



THE ARCHDIOCESE
OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS

Office of the Archbishop

Message from Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann on The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy

To the pastors, priests, deacons, consecrated religious and all the lay Faithful of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas:

Greetings in Christ Jesus, the living face of the Father's mercy.

On March 13, 2015, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, announced an *Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy* which will begin on the *Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*, December 8, 2015, and will conclude on November 20, 2016, the *Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*. In the Bull of Indiction, *Misericordiae Vultus*, the Holy Father said: "The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person. The Spouse of Christ must pattern her behavior after the Son of God who went out to everyone without exception."

Recently I promulgated the *Shared Ten-Year Vision* for the Archdiocese and in that vision the mission of evangelization is a key initiative for the local Church in the upcoming years. The mission to evangelize was given to the Church by Jesus, and the successors to St. Peter, the Popes, especially those over the last fifty years, have renewed the call to evangelize by announcing the *New Evangelization*. Pope Francis speaks of the essential connection between mercy and evangelization when he says, "In the present day, as the Church is charged with the task of the new evangelization, the theme of mercy needs to be proposed again and again with new enthusiasm and renewed pastoral action. It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy. Her language and her gestures must transmit mercy, so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father."

I pray that this *Year of Mercy* will be a time of great spiritual renewal for the Church in northeast Kansas. The Church faces many challenges today and while many wonderful signs of growth and spiritual vigor are present within our local Church, there are also forces present in our modern-day culture that question the truth of the Gospel, threaten the integrity of marriage and family life and work to polarize and marginalize people who hold views different from the those embraced by popular culture. Additionally, those on the margins of society are often left without a voice in the affairs that impact their lives. As in every generation, the Church is ever-tasked with bringing "the light and the saving truth of the Gospel to every corner of society" (*Prayer for Religious Liberty*). This *Jubilee Year of Mercy* will help the Church confront these forces not with the "arms of severity", but with "medicine of mercy" (cf. Opening Address, Vatican II, Bl. John XXIII).

After hearing the recommendation of a task force assembled to plan the *Year of Mercy*, I hereby announce the following Archdiocesan initiatives for the *Year of Mercy*.

Works of Mercy:

In the Bull of Indiction, the Holy Father established the motto for the year to be *Merciful like the Father*. The Holy Father reminds us “in mercy, we find proof of how God loves us.” Addressing further the works of mercy, Pope Francis said, “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.”

The Holy Father went on to say, “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. Let us rediscover these *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. And let us not forget 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.”

The *Ten-Year Shared Vision* document provides an opportunity for the Faithful of the Archdiocese to once again familiarize themselves with the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and to commit to renewed practice of the Works of Mercy. I pray that Catholics in northeast Kansas will recommit to knowing and living the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Pilgrimage:

During the Jubilee Year, pilgrims will be welcomed to the principal basilicas in Rome where the Holy Father has designated Holy Doors. Pope Francis states that, “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.”

The pope has called on churches throughout the world to assign certain doors as holy doors by which the faithful may enter during the year, recalling God’s great mercy, and reflecting upon the application of that mercy towards oneself and one’s neighbor. It is to be considered a truly faithful action, so much so that Pope Francis has referred to the holy door itself as a door of faith—*Porta fide*. I have designated certain churches in the Archdiocese to be local pilgrimage sites. These churches will have designated holy doors, through which the faithful will pass. The declaration of certain holy doors throughout the Archdiocese will undoubtedly provide the opportunity for the faithful to seek and find extraordinary “indulgence” from God the Father through Jesus Christ, himself the true face of the Father’s mercy. The designated pilgrimage sites with holy doors will be located at:

- The Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle in Kansas City
- Divine Mercy Parish in Gardner
- Assumption Church (the “Mother Church” of Topeka) in Topeka
- The Shrine of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne at Sacred Heart Church in Mound City
- St. Benedict’s Abbey Church in Atchison
- St. Mary Catholic Church in St. Benedict (near Seneca)

I have instructed the Archdiocesan Office of Liturgy and Sacramental Life to prepare reflection and prayer resources for use by pilgrims when visiting the pilgrimage sites. Additionally, I have asked that office to prepare documents that explain the conditions that must be met for obtaining an indulgence, once the Apostolic Penitentiary issues a decree specifying the conditions for the Year of Mercy indulgence.

Lent:

The Holy Father has suggested that during the Jubilee Year the season of Lent should be “lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God’s mercy.” In addition to the Lenten Confession Initiative that has taken place in the Archdiocese over the past several years, I am asking, in accord with the Holy Father’s request, that the papal initiative started last year, “24 Hours for the Lord,” should be celebrated at specified churches in each of the Archdiocese’s pastoral regions on the Friday and Saturday preceding the Fourth Week of Lent. In recent years, there has been a noticeable and welcomed return by many of the faithful, including young people, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The “24 Hours for the Lord” initiative affords people an opportunity for intense prayer and enables “people to touch the grandeur of God’s mercy.” The Archdiocesan Office of Liturgy and Sacramental Life will coordinate with the Pastoral Leader of each Pastoral Region to identify sites and make arrangements for the celebration of “24 Hours for the Lord.”

Divine Mercy Devotion:

St. John Paul II was an ardent advocate for the Divine Mercy devotion connected to the private revelation received by St. Maria Faustina Kowalska. The Archdiocese, through *The Leaven* and with the help of the Office of Liturgy and Sacramental Life, will work to spread the message of Divine Mercy, increase awareness among the Faithful concerning the Lord’s message of mercy revealed to St. Faustina and promote the Divine Mercy chaplet and devotion.

Outreach to those Wounded by Church Members or by Agents of the Church:

As members of the Body of Christ, we are called upon to respond with deep compassion to any of our brothers and sisters who have been harmed in any way by members of the Church or by her ministers. The unique and tragically harmful effects inflicted by someone acting in the name of the Church requires a loving and nurturing response of caring and healing that is only possible through God’s outpouring of mercy toward His beloved sons and daughters. When ministers of the Church grievously offend, it inflicts a spiritual wound resulting, not only by having been hurt by someone you had a right to trust, but from someone who represented to you the Church and in some measure even symbolized God. The unique and insidious nature of these wounds is that they can impede those victimized from being able to approach the very place one should be able to come for healing and comfort -- the Church and even more devastatingly it can block out ability to reach out to Our Lord -- Divine Physician, the ultimate healer.

During the Jubilee Year I call upon all the faithful to remember in prayer their brothers and sisters in Christ who have suffered harm by the words, actions or omissions of the clergy,

church employees, lay volunteers, ministers or other members of the Church. I will preside at Healing Services to be held in the Archdiocese during the Jubilee Year. I encourage all the faithful to attend one or more of these services and pray for healing for victims and their families. Times and locations will be announced by the Office of Liturgy and Sacramental Life.

Through our efforts and prayers, especially in this Year of Mercy, may the wounded be truly healed that they may more freely and fully participate in the life and mission of the Church. May those who have left the Church find in their return the love, welcoming and compassionate care which God Himself generously bestows to all His children.

Other Archdiocesan Efforts:

The Archdiocese, through the various chancery offices, will support the catechetical, prayer and healing initiatives offered by parishes, schools or other Catholic entities during the *Year of Mercy*. Specifically, the chancery will offer assistance by:

- Creating and managing a Year of Mercy website featuring resources and links to support programs or initiatives conducted by parishes, schools or other Catholic institutions during the Jubilee Year of Mercy
- Making available to parishes, through the Office of Social Justice and Catholic Charities, the “Catholic Social Teaching” workshop
- Promoting, through the Pro-Life Office and the Office of Marriage and Family Life, the Project Rachel Ministry and the “Healing Hearts” woman’s retreat for victims of sexual trauma.

Suggestions for Parishes, Schools and other Catholic Groups:

I encourage parishes, schools and other Catholic groups, in addition to the programs and initiatives described above, to identify programs or opportunities that might be offered during the Year of Mercy. The following are possible initiatives that might be offered by parishes, schools or other Catholic groups:

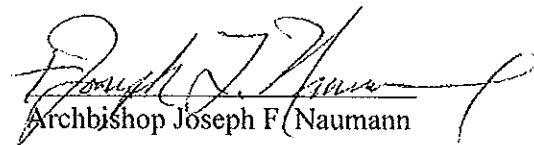
- Special parish/school celebrations for Divine Mercy Sunday (The Office of Liturgy and Sacramental Life will provide samples of parish celebrations)
- Additional weekly parish confession times
- An Examination of Conscience for use by parishioners/students based on the Corporal/Spiritual Works of Mercy (sample will be provided by the Office of Liturgy and Sacramental Life on the Archdiocesan Year of Mercy website)
- Bulletin, newsletter or webpage articles on the Year of Mercy (samples will be provided on the Archdiocesan Year of Mercy website)
- For Catholic groups that host conferences for men, women or teens, the theme of mercy should be considered when planning the programs and securing speakers

During this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Faithful in northeast Kansas should be “dedicated to living out in our daily lives the mercy which the Father constantly extends to all of us. 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.” The Holy Father, in establishing this Year of Mercy, recognizes that the life of the Church is “authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing herald of mercy. She knows that her primary task, especially at a moment full of great hopes and signs of contradiction, is to introduce everyone to the great mystery of God’s mercy by contemplating the face of Christ.”

I entrust the upcoming Year of Mercy in the Archdiocese to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the one through whom Mercy was made flesh. May she watch over the local Church and help us through her prayers to live the mercy that this year calls us to celebrate.

Given at the Chancery in Kansas City, Kansas on the 21st day of September 2015, the Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.



Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann



Chancellor