



ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND
IN OREGON

Office of the Archbishop

November 24, 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

We are about to enter into a special time of grace for the Church. Pope Francis has called for a Jubilee Year of Mercy, which begins during this Advent on December 8 and concludes on November 20, 2016. In announcing the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis describes mercy as "the beating heart of the Gospel". The Pope reminds us that Jesus is the face of the Father's mercy, and that we, in turn, should be the face of God's mercy in the world.

In response to the Holy Father's call for a Year of Mercy, I invite each family and individual to take concrete steps to live out this Extraordinary Jubilee Year. Through prayer, reconciliation and pilgrimage, we can have a first-hand experience of God's mercy, which will enable us to embrace and carry out the works of mercy that Jesus taught us in his own life and ministry.

Prayer: I ask parishes to pray our diocesan prayer for the Year of Mercy at all Sunday Masses throughout the Jubilee Year. I ask schools to pray this prayer at school Masses and at other opportune times during the year. I invite all individuals and families to pray daily the *Hail, Holy Queen (Salve Regina)*, which invokes Mary as the "Mother of Mercy".

Reconciliation: Pope Francis invites us to put the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the center. I ask all Catholics to rediscover this sacrament of mercy. If you have been away for a while, please come back. Attend the penance service in your parish this Advent. Come back again during Lent. This is the year to turn our hearts toward God and remember that no sin is greater than God's mercy.

Pilgrimage: Making a pilgrimage to a sacred destination requires time and effort. Such a journey can inspire conversion; it is a sign of our desire to reach out for God's mercy. Plan a pilgrimage during this Jubilee Year to one of the three Holy Doors established in the Archdiocese of Portland. Find out more about pilgrimage and the Holy Doors by visiting our Year of Mercy website: www.pdxmercy.org.

Works of Mercy: We are called to take up anew the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. These works include feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting the imprisoned, comforting the afflicted, forgiving offences, and praying for the living and the dead. Let us rededicate ourselves to these works of service which bring the mercy of God to the world.

This Jubilee Year of Mercy is the opportune moment to change our lives! Let us take advantage of this time of grace by opening our hearts to God's mercy and extending that mercy to others.

In the grace and peace of Christ,

Most Rev. Alexander K. Sample
Archbishop of Portland in Oregon

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