



JUBILEE OF MERCY MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION



Press Conference

Press Office, 9 June 2016



We are returning from some particularly significant events in the Jubilee. In the past weeks, the “Jubilee for Deacons” (27-29 May) and the “Jubilee for Priests” (1-3 June) took place. On 2 June, Pope Francis delivered three meditations in the three Basilicas of Saint John Lateran, Saint Mary Major, and Saint Paul Outside the Walls to an audience of more than 6,000 priests, speaking of priests as ministers of mercy. The world was truly present in the priests who came to Rome from all parts of the world: Togo, Cameroon, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Hong Kong, South Korea, Brazil, Argentina, USA, Japan, Canada, Denmark, France, Spain, Germany, Poland, England, Mexico, Italy, and from many other countries. It was an event that will certainly remain in the memory of many priests as an experience of fraternity, reflection, prayer, and sharing.

With the data updated as of today, the number of pilgrims who have come to Rome for the various Jubilee occasions and to visit the 4 Major Basilicas—in addition to the Holy Door at the Sanctuary of Divine Love (Santuario del Divino Amore) – has reached 9,100,935. It is certainly a significant total for the first six months of the Jubilee, and it confirms the great attention of the faithful from all over the world accompanied by their desire to come to Rome to encounter Pope Francis, even though the Doors of Mercy are very present all over the world.

Now we are here to present the upcoming *Jubilee for the Sick and Persons with Disabilities* which will take place on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 10-12. It has a well-structured schedule, which contains many “firsts” that will permit the Jubilee event to bring the condition of the sick and persons with disabilities before the eyes of public opinion, which often unjustly avoids these topics. The Jubilee will begin, as always, with the pilgrimage to the Holy Door beginning at Castel Sant’Angelo and continuing up Via della Conciliazione. This pathway has received a strong positive response from pilgrims sheltered from crowds and gypsies so that they can pray and prepare to pass through the Holy Door. On **Friday, 10 June** at 17:00 in the Church of Santa Maria in Vallicella, there will be a catechesis addressed to everyone, but particularly to the deaf and blind. It will be given by a priest known throughout the world, above all in China, the United Kingdom, and South Africa,

for his complete dedication to working with disabilities. He is Father Cyrill Axerold, a deaf-blind Redemptorist, whose catechesis will be translated in International Sign Language (I.S.L.) and in Italian Sign Language (Lingua dei Segni Italiana/L.I.S.) and in Tactile Sign Language.

Saturday will be marked by two special activities. The first, of a religious nature, will be the catechesis offered in several of the churches in the Central Historic District for pilgrims who are sick and those with disabilities. Entitled “Mercy, Source of Joy”, it will take place at 10:00 and 11:00, and be offered in different languages and with different modalities of presentation. In particular: at the Church of Sant’Andrea della Valle there will be a catechesis in Italian, accompanied by a symbolic presentation (with the dramatization of a Gospel passage and some simple actions that will accompany the prayer) that will permit especially the participation of persons with intellectual disabilities. The catechesis will be delivered S.E. Mons. Gerard Daucourt (Bishop Emeritus of Nanterre). There will also be an Italian catechesis at Santa Maria in Vallicella given by S.E. Mons. Luigi Marrucci (Bishop of Civitavecchia), at S. Salvatore in Lauro a catechesis in English by S.E. Mons. Arthur Roche (Secretary for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments), and a catechesis in Spanish by S.E. Mons. Octavio Ruiz Arenas (Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization).

The second activity of the day will be more for entertainment, and will take place in the gardens at Castel Sant’Angelo from 18:00 to 20:00; it will be a welcome party entitled “Beyond Limits”, and will be preceded and opened by a performance from the Military Carabinieri Band. Figures well-known to the public, such as Rudy Zerbi and Annalisa Minetti, will lead the event. Sick persons and persons with disabilities will perform along with professional singers and ballerinas including Alessandra Amoroso, Silvan, Simona Atzori, Bebe Vio, Stefano Oradei e Nicole Orlando. Not to be forgotten is the participation of the youth of the “Amoris Laetitia Chorus”, the “White Hands Chorus” (youth with intellectual disabilities from the areas of Testaccio and Terra dei Fuochi), the “Colored Hands Chorus”, the “You Have Given Us a Sign Chorus” (composed of deaf and blind adults from Pescara), and finally the “Chicco Sband” (from L’Arche community, which Pope Francis visited this past 13 May on one of the “Fridays of Mercy”) and their interpretation of two songs from the musical “Notre Dame in Paris” in L.I.S. Also in the same Gardens there will be seven “Tents of Mercy” open in which multiple pastoral organizations and volunteer associations will share their experiences of evangelization for and with the sick and persons with disabilities: *U.N.I.T.A.L.S.I.*, the Onlus *For the Blind*, the Office for Pastoral Care of the Sick of the C.E.I together with the Office for Catechesis for Persons with Disabilities, *Center of Volunteers for Suffering*, the Onlus *Faith and Light*, the Community *L’Arche*, the *John XXIII* Community, and a stand that will include the experiences of the Sant’Egidio community, *La trattoria degli amici* where persons with intellectual disabilities work, a location run by a number of people with autistic syndromes who come from Trento, *La locanda dei girasoli* (a restaurant where youth with Down Syndrome work), along with additional organizations from Italy and other countries that work in evangelization for and with deaf persons.

On Sunday, 12 June at 10:30, Pope Francis will preside at a concelebrated Mass that will be broadcast live on worldwide *streaming* with sign language translation. There will be some other special aspects of the Eucharistic celebration that merit being mentioned. Above all, the liturgical service and the readings will be done by persons with disabilities; in particular, among the servers there will be some youth with Down Syndrome and other intellectual disabilities, there will be a deaf German deacon, the first reading will be proclaimed by a Spanish person with disabilities, and the second reading, in English, will be read from Braille by a young blind woman. All the readings will be translated by deaf persons from various nations into International Sign Language; while the prayer of the faithful, which will be in several languages, will be read by people from various countries who are sick or disabled. In addition, for the first time at Saint Peter’s Square, the proclamation of the Gospel will be dramatized by a group of persons with intellectual disabilities, to allow pilgrims with mental/intellectual disabilities to understand the passage. During the time of communion, the Sistine Chapel Choir will be joined by the “Amoris Laetitia” choir which, together with other choirs whose

members have disabilities and who use sign language in their performances, will sing *Pane del cielo* (*Bread from Heaven*).

Before the liturgy, at 9:00, pilgrims waiting in Saint Peter's Square for arrival of Pope Francis will be able to enjoy the presentation called "When I Am Weak, I Am Strong", let by Rosario Carello.

It will include the testimonies of Enrico Petrillo, husband of Chiara Corbella, who died when she was only 28 due to a tumor discovered during her pregnancy; of Maria Grazia Fiore and her family with two disabled children; and of Father Cyril Axerold, who also presented the catechesis on Friday.

There will also be a testimony from a couple coping with a degenerative neurological disease, and a greeting from Jean Vanier, the founder of *L'Arche* community, and a video contribution from *Faith and Light*. The testimonies will alternate with songs and readings performed by persons who are sick or have disabilities.

During the Mass, the painting of Our Lady *Salus infirmorum* (*Health of the Sick*), will be displayed, normally kept in the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Campo Marzio in Rome. This precious image from the 1500s, executed by an unknown artist, was given to the Church of the Magdalene by a Roman nobleman in 1619, after his prayers in front of the painting to be healed from a malady were miraculously answered. Since then, the Madonna in this image has been venerated and called upon for assistance by those afflicted with sickness.

The initiative sponsored by the Foundation *MedTag* merits special attention. We received it with particular enthusiasm, and we are certain that it will bring a great contribution to this Jubilee event.

Beginning on Friday, 10 June, there will be four *Health Points* ("Punti Salute") in the areas surrounding the 4 Vatican basilicas that will offer free specialized health care, especially for the numerous homeless present in the city. About 350 volunteers including religious sisters, members of the Red Cross, military men and women, and health care workers will provide for free visits to over 700 homeless people. The medical specialties available include general medicine, dermatology, breast cancer, pediatrics, and gynecology. Vaccines against pneumonia, which is, as is widely known, one of the most dangerous illnesses for such people, will also be administered. Finally, PAP tests will be offered for women. We are grateful to all the doctors and other staff who have put themselves at the service of this work of mercy with great dedication, under the direction of Prof. Raffaele Landolfi of the Policlinico Gemelli. We would be remiss not to give special thanks as well to the *Science for Life - The MedTag Foundation*, the *Catholic Medical Network* and *MedTag* for having made a reality the original proposal that came to me at the beginning of the Jubilee by the lamented Prof. Sergio Chimenti, who passed away within the past few months.

In **June** there will be two Jubilee Audiences—the 18th and the 30th—to permit the large number of pilgrims expected to be received by the Holy Father and to listen to his catechesis on mercy. The other Jubilee initiatives will continue with the great rhythm that has already been established for the past months, and we will continue to follow attentively the events taking place in the dioceses of the world. These local events, in which there has been great participation, are making the mercy of God present to everyone, the mercy that we are all called to experience and to lead others to experience. As Pope Francis recently had the occasion to say, "The Gospel of mercy remains an open book, in which to continue writing the signs of the disciples of Christ, the concrete gestures that are the best testimony about mercy. We are all called to be living writers of the Gospel, bearers of the Good News to every woman and every man of today. We can do this by putting into practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, which are the mode Christian living. Through these actions, simple and strong, sometimes even invisible, we can visit all those who are in need, bringing them the tenderness and the consolation of God". It is with this spirit that, having already reached the midpoint of the Jubilee Year, we want to continue toward its completion on 20 November, 2016.