



## JUBILEE OF MERCY MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION



### Appraisal of the First Major Jubilee Event

Vatican City, 11 February, 2016



#### Press Release

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**The visit to Rome of the relics of Saint Pio da Pietrelcina and of Saint Leopoldo Mandi# and the sending of the Missionaries of Mercy into the whole world.**

In total, half a million people were present in Rome during one week for this much awaited event of the Jubilee of Mercy.

The first Major Event on the calendar for the Jubilee Year brought an influx of pilgrims beyond every expectation. An enormous number of faithful came to Rome from the whole world to venerate the relics of Saint Leopold and Saint Pio. The constant presence of the mass media - to whom we wish to extend special thanks - permitted also many sick, prisoners, and elderly confined to their homes to follow the celebrations on television and radio broadcasts. The continuous flow of faithful on the 3rd and 4th of February was concentrated at the Basilica of Saint Lawrence Outside the Walls (San Lorenzo fuori le mura). Thousands of people waited for hours in the night of February 4th for the arrival of the two Saints at the Basilica of San Salvatore in Lauro, which remained opened without interruption until the procession the following day. There was continual prayer, 24 hours a day. It was a spiritual moment with so much participation and spontaneity that it struck the entire city. Thousands of people lined up in the procession from San Salvatore in Lauro to the entrance of Saint Peter's

Basilica. In the days that followed, there were innumerable other witnesses of faith and devotion in the faithful who came to give homage to the two Saints of Mercy.

Another moment greatly participated in was the audience granted by the Holy Father on the morning of the 6th of February to Padre Pio Prayer groups, who gathered from all continents to pray and reflect on the words of the Holy Father. Nor can we forget, after that, the amazement of so many of the faithful who on Saturday afternoon were present for the spontaneous gesture of Pope Francis, who wanted to be united with them and stood in prayer before Saint Leopold and Saint Pio.

These moments culminated in the sending of the Missionaries of Mercy: 750 were present at Saint Peter's during the celebration of Ash Wednesday, and more than 300 united in prayer from many distant places. During the private meeting with them the day before, Pope Francis had spoken to their hearts, instructing them on how to undertake with tenderness the mission to bring the merciful embrace of the Father to every person.

Once again this morning, at the Mass of farewell celebrated by S.E. Mons. Rino Fisichella, the affection and constant prayer of thousands of pilgrims was visible. The procession with the relics at the end of the liturgy, permitting everyone present to give one last moment of veneration to Saint Leopold and Saint Pio, was touching.

We would like to thank especially the Capuchin friars for their availability. In addition, we extend thanks to the Gendarmerie Corps of the Vatican and the Pontifical Swiss Guard, the Fabbrica di San Pietro, and all the Armed Forces of the Italian State for their assiduous and dedicated collaboration.