

Merciful like the Father

Jubilee path of Mercy at the Basilique du Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre

Introduction:

In pilgrimage toward the Door of Mercy

“The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a *viator*, a pilgrim travelling along the road, making his way to the desired destination. Similarly, to reach the Holy Door in Rome or in any other place in the world, everyone, each according to his or her ability, will have to make a pilgrimage. This will be a sign that mercy is also a goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice. May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 14)

Gospel according to Luke 10:25-37

And now a lawyer stood up and, to test him, asked, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

Jesus said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?'

He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.'

Jesus said to him, 'You have answered right, do this and life is yours.'

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?'

In answer Jesus said, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead.'

Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him.

He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him.

Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, "Look after him, and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have."

Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?'

He replied, 'The one who showed pity towards him.' Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

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1st step

Just as I am, without fear, I present my life to the Father of mercies.

Chapel of Mary, refuge of sinners - the route toward Jericho: look at his wounds

“A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead.

Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side.” (Luke 10:30-32)

At this first step of our journey, let us remain silent, let us look deep down into our heart and let us ask ourselves: in my life, what is it that resembles the disorder of Jericho? On which “slippery slope” have I allowed myself to be dragged down? What desire for conversion has the Lord placed on my heart?

“I direct this invitation to conversion even more fervently to those whose behaviour distances them from the grace of God.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 19)

Act of contrition

O my God, I am sorry for my sins because I have offended you. I know I should love you above all things. Help me to do penance, to do better, and to avoid anything that might lead me to sin. Amen.

Self-examination proposed by Pope Francis

“The Lord Jesus shows us the steps of the pilgrimage to attain our goal: “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (Lk 6:37-38). The Lord asks us above all not to judge and not to condemn. If anyone wishes to avoid God’s judgement, he should not make himself the judge of his brother or sister. Human beings, whenever they judge, look no farther than the surface, whereas the Father looks into the very depths of the soul. How much harm words do when they are motivated by feelings of jealousy and envy! To speak ill of others puts them in a bad light, undermines their reputation and leaves them prey to the whims of gossip. To refrain from judgement and

condemnation means, in a positive sense, to know how to accept the good in every person and to spare him any suffering that might be caused by our partial judgment, our presumption to know everything about him. But this is still not sufficient to express mercy. Jesus asks us also to forgive and to give. To be instruments of mercy because it was we who first received mercy from God. To be generous with others, knowing that God showers his goodness upon us with immense generosity.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 14)

“Pardoning offences becomes the clearest expression of merciful love, and for us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully. Let us therefore heed the Apostle’s exhortation: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph 4:26). Above all, let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7): the beatitude to which we should particularly aspire in this Holy Year.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 9)

“We cannot escape the Lord’s words to us, and they will serve as the criteria upon which we will be judged: whether we have fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger and clothed the naked, or spent time with the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25:31-45). Moreover, we will be asked if we have helped others to escape the doubt that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness; if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bonds of poverty; if we have been close to the lonely and afflicted; if we have forgiven those who have offended us and have rejected all forms of anger and hate that lead to violence; if we have had the kind of patience God shows, who is so patient with us; and if we have commended our brothers and sisters to the Lord in prayer. In each of these “little ones,” Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us. Let us not forget the words of Saint John of the Cross: **“as we prepare to leave this life, we will be judged on the basis of love”.**”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 15)

“I particularly have in mind men and women belonging to criminal organizations of any kind. For their own good, I beg them to change their lives. I ask them this in the name of the Son of God who, though rejecting sin, never rejected the sinner. Do not fall into the terrible trap of thinking that life depends on money and that, in comparison with money, anything else is devoid of value or dignity. This is nothing but an illusion! We cannot take money with us into the life beyond. Money does not bring us happiness. Violence inflicted for the sake of amassing riches soaked in blood makes one neither powerful nor immortal. Everyone, sooner or later, will be subject to God’s judgment, from which no one can escape.

The same invitation is extended to those who either perpetrate or participate in corruption. This festering wound is a grave sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance, because it threatens the very foundations of personal and social life. Corruption prevents us from looking to the future with hope, because its tyrannical greed shatters the plans of the weak and tramples upon the poorest of the poor. It is an evil that embeds itself into the actions of everyday life and spreads, causing great public scandal. Corruption is a sinful hardening of the heart that replaces God with the illusion that money is a form of power. It is a work of darkness, fed by suspicion and intrigue. *Corruptio optimi pessima*, saint Gregory the Great said with good reason, affirming that no one can think himself immune from this temptation. If we want to drive it out from personal and social life, we need prudence, vigilance, loyalty, transparency, together with the courage to denounce any wrongdoing. If it is not combated openly, sooner or later everyone will become an accomplice to it, and it will end up destroying our very existence.

This is the opportune moment to change our lives!”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 19)

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2nd step

He came to seek out each one of us.

The baptismal water: the encounter with Christ the Healer and the grace of the sacraments

“But a Samaritan traveller who came on him was moved with compassion when he saw him.

He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them.” (Luke 10:33-34)

“In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us. [...] From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it. Every time someone is in need, he or she can approach it, because the mercy of God never ends.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 25)

Christ has loved us, and in his love he has borne each one of us on the Cross, with our weaknesses and our sins, to give us the chance to live a new life, to give us access to the Father.

In coming forward to do the sign of the cross with the baptismal water, we recall having been plunged into the mercy of God available to all in the death and the resurrection of Jesus and we ask for grace to be always and more, with a purified heart and a more open spirit, instruments of mercy in this world.

By marking our body with the sign of the Cross with the holy water, we can each say in a low voice:

“Lord, I believe in your mercy”

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3rd step

He wanted his Church to share his life with us

The inn – the Church: the Word of God, the Virgin Mary and the sacraments

“He then lifted him onto his own mount and took him to an inn and looked after him.

Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Look after him, and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have’.” (Luke 10:34-35)

The inn, it is the Church, to which Christ entrust us. The Church is the place where we receive the Word of God and the sacraments. This Word of life, transmitted through the Holy Scripture, is summarised in the dual commandment regarding love: “You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

The love of God, the love of your neighbour, these are the “two silver coins” that Christ provides to us in the Church while awaiting his return at the end of time.

We each receive two verses of Scripture that we are encouraged to meditate on to prepare ourselves to pass through the Holy Door and to extend our walk in our daily life.

“In order to be capable of mercy, therefore, we must first of all dispose ourselves to listen to the Word of God. This means rediscovering the value of silence in order to meditate on the Word that comes to us.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 13)

The Church is also the place where Mary, the Mother of the Saviour, welcomes us all.

“My thoughts now turn to the Mother of Mercy. [...] Her hymn of praise, sung at the threshold of the home of Elizabeth, was dedicated to the mercy of God which extends from “generation to generation” (Lk 1:50). We too were included in those prophetic words of the Virgin Mary. [...] Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the *Salve Regina*, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 24)

In the Church, we rely on the faith confessed by Saint Peter and transmitted by the apostles. Within the framework of an undertaking to receive the plenary indulgence of the Holy Year, it is proposed that we make a stop before the statue of Saint Peter to recite [the Credo \(I believe in God\)](#), in communion with Pope Francis, Peter’s successor.

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4th step

With the saints of yesterday and today, let us become artisans of mercy

Saint Marguerite-Marie Chapel: the works of mercy and the intercession of the saints

“Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?”

He replied, 'The one who showed pity towards him.' Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.’”

(Luke 10:36-37)

“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. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 15)

- **The 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.

- **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.

We commit to performing an act of mercy that we record on a “works of mercy note” that we will deposit in the Cup of Mercy before the Lord, after passing through the Door of Mercy.

In our commitment to perform these acts of mercy, we confide in the intercession of the saints of Mercy, particularly those that have come before us in pilgrimage to Montmartre, in order that they may help us to place our footsteps in their footsteps.

“Our prayer also extends to the saints and blessed ones who made divine mercy their mission in life.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 24)

Litanies of the saints of mercy

With Saint Denis, who gave his life out of love to announce to our fathers the good news of Salvation,

Lord, we pray to you

With Saint Marguerite-Marie, who contemplated the Heart of Christ burning with love for all men,

Lord, we pray to you

With Saint Vincent de Paul, tireless apostle of charity among the poorest and the most neglected,

Lord, we pray to you

With Saint Louis Martin, witness of the tenderness of God in family life,

Lord, we pray to you

With Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who offered herself with confidence to the merciful Love of God,

Lord, we pray to you

With the blessed Charles de Foucauld, who received the mercy of Jesus and shined forth his tenderness through the least of his brothers,

Lord, we pray to you

With Saint Faustine Kowalska, who was called to enter into the depths of divine mercy,

Lord, we pray to you

With Saint John XXIII, artisan of peace and of reconciliation among men,

Lord, we pray to you

With Saint John-Paul II, apostle of the divine mercy for the Church of the new millennium,

Lord, we pray to you.

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5th step

Passing through the Door of Mercy

“The Holy Door [is] a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instils hope.”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 3)

We pass through the door to meet God and to let God meet us, with the desire for the communion of the hearts of all our brothers. This passing through leads us into the nave before the exposed Holy Sacrament.

PRAYER TO PASS THROUGH THE DOOR OF MERCY

O Very Holy Father,

Tender and Merciful God,

at the threshold of this Holy Door,

lay upon us your look of kindness.

That on passing through it,

our hearts turn resolutely toward You.

Hear, Lord, and have mercy!

Grant us the grace of true repentance

through your Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

By the power of Your Holy Spirit,

Support us on this path of conversion.

Inspire us to works of mercy and acts of reconciliation to be accomplished

and keep us from condemning others.

Make us strong in the battle against evil,

watchful in listening to Your Word,

happy to be a sign of Your Love.

Hear, Lord, and have mercy!

Forgive us, sanctify us,

so that we can, at the hour of our death,

appear before You, purified of all defilement,

and sing forever with all our brothers

Your Mercy.

Amen.

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6th step: the Cup of Mercy and the Eucharistic worship

“Adopting God’s mercy as our lifestyle”

(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 13)

Let us deposit our work of mercy note in the Cup of Mercy.

- **“God, come to my aid, Lord, help us!”** (Psalm 69)

- **“Do not fear: I am with you”** (Isaiah 41, 10)

In silence, we worship the Lord Jesus present in the Very Holy Sacrament and we pray for Pope Francis, for the intentions that he has in his heart for the good of the Church and for the whole world.

THE SANCTUARY’S PRAYER

Lord,
who wished to stay present
among us through
Your Holy Eucharist, the mystery of your love,
we unite ourselves to all those
who come to adore You
in spirit and in truth.

Praying day and night,
we would like to offer our presence
to Your Presence.
Allow us to listen to You in silence,

as You wish to reveal Yourself
to us in the secret of our hearts.
Help us to abandon ourselves to You:
may the praise and supplication,
and the confident gift of our lives
raise up from our hearts.

May Your Sacred Heart, source of all mercy,
establish our hearts in peace
and inner joy. May it strengthen
our faith, renew our love,
and sustain our hope. Amen.

PRAYER OF POPE FRANCIS FOR THE JUBILEE

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Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
Show us your face and we will be saved.
Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;
made Peter weep after his betrayal,
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.
Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:
“If you knew the gift of God!”

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 His 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 of you, Lord Jesus, 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.