



The Newsletter of
St. Peter
the Apostle Parish,
River Edge,
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The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy

By Barbara Gallagher



faith, encourage works of charity and brotherly communion in society and to call Christians to be more sincere in their faith in Christ.

What is Pope Francis's focus on Mercy?

Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers.

The theme of the Jubilee year is found in the light of the Lord's words: Merciful like the Father. "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). Jesus's command is directed to anyone willing to listen to his voice. In mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always, freely asking nothing in return. In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society.

The Jubilee of Mercy is an opportunity for all of us to change our lives: a time to allow our hearts to touch and be touched with mercy, forgiveness and love, listening to the cry of innocent people who are deprived of their property, dignity, feelings and bring the love of God as an answer to their prayers.

Pope Francis has declared an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The Jubilee will begin at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome December 8, 2015 on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. On this date the Pope will open the Jubilee Doors of the Basilica beginning the Year of Mercy. These doors have remained sealed since the last Jubilee Year in 2001.

Here at St. Peter's, our Jubilee Commission is planning how we will answer the Pope's call. We will celebrate the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy with a Blessing of Church Doors at the 5:30 pm Mass on December 12 and incorporate a special liturgy into the Mass.

During the next year, St. Peter's will celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy with several events to experience God's mercy. These will be announced from the pulpit and in the bulletin.

What is a Jubilee?

In the Roman Catholic tradition, a Jubilee is a great religious event. It is a year of forgiveness of sins. It is a year of reconciliation between adversaries, of conversion and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and consequently of solidarity of hope, justice and commitment to serve God in peace with our brothers and sisters. A Jubilee year is, above all, the Year of Christ, who brings life and grace to humanity.

The Jubilee is a Holy Year because its purpose is to encourage holiness of life. It was called to strengthen

Works of Mercy

During the Jubilee of Mercy, Christians are called to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy:

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- FEED THE HUNGRY
- GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY
- CLOTHE THE NAKED
- SHELTER THE HOMELESS
- VISIT THE SICK
- VISIT THE IMPRISONED
- BURY THE DEAD

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

ADMONISH THE SINNER
Instruct the ignorant
(provide guidance/counsel
to those who are confused)
COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL
COMFORT THE SORROWFUL
BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY
FORGIVE ALL INJURIES
PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

The Jubilee of Mercy will conclude on November 20, 2016 which is the Solemnity of Christ King.

The Blessing of Being Thought Of, and then attending the Papal Mass!

By Eileen Hanrahan

I have been working for St. Peter's for a while now; I am a Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation. I do not consider it a job, I consider it a ministry, and am blessed to have the role that I do. So, when it was announced that Pope Francis was going to visit the United States, I was very excited, and hoped to take part!

As the time for his visit grew closer and closer, though, it looked like he might come and go without me participating. Going to Philadelphia was out of the question for me, because it was the second week of Faith Formation and our annual carnival. I had entered a raffle for tickets to his visit to Central Park, even to see him drive by would be a blessing, but I was unsure if that would work out.

Then my phone rang on Thursday, the day before the papal mass at Madison Square Garden. A friend from long ago, and kindred spirit but someone I do not interact with on a daily basis, called me to say she could secure me one ticket to the mass! I couldn't believe it – this was better than I could have imagined. Prior to that, a "church buddy" gave me two tickets to the red zone at Central Park, and I also won the raffle for two tickets. I was thrilled to know that I was going to see the Pope, but I was also deeply moved to be

thought of by so many people. What a blessing it is to have friends who reach out. I was truly floating on cloud nine!

I attended the mass at MSG, and gave away all the other tickets I couldn't use. I was happy to think of others in the same way that others had thought of me.

As far as actually seeing the Pope – I really felt like I was playing a part in a movie, and it wasn't really happening to me. What to wear? Well of course a dress (it was a mass after all), and a green sweater (I wanted to match Pope Francis – since it was ordinary time he would be in green)! Off I went, accompanied by Gloria DiBella from our parish, who had also been the lucky recipient of a golden ticket.

I had some special items with me – my father's Connemara marble (also green!) rosary beads (I thought they might turn to gold miraculously – they are still green – but now are a relic because they were blessed by the pope!), and pictures of people in my life and in the parish that could use a miracle. Hey, it couldn't hurt to try!

It was incredible. When I got to my seat, (I sat behind the altar, one level up, I had the same view as Pope Francis!) we prayed the rosary in many different languages. I looked down to the first row, and there were John and David Finn, former parishioners of St. Peter's, who had been invited personally by Cardinal Dolan. We were treated to singing by some famous artists, all faith filled Catholics, singing

church hymns we are familiar with. It was very beautiful and prayerful. Then we watched a video about the Archdiocese of New York while we waited for the arrival of Pope Francis at 6:15.

And at 6:05, ten minutes early, in comes the Popemobile! Before mass and vesting, Pope Francis rode around and blessed everyone. He looked as though he was illuminated -- you could always tell where he was even in that vast coliseum. I could not take my eyes off him.

The mass was very prayerful and beautiful. I prayed for all of us, and for the special people whose pictures I had with me. Pope Francis's homily

talked about Jesus in the city; he touched on hunger and poverty and what we can do to combat it.

I still can't believe I went. It is a memory I will keep with me forever! I am an imperfect but faithful servant, and I thank God for this blessing and for the blessing of friends who thought of me and made it possible. **God is good!**



Pope Francis and Synod of the Family

By Rev. Thomas P. Ivory

Pope Francis is someone almost universally admired, and the Bishop of Rome who makes us grateful to be Catholic Christians. From the time of his election and the choice of his name, he has helped us to participate in the renewal of our church envisioned by The Second Vatican Council. By means of his writings and homilies, and especially through his actions, Pope Francis has challenged us to become more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. As our young people say: “He walks the talk.”

As autumn begins to yield to the winter season in our climate, we Catholics prepare to begin a new liturgical “Church Year” with the season of Advent. This does not correspond with our secular calendar year, but it seems to help us to celebrate the ongoing history of God’s love for us which has been revealed in Jesus Christ and carried through the mission and ministry of our church.

Pope Francis has declared this coming liturgical year to be “Year of Mercy”. We can sense that this theme of God’s mercy and compassion has been a consistent priority in this past year of Pope Francis’ ministry.

His concern for sharing the Good News was evident in his past major encyclical, “The Joy of the Gospel”, and in calling for a Synod on Evangelization and Family Life. As a good pastor, he realized the critical importance of family faith formation in the sharing of God’s love and compassion.

We recently observed the closure of the second session of the Synod of the Family, which dealt with many of the controversial and troubling issues which are impacting family life: divorced and civil remarriage; same sex unions; couples living together outside of marriage; preparing couples better for the challenges of sacramental married life; and supporting couples more effectively during marriage.

It is encouraging for us to note that these Synod sessions are intended to continue the renewal of our church that has been implemented after the Second Vatican Council. The efforts of the Holy Father to consult with the representatives of the Bishops of the entire world, and his request that they, in turn, consult with their faithful people in their dioceses, is a clear example of the principle of collegiality and consultation called for by the Council in 1965. In the future we can hope for greater participation of the laity and the expertise of the theological community.

The fact that some cardinals and bishops were reported to disagree about how to resolve certain issues on the light of the Gospel and the Church Tradition did not disturb Pope Francis because he trusts in the Holy Spirit to promote the emergence of the truth the discussion and discernment process.

So the question is what is next? The pope took all the recommendations given by the bishops and people at the Synod and a new document will come soon, an encyclical in which the pope will lay down new directions for the church to approach these issues in the life of families in our world and church. As Pope Francis reflects on the Synod recommendations, we can join his trust in the Holy Spirit’s guidance and be open to some special signs of God’s love and compassion in this coming Year of Mercy.

Thomas P. Ivory is pastor emeritus of **Presentation Parish** in Upper Saddle River, N.J., and was co-founder of **RENEW** while serving as Newark Archdiocesan Catechetical Director.

Editor’s Note: we read about the Synod of the Family in this issue, and we heard a lot about it during the year. Did you know that “Synod” is from a Greek word that means ‘walking together’?

ST. PETER'S LIBRARY HAS WONDERFUL BOOKS FOR ADVENT

By Eleanor Grybowski

With the arrival of Advent, we wish to prepare for Christmas by becoming closer to Jesus. A suggestion for one of the ways is through reading. The following are some of the many books you will find in St. Peter's Library.

Our newest books by Pope Francis are:

"The Joy of the Gospel"

"On Heaven and Earth"

"God is Always Near"

"Encyclical on Climate Change and Inequality"

You will find these books on the top of the shelves in the library.

Not to overlook our former popes, we have the following books:

"Call me John" by Cardinal Cushing"

"Journal of a Soul" - Autobiography of Pope John Paul XXIII. (Green tape)

"Pope John Paul II" - A biography by Tad Szula. (Green tape)

"In the Footsteps of John Paul II- Francis Leighton (Green tape)

"Pope Benedict XVI" - Can be found with oversized books. Peter Seawald (Green tape)

Have you ever read any of James Martin's books?

Many of them are in our library. Our books are organized by color-coded tapes and you can find his books with either a Yellow or Green tape on their spines. His book "The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything - A Spirituality for Real Life" (Green tape) was a NY Times bestseller.

*Our section with the Aqua tapes are books to help us through hard times
or about those who have triumphed over hardship.*

We suggest you spend some time in the library to acquaint yourself with what is there for your enjoyment and spiritual enrichment. These books have been acquired over the years for YOU as a St. Peter's parishioner. The library is located directly across from the church in the gathering space, right by the rocking chairs. It is open every Sunday after the 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. masses. Plan an extra 5 minutes to browse on your way out!

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from the staff of The Net Worker**

