



EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

DEC. 8, 2015 - NOV. 20, 2016



"IT WILL BE A HOLY YEAR OF MERCY."
- POPE FRANCIS

HOLY DOORS OPEN THROUGHOUT THE DIOCESE ON DECEMBER 13

To celebrate the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica on December 8. Likewise on December 13, five Holy Doors will open throughout the Diocese of Camden welcoming pilgrims who wish to partake in this ancient ritual.

Bishop Dennis Sullivan has designated the following as Jubilee Churches, each featuring a Holy Door:

CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, CAMDEN
CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES, MARY MOTHER OF MERCY PARISH, GLASSBORO
CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS, PARISH OF SAINT MONICA, ATLANTIC CITY
CHURCH OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DIVINE MERCY PARISH, VINELAND
CHURCH OF OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, CAPE MAY

The establishment of the Holy Doors traces its roots back to early Christians who used the practice as a public sign of penance before they could return to their faith community. Today, pilgrims who enter through these doors during a Holy Year are making a public acknowledgment of repentance and recommitment to their faith.

As explained by Saint John Paul II, "To focus on the door is to recall the responsibility of every believer to cross its threshold. To pass through that door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; it is to strengthen faith in him in order to live the new life which he has given us. It is a decision which presumes freedom to choose and also the courage to leave something behind, in the knowledge that what is gained is divine life."

In a recent letter, Pope Francis noted that the Jubilee of Mercy and pilgrimages to Holy Doors "must be linked, first and foremost, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy." Faithful who make pilgrimages to religious sites or do good works during a Holy Year can receive indulgences provided that within one week of performing the act that an indulgence is attached to, they also receive the sacraments of penance and the Holy Eucharist and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

The modern example of the Holy Doors dates back to 1499 when the pope at the time opened the door on Christmas Eve to inaugurate the Holy Year 1500. For most of Catholic history, the doors were opened with a hammer to symbolize the force of prayer and penance. This will be only the 29th Holy Year in the Church since the tradition began.

In addition to St. Peter's, the Pope will also open Holy Doors at the three other papal basilicas in Rome: St. John Lateran, St. Paul Outside the Walls and St. Mary Major. The Jubilee of Mercy will conclude on November 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King.

