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Editorial

Jubilee Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has launched his yearlong push for a global Catholic church of mercy and forgiveness, starting the Jubilee year focused on the subject by opening the holy door at St. Peter's Basilica and calling for a church "that always puts mercy before judgment."

In a solemn Mass attended by tens of thousands in a chilly St. Peter's Square and marked by an unusually high security presence, on 8th December 2015, the pontiff also praised the work of the Second Vatican Council and said the newly-opened Jubilee "compels us not to neglect the spirit which emerged" from that event.

"This Extraordinary Holy Year is itself a gift of grace," Francis said during the homily at the Mass. "To enter through the Holy Door means to rediscover the deepness of the mercy of the Father who welcomes all and goes out to meet everyone personally."

"How much wrong we do to God and his grace when we affirm that sins are punished by his judgment before putting first that they are forgiven by his mercy!" the pope exhorted.

"It is truly so," he said. "We have to put mercy before judgment, and in every case God's judgment will always be in the light of his mercy."

He added: "Let us abandon all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved," said Francis. "Instead, let us live the joy of encounter with the grace that transforms all."

A Jubilee year is a special year called by the Catholic church to receive blessing and pardon from God and remission of sins.

While most Jubilees have been focused on calling pilgrims to Rome to receive such pardon, Pope Francis has widely expanded his Jubilee, asking that dioceses throughout the world open their own holy door at a cathedral or other church to expand the practice globally.

Pope Francis' homily at the Mass and the ceremony itself also paid tribute to the Second Vatican Council, which officially closed its work on Dec. 8, 1965.

May this special Jubilee make us and the whole world peaceful, compassionate and reconciled with others.

Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ
Editor

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- "Situations can change; people can change. Be the first to seek to bring good. Do not grow accustomed to evil, but defeat it with good." — Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*
 - "To be faithful, to be creative, we need to be able to change. To change! And why must I change? So that I can adapt to the situations in which I must proclaim the Gospel. To stay close to God, we need to know how to set out; we must not be afraid to set out." — Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*