



Seek a conversion of heart during this jubilee year

During this Advent the Church has begun the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy with the opening of a Door of Mercy in every cathedral throughout the world. In addition to the Door of Mercy at every cathedral, the Holy Father has permitted bishops to designate other Doors of Mercy in their dioceses. In the Diocese of Charlotte, besides the Door of Mercy at St. Patrick Cathedral in Charlotte, we are also opening a Door of Mercy at St. Lawrence Basilica in Asheville, and a Door of Mercy at St. Pius X Church in Greensboro.

PLENARY INDULGENCE

At the Holy Door in each of these three churches, a plenary indulgence may be obtained by the faithful. An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. Every sin has a double consequence: 1) it deprives us of communion with God; and 2) it entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in purgatory. This purification is helped through prayer, practices of penance, and works of mercy and charity. The grace of the indulgence is drawn from the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to remit the temporal punishment, thus further purifying us and preparing us for eternal life.

PILGRIMAGE TO A DOOR OF MERCY

To obtain this indulgence of the Jubilee of Mercy, the Holy Father asks us to make a pilgrimage to a Door of Mercy. Since not everyone can go on pilgrimage to Rome to visit the Holy Door at one of the basilicas, the Holy Father is permitting the same jubilee indulgence to be obtained by visiting a Door of Mercy that has been designated by the bishop in his local diocese. In our diocese a pilgrimage would be made to the Door of Mercy at St. Patrick Cathedral, St. Lawrence Basilica or St. Pius X Church, accompanied by the Profession of Faith and a reflection on mercy. In addition, as with any plenary indulgence, there are the usual three conditions to be fulfilled: make a sacramental confession; receive Holy Communion; and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. One should also be free from all attachment to sin, even venial sin. You may obtain a plenary indulgence every day!

The goal of making a passage through one of these three Doors of Mercy to receive the indulgence is that we have a true conversion of heart: to be more merciful with others as God has been merciful with us. The Holy Father notes that just as a pilgrimage to a holy place is a goal to reach that entails dedication and sacrifice, so mercy itself is also a goal to reach that entails dedication and sacrifice.

WORKS OF MERCY

The Holy Father asks us to focus on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy during this jubilee year. How are we doing in practicing the corporal works of mercy: feeding the hungry; clothing the naked; sheltering the homeless; visiting the sick and imprisoned; burying the dead? How are we doing in practicing the spiritual works of mercy: counseling the doubtful; instructing the ignorant; admonishing sinners; comforting the afflicted; forgiving offenses; bearing wrongs patiently? How are we doing in coming to the aid of our brothers and sisters in their bodily and spiritual needs?

Of course, Jesus is the Door of Mercy through which we enter into eternal life. He tells us that He is the gate for the sheep, and that all those who enter through Him will be saved; they will enter through Him and find green pastures (John 10:9). We enter spiritually through Jesus into an experience of the mercy of God the Father, who has had mercy on the whole human race by giving us His Son as our savior.

During this Jubilee Year of Mercy, may God grant us the grace to know His mercy more deeply through our repentance and conversion from sin, and through this spiritual renewal may we be more merciful with others as God has been merciful with us.

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