

WHAT IS THE YEAR OF MERCY?

Pope Francis has announced a special Year of Mercy beginning December 8, 2015, and continuing through November 20, 2016. The Year of Mercy is a special time for prayer, pilgrimage, and works of mercy, a graced opportunity to encounter the mercy of God.

WHY A YEAR OF MERCY? “At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective.” (Pope Francis)

WHAT IS A JUBILEE? For centuries, the Church has observed Jubilees—times of special grace and forgiveness of sins— at significant anniversaries, as in the Great Jubilee Year 2000, which marked the 2000th anniversary of Christ’s birth. The Year of Mercy is an “Extraordinary Jubilee” because it does not mark a particular anniversary. As in other Jubilee Years, the Jubilee Doors at the Major Basilicas in Rome will be opened and the faithful will have the opportunity to obtain a plenary indulgence for themselves and for their deceased loved ones.

WHERE ARE THE DOORS OF MERCY?

This Jubilee observance is unique in that Pope Francis has instructed that Doors of Mercy be designated not only in the Major Basilicas in Rome, but in every diocese around the world, in all cathedral churches and major shrines. Pope Francis will open the first Doors of Mercy on November 29, when he visits the Cathedral of Bangui in the Central African Republic. Archbishop Sartain will open the Doors of Mercy at St. James Cathedral on Sunday,



December 13. They will open for pilgrims throughout the Year of Mercy, until November 13, 2016.

HOW SHOULD WE MARK THE YEAR OF MERCY? Pope Francis has written: “It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty.... Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: 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. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to 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.” In addition, the Year of Mercy is an opportune time to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, to pray, to reflect on the Scriptures (particularly the Gospel of Luke, which we will read throughout the year at Sunday Mass), and to make a pilgrimage and pass through the Doors of Mercy in Rome or closer to home at St. James Cathedral.

WHAT SPECIAL EVENTS ARE HAPPENING DURING THE YEAR OF MERCY?

Pilgrims will be welcome at St. James Cathedral throughout the year, from December 13, 2015 through November 13, 2016. In addition, a series of Jubilee events will take place in the Cathedral for various groups—religious and clergy, young people, people with special needs, and many more. Visit www.stjames-cathedral.org/mercy for the full schedule of events. There will be opportunities for prayer and reflection in every parish community as well.