

A HOLY YEAR OF MERCY

8 DECEMBER 2015 – 20 NOVEMBER 2016

Pope Francis announced a Holy Year of Mercy as an opportunity to reflect upon different aspects of mercy. The central focus of the year is our way through **THE DOOR OF MERCY**, in Rome, in Westminster Cathedral, or here in the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint George, Enfield.

Mercy is a 'way', a two-way journey: God comes towards us and we return to Him. You are invited to make this way, walking around our church, as a 'way of mercy', pausing, praying, and giving thanks, especially at the following seven focal points:



- 1. Face of Mercy**
Christ on the Cross.
- 2. Font of Mercy**
The Baptismal Font.
- 3. Mother of Mercy**
Our Lady.
- 4. Patroness of Mercy**
St. Thérèse of Lisieux.
- 5. Living Mercy**
Simon of Cyrene carries the Cross.
- 6. The Sacrament of Mercy**
The Confessional.
- 7. Door of Mercy**
Receive plenary Indulgence.

The *logo* and the *motto* of the Year of Mercy together provide a summary of what the Year of Mercy is all about. The motto: *Merciful Like the Father* (taken from the Gospel of Luke, 6:36) serves as an invitation to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure. The logo presents a catechesis on the theme of mercy. It represents an important image important to the early Church: that of the Son having taken upon his shoulders the lost soul demonstrating that it is the love of Christ that brings to completion the mystery of his incarnation culminating in redemption.

1. Face of Mercy. *You have entered the church through a door and traced the sign of the Cross on yourself, the image of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - the source of Mercy. Make your way to the front of the church, sit down and spend a few minutes contemplating Christ on the Cross.*

The wood of the Cross is the wood of a *New Door*, the door of the love of God for those who return to Him. A door which is always open, as always open are the wounds of Christ, as always open is His heart for us. Christ on the Cross is the face of Mercy, the face of our God. Pope Francis reminds us that: “by contemplating Christ’s union with the Father even at the height of His sufferings on the cross (cf. Mk 15:34), Christians learn to share in the same gaze of Jesus” (*Lumen Fidei*).

Praying before a crucifix can help deepen our love for Jesus. Remember, His death on the Cross enables us to share Eternal life with Him in heaven.

Prayer: We adore You O Christ, and we praise You, because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

2. Font of Mercy. *Now stand in front of the baptismal font.*

Baptism, the first Sacrament we receive as Christians, is the font of mercy. “Special sacramental graces first flow into our hearts at our Baptism where we are adopted into God’s family, and we begin to swim for the first time in the ocean of His infinite mercy.” In Baptism all our sins are forgiven and we truly become children of God the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit.

Bless yourself with the water from the font and renew your Baptism by reciting the Apostles Creed: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

3. Mother of Mercy. *Make your way to the shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.*

Mary’s sacrifice is a unique sharing in the revelation of mercy, that is, a sharing in the absolute fidelity of God to His own love, to the covenant that He willed from eternity and that He entered into... with humanity; it is a sharing in that revelation that was definitively fulfilled through the cross... No one has received into his heart

as much as Mary did, that mystery, that truly divine dimension of the redemption effected on Calvary by means of the death of the Son, together with the sacrifice of her maternal heart, together with her definitive *yes*, her *'fiat'*.

Prayer: Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.

4. Patroness of Mercy. *Move towards the statue of St. Thérèse.*

Pope Francis describes the Saints as those who “made divine mercy their mission in life.” St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the ‘Little Flower,’ is a great witness to the mercy and love of God. In the Gospels St. Thérèse discovered above all the Mercy of Jesus, to the point that she said: “To me, He has given his Infinite Mercy, and it is in this ineffable mirror that I contemplate his other divine attributes. Therein all appear to me radiant with Love. His Justice, even more perhaps than the rest, seems to me to be clothed with Love” (*The Story of a Soul, Manuscript A*).

Let us, with St. Thérèse, with child-like simplicity, offer our whole lives to God:

My Lord, I offer You all the actions I do today, for the intentions and the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; I would like to sanctify the beating of my heart, my thoughts and my most simple work by joining them to His most infinite merits, to repair my faults by throwing them in the blaze of His Merciful Love. O my God I ask You for myself and for those I love for the grace to accomplish perfectly Your holy wish, to accept for Your Love the joys and pains of this passage that is life so that one day we can be reunited in Heaven for all eternity. Amen.

5. Living Mercy. *Make your journey to the back of the church and pause by the fifth Station of the Cross: Simon of Cyrene carries the Cross with Jesus.*

Simon of Cyrene wasn't a willing participant in the Way of the Cross, but he reminds us we are called to live God's mercy every moment of every day. There are many ways in which we can help others to carry their cross. During the Year of Mercy Pope Francis offers a possibility of gaining an indulgence if we practise one of the spiritual or corporal works of mercy.

Spiritual Works of Mercy: to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to admonish sinners in love, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences willingly, to comfort the afflicted, to pray for the living and the dead.

Corporal Works of Mercy: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to the homeless, to visit the sick, to ransom the captive, to bury the dead.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to be indifferent to the plight of others. Because I cannot see them face to face, I sometimes shut out the silent pleas for help that are conveyed in images and television clips. May I become like Simon for them in their hour of need. May I take on the role of servant in imitation of Jesus who came 'to serve and not to be served'. Amen.

6. The Sacrament of Mercy. *Move towards the confessional. Stop for a moment and contemplate the following words from the scripture:*

'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' (Luke 15:20-24)

"God's patience has to call forth in us the courage to return to Him, however many mistakes and sins there may be in our life. ... It is there, in the wounds of Jesus, that we are truly secure; there we encounter the boundless love of His heart" (Pope Francis). During this Year of Mercy let us return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in full confidence that God waits for us there with open arms.

Pray for the intentions of Pope Francis: I love you Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from You again. Only grant that I may love You always, then do with me what You will. Amen.

7. Door of Mercy. *Having made your 'way' through the Door of Mercy, having prayed for the Pope and professed your faith, you can receive a further grace when in the near future you go to Sacramental Confession and receive Holy Communion.*

God not only wants to forgive all our sins, He also wants to cancel all the consequences of our sins. This is called a 'plenary indulgence'. This gift is for you, or you can offer it for a beloved faithful departed.

The same door you entered on your way in, is now a door which speaks of the mercy of God. In crossing it, you will receive a gift from God. This gift is the grace for you to become merciful like him, missionaries of mercy. This is our mission: 'Be Merciful, as your Father is Merciful' (Lk 6, 36).