



JUBILEE OF MERCY MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION



The Jubilee from Saint Peter's to the World – A Month Ago

2016-01-08pcpne



A month has passed since Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of Saint Peter's. In his homily he explained the meaning of this action, saying, "To pass through the Holy Door means to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them. It is he who seeks us! It is he who comes to encounter us! This will be a year in which we grow ever more convinced of God's mercy... In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love, of tenderness.

"Let us set aside all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. Instead, let us experience the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things." This sign was already anticipated in Bangui when the Holy Father carried out an action that brought a profound novelty to the history of the Jubilee Years. For the first time, he opened a Jubilee Door not in one of the Papal Basilicas, but in Africa, putting that continent before the world so that everyone might perceive the potential that Africa has for the future of humanity.

Pope Francis desires that the Jubilee be primarily an ecclesial event, lived out in every local Church, to rediscover the force of mercy in the daily lives of believers. He wants there to be a concrete effort to render every instrument of mercy visible to everyone. Moving testimonies are arriving from all over the world about the participation of numerous people in the opening of the Holy Doors in individual dioceses. Cathedrals and shrines have not been large enough to hold the crowds of faithful who have filled the squares outside waiting to carry out the symbolic action of passing through the Holy Door. This is a concrete sign that the original intuition of Pope Francis was a real need at the present time, and certainly an incentive to live the coming years with missionary responsibility. It is

certainly so. The presence of so many people attests that the message about encountering Christ and the possibility of experiencing the tenderness and pardon of God is being received as something personally necessary to give meaning to the dramatic events of history in these years.

All of this, nevertheless, has not prevented Rome from remaining a key part of the Jubilee. Exactly one month after the opening of the Jubilee, we have logged more than one million people present in Rome for Jubilee events. To be exact, 1,025,000. Numbers are not important in the spiritual dimension. All the same, they are in indication of an intense participation and of a need being experienced. The decision made by civil authorities to convert Via della Conciliazione into a pedestrian-only street during the time around Christmas has allowed many people to visit this area who have overcome fear and attempts to marginalize public participation. The presence of the armed forces has made the events safer, and Rome has passed these days of celebration with the serenity that they deserve. The pathway reserved for pilgrims daily calls attention to every group of faithful and the individuals who, with the Jubilee Cross, advance toward Holy Door in prayer. It is a moving testimony of faith that does not leave observers indifferent.

Mercy is truly the message that revolutionizes, and which, as Pope Francis teaches, brings a momentum of personal commitment. You receive mercy in order to be able to give it. Without this circularity, something essential is missing that prevents us from grasping the profundity of the mystery of the love of the Father. The first month has passed, and a year has been begun that continues to grow in participation and in events that already make us realize how much this Jubilee of Mercy has entered the hearts of people and can change their lives.

+Rino Fisichella