

Year of Mercy



December 8th began our “Year of Mercy” called by Pope Francis. What is this and how are we invited to celebrate it?

- Occasionally, a Pope will invite Catholics around the world to focus on a certain theme of our faith by calling a “year of. . .” This year we are invited to experience and share **God’s mercy**.
 - Experience God’s mercy: reflect upon God’s mercy and our need for it and make a point of receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation more regularly
 - Show God’s mercy to others: forgive those who have hurt us, do not judge others, be reconciled with others, and seek to raise others up through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy
- The Church also invites us to make pilgrimages to designated churches, to receive special indulgences, and for those able—to join the Pope in Rome for special gatherings

What is mercy?

Mercy is love shown especially when undeserved; seeks to lift another up from his/her misery, mistakes, suffering, or smallness to become all he/she can be.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry
Give drink to the thirsty
Clothe the naked
Welcome the stranger
Care for the sick
Visit the imprisoned
Bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Counsel the doubtful
Instruct the ignorant
Admonish sinners
Comfort the afflicted
Forgive offenses
Bear wrongs patiently
Pray for the living & the dead

For more info go to: www.olv-troy.org
and visit the Year of Mercy Resource Section, as well as the Family Life Tab!

Our Need for God's Mercy

The story of the Prodigal Son can be found in Luke 15



At the heart of this year’s celebration of mercy, is the mercy of God. God loves us, even when we are most undeserving. He wants to lift us up to become our full potential, to overcome our weaknesses and bad habits, to see the beauty and meaning even in our suffering, and to find our security in being his child. Just as the father in the Story of the Prodigal Son waited, watching for his son to return home, God is anxious to forgive and love us. But first, as the Prodigal Son, we must become aware of our need for mercy and turn to the Lord with an open heart, sorry for our sins and shortcomings and desiring to be better. When we turn to the Lord in our brokenness in prayer, and especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we can almost tangibly feel God’s mercy embrace us, cleanse us, heal us, and give us the boost we need to move forward.

Pope Francis speaks to us. . .

“ Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. . . . Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him.

Standing before him with open hearts, letting him look at us, we see that gaze of love. . .

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.

. . . wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy. ”

Year of Mercy **Motto:** “Merciful like the Father”

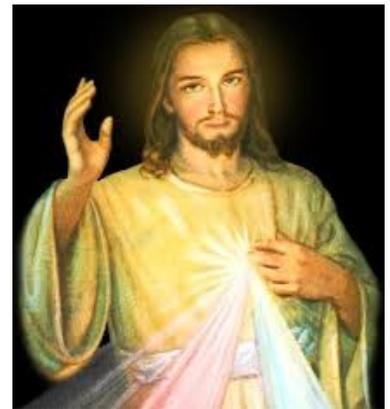
Taken from Jesus’ own words in Luke 6:36

The motto 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

Year of Mercy **Logo:** Jesus, the Good Shepherd taking a lost soul/sinner on his shoulders

The logo has been designed in such a way so as to express the profound way in which the Good Shepherd touches the flesh of humanity and does so with a love with the power to change one’s life.

- Year of Mercy Website



Pilgrimage

Journeying to a holy place has long been a tradition in our faith. It symbolizes our journey through life. Through the external challenges of a pilgrimage (often made on foot), the pilgrim experiences internal conversion/change and receives special help from God to leave sin behind and live virtuously. During the holy year, this practice will also remind us that “mercy is a goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice.” Certain churches have been designated as pilgrimage sites throughout the world. The closest one to us is The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany.

Indulgences

Certain prayers or actions through which the church grants individuals the remission of the punishment due for sin. During the Year of Mercy, certain churches have “Holy Doors” opened only on special occasions. Pilgrimage to cross the threshold of one of these doors may grant an indulgence. This action must be accompanied by: detachment from sin, going to Confession, receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, and praying for the Pope and his intentions. The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany has a Holy Door! Visit our website for others in our area !

The Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica,



A few ways our parish will be celebrating the Year of Mercy:

- ◆ **Rediscover Jesus** distributed during Lent and Small Faith Sharing Group experiences.
- ◆ Mercy info and inspiration in the gathering area & on the AV screen.
- ◆ Resources in the parish **bulletin**, on our **website**, and on **Facebook**.
- ◆ CRS Rice Bowl Lent 2016. Watch for additional **family service projects during the coming year!**
- ◆ **Bible Study on Mercy**—Coming Tuesday evenings—May 2016.
- ◆ Women’s Retreat—**Gazing at the Face of Mercy** May 21, 2016.