

# Living Mercy in the Jubilee Year of Mercy



The Jubilee Year of Mercy begins on December 8, 2015, the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Here are a few important themes for reflection during this important year.

## Jesus is the “face” of the Father’s mercy

Jesus of Nazareth, Pope Francis writes in [Misericordiae Vultus, the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy](#), is the “face” of the Father’s mercy—he reveals the mercy of God by his words, actions, and person. We follow Jesus’ example when we open ourselves to the Father’s mercy by looking “sincerely” into the eyes of our brothers and sisters, including those “who are denied their dignity.” **How have you experienced the Father’s mercy in your own life? How might Jesus be calling you to look “sincerely” into the eyes of those who are denied their dignity?**

## Mercy is “the beating heart of the Gospel”

Pope Francis writes: “It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy.” Mercy, he says, is “the beating heart of the Gospel” (*Misericordiae Vultus*). To live mercy, we must rediscover both the *spiritual works of mercy* (counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead), and the *corporal works of mercy* (feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead). **Which spiritual works of mercy might Christ be calling you to practice? Which corporal works of mercy?**

## Mercy “demands justice”

“True mercy, the mercy God gives to us and teaches us, demands justice, it demands that the poor find the way to be poor no longer,” Pope Francis notes. “It asks us, the Church, us, the City of Rome, it asks the institutions — to ensure that no one ever again stand in need of a soup-kitchen, of makeshift-lodgings, of a service of legal assistance in order to have his legitimate right recognized to live and to work, to be fully a person” (Address to Jesuit Refugee Services, 9/10/13). **In your own life, and in your faith community, how do you work for justice? Do you seek to address the *root* causes of problems that affect those who are vulnerable?**

## Ideas for Living Mercy during the Jubilee Year

There are many ways we can respond to the call to live mercy. Here are a few ideas:

- **Put Two Feet of Love in Action.** Use the “Two Feet of Love in Action” guide to consider how you can strengthen both charitable works and social justice at home and as part of your faith community. Visit [www.usccb.org/twofeet](http://www.usccb.org/twofeet) for more information.
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- **Get Involved Locally.** Explore the map at [PovertyUSA.org](http://PovertyUSA.org) to find local organizations that practice mercy by learning about and addressing poverty. Or, contact your [diocesan director](#) for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.
  - **Engage Your Faith Community.** With your faith community, use Pope Francis' prayer for the Jubilee Year, and the resources mentioned below, to pray, reach out, learn, and act during the year. Visit [WeAreSaltAndLight.org](http://WeAreSaltAndLight.org) for stories of how communities of faith around the country are living mercy.
  - **Attend the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering** (Jan. 23-26, 2016). This year's theme is *Called to Live Mercy in Our Common Home* ([www.CatholicSocialMinistryGathering.org](http://www.CatholicSocialMinistryGathering.org)).
  - **Participate in Action Alerts** on issues of life and dignity from the U.S. Catholic bishops ([cqrcengage.com/catholicbishops](http://cqrcengage.com/catholicbishops)).

## Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy

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.

Excerpted from Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy

## More Resources

- **Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization** has a Jubilee Year of Mercy website ([www.im.va](http://www.im.va)).
- **USCCB Evangelization and Catechesis** has a [webpage on the Year of Mercy](#) which includes articles, resources, links and more ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)).
- **Learn about the U.S. Catholic bishops' work** on restorative justice and criminal justice reform ([www.usccb.org/jphd](http://www.usccb.org/jphd)).
- **Catholic Mobilizing Network** resources on restorative justice and criminal justice reform include a [Jubilee Year of Mercy Prayer Card](#), several [Jubilee Year of Mercy Podcasts](#), a [Living the Year of Mercy Workshop](#), and more ([www.CatholicMobilizingNetwork.org](http://www.CatholicMobilizingNetwork.org)).
- **Catholic Relief Services** has a [Prayer for the Year of Mercy](#), homily helps, Live Mercy sessions, and a clergy workshop for the Jubilee of Mercy (coming soon at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org)).