

December 8, 2015 Morning Announcement

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Inauguration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy

Good morning. Today is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. It is the day when the Church remembers how God, with great mercy prepared Mary to be the Mother of Jesus our Saviour, preserving her from original sin as she was conceived in her mother's womb. Today also marks the beginning of the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year of Mercy. Pope Francis will open the Holy Door at St. Peter's basilica for pilgrims to enter and "experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and fills us with hope." The Holy Door is a symbol of Jesus himself, who is our "door" to salvation. His heart, like the Holy Door, is always open, and ready to fill our lives with his mercy, forgiveness and compassion. As we begin this Holy Year, let us think about where we need to experience God's mercy and compassion in our lives. Let us look to Mary's example of openness to God's grace, and pray that our own hearts might be doors of mercy where others can find friendship, compassion and forgiveness.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God, we praise you for your great mercy that gave us Mary to be the sinless Mother of Jesus your Son. As we begin this Jubilee Year of Mercy, help us open the doors of our hearts to His healing mercy and forgiveness. Make us ministers of your mercy with one another – that we might be signs of your compassion, forgiveness and love. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus, the Lord.

READING

And now, let us listen to God's word.

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew: (Mt 11: 28-30)

At that time, Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE

What heavy burdens do I carry in my heart? How can I give these burdens to Jesus? (pause)

How can I show mercy to others around me in this special year?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we thank you for preparing Mary to be the sinless Mother of Jesus our Saviour, whose merciful heart is always open to welcome, forgive and heal. Help us during this Holy Year to turn our burdens over to him - in our daily prayer, and in a renewed encounter with Him in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. May your mercy overflow from our hearts and transform us into the merciful people you have called us to be. Trusting in Mary's motherly intercession, we make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus, her Son and our Lord. Amen.

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.