope by being inspired by the Holy Spirit realized the importance to keep this great event alive in the Church; because with the Council the Church entered a new phase of her history. However, the Church has long since forgotten how to show and live the way of mercy. As a result, the merciful face of the Father reflected so brilliantly in the life of the Church is waning; and the word 'mercy' is dropped out of use. The Church, without a witness to mercy, has become fruitless and sterile that of a desert. The time has come for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more; for mercy is the life-giving force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope.

To recapture the Spirit of the Church in today's cultural milieu Pope Francis is appealing every member of the Church to live in this Jubilee Year in the light of the Lord's words: **Merciful like the Father** – "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk. 6:36). In order to be merciful, therefore, we must first of all dispose ourselves to listen to the Word of God prayerfully in silence. In this way, it will be possible for each one of us to contemplate God's mercy and adopt it as our lifestyle manifesting the steadfast love of the merciful Father to the people around. We must remember that the Gospel is effectively being preached whenever the preaching of the Word is accompanied by the works of mercy; for we believe that in each of these "little ones," Christ himself is present. By being compassionate to our brothers and sisters who live in the peripheries we can manifest the face of the merciful Father in Christ Jesus.

The call to be 'Merciful like the Father' needs a pilgrimage to be made in faith by every faithful assisted by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to us the mysteries of the Kingdom. He does not only reveal but also give us strength and courage to carry out the works of mercy to achieve the goal of eternal life. In this journey of faith Mary, the Mother of Mercy, is the model for us to imitate. I am sure the powerful intercession of the Virgin Mary, who stood at the foot of the Cross of Jesus; and of St. Faustina Kowalska, the apostle of mercy, will assist us in our journey ahead. I am sure at the closing of this extraordinary Jubilee Year of mercy by sealing the Holy Door on the Solemnity of Christ the King on November 20, 2016 with a heart full of profound gratitude to the Most Holy Trinity for having granted us an extraordinary time of grace.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis has suggested numerous ways of experiencing and practicing Mercy in *Misericordiae Vultus*:

1. As advised by the Holy Father I have assigned Fr. Roy Chowalloor with the task of logging on to a restricted page of the website in order to post news and information pertaining to the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy within our diocese. He also serves as the Diocesan point of contact with the Pontifical Council.
2. On December 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, as the Holy Father Pope Francis inaugurates the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy by opening the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, we shall join him in Spirit & Prayer by celebrating solemnly the feast and at the Mass the priest can read this letter or explain in brief this message and prepare our people in all our parishes for the Jubilee Year of Mercy.
3. On December 13, 2015, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent as the Holy Father opens the Holy Door of Mercy in his Cathedral Church, Basilica of St. John Lateran, expects every diocese to open a Door of Mercy either in the Cathedral or of a Basilica Shrine of great importance. We shall in our diocese open the main door of the Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of Graces, Sardhana at 11 a.m. with the Holy Eucharist. The faithful of all our parishes are expected to choose a day during the year and make a pilgrimage entering through the door of mercy to experience the Merciful Father and gain indulgence.
4. On February 2, 2016, the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord which is also the day of conclusion of the 'Year of Consecrated Life' we shall invite all the Consecrated Religious working in our diocese for a common diocesan celebration at St. Joseph's Cathedral with the Holy Eucharist & felicitation programme.
5. Let us rediscover these corporal works of Mercy: i) to feed the hungry, ii) give drink to the thirsty, iii) clothe the naked, iv) welcome the stranger, v) heal the sick, vi) visit the imprisoned and vii) bury the dead."(MV15).
6. And let us not forget the spiritual works of Mercy: i) to counsel the doubtful, ii) instruct the ignorant, iii) admonish sinners, iv) comfort the afflicted, v) forgive offences, vi) bear patiently those who do us ill and vii) pray for the living and the dead" (MV 15).
7. *Pilgrimage*: "The Practice of Pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life" (MV 14).

8. *Lent 2016: "The season of Lent during this Jubilee Year should also be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God's Mercy" (MV 16).*
9. Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the centre once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God's Mercy with their own hand"(MV 17).
10. The initiative of 24 Hours for the Lord to be celebrated on the Friday and Saturday preceding the Fourth week of Lent, March 4 and 5, 2016.
11. May we reach out to wounded and hurt and support them so that they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship and our fraternity" (MV 15).
12. Prison Ministry has been chosen as one of the means of showing merciful love of Jesus in our region. A proposal is also made to constitute a regional cell for Prison Ministry.
13. Divine Mercy Devotion
14. The Jubilee Year of Mercy should help us personally to forgive everyone especially in our circles (in our parishes and institutions).
15. Prayerful recitation of the Jubilee Year of Mercy prepared by the Holy Father.
16. According to the programme of the Holy Father the closing of the Holy Doors in the Basilicas of Rome and in the dioceses of the world is kept for November 13, 2016. We shall also have the closing of the Basilica door of mercy on that very day which is also the annual pilgrimage of the Shrine of Our Lady of Graces, being the Second Sunday of November.
17. On Sunday, November 20, 2016 Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, is the closing of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica and the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Kindly read this letter and explain to the faithful in every parish church on December 8, 2015 & December 13, 2015.

With prayerful wishes, I remain

Yours in Our Lord

+Francis Kalist

Please Note: This circular in Hindi will be made available soon.