

Pilgrimage to a Holy Door - Diocese of Camden

Before Departing

Gathering before departure for a pilgrimage to a holy door.

Initial Reflection

You are about to make a journey to a particular Holy Door. Collect your thoughts and the intentions you want to take with you to the goal of your pilgrimage. Think of those who have preceded you and those who will follow, especially the members of your pilgrimage group. Think also of those whom you would like to have with you in this moment, but who for various reasons are not here: perhaps because they are sick or too old, or they are not participating because they have lost their faith. Remember all your deceased loved ones. Gather all of these people and situations in your heart, and carry them with you to the Door of Mercy.

Pray from Psalm 122

I rejoiced when they said to me, "let us go to the house of the Lord." And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. For the peace of Jerusalem pray, "May they prosper, those who love you." May peace abide in your walls, and security be in your towers. For the sake of my family and friends, let me say, "Peace upon you." For the sake of the house of the Lord, our God, I will seek good things.

Upon Arriving at the Parish

When you and those with you arrive at the parish, gather together before a shrine of Our Lady found on the parish grounds or call to mind the image of Our Lady.

Prayer to Our Lady, Mother of Mercy

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us; and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

Reflection

"Mercy is a quality of maternal love. Her son was born to her so that he might be the mercy of humanity; Mary spreads this mercy with the love of a Mother, extending it from generation to generation, according to the design of the Father who associated her intimately with the mystery of Christ and of the Church. This is the origin of the many depictions of Mary that, with a profound religious sense, evoke her maternal protection precisely as the Mother of Mercy: the Madonna depicted with a mantle under which the Christian people take refuge." (Cardinal Vincenzo Fagiolo, *The Mother of Mercy*)

Quiet Reflection

Prayer

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever." (Luke 1:46-55)

Approaching the Holy Door

Begin to make your way toward the holy door and about halfway to the door stop and call to mind Saint Peter's Square in Rome with its colonnade and the statues of many saints.

Reflection

With its Bernini Colonnade, Saint Peter's Square welcomes all the faithful who make pilgrimage. The statues of the saints on top of the Colonnade bring together heaven and earth, indicating the secure path to salvation. The saints became merciful toward their neighbor, because they first let themselves be filled with the infinite Charity of God. They became *merciful* because they understood themselves to be immersed in *Divine Mercy*. Christian sanctity begins with the amazement we experience before the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, when we realize that He is both our God and our neighbor, uniting in himself – once and for all – the two great commandments. Every church building invites us to contemplate the mystery of God made man.

Prayer for the Jubilee

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God!"

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

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Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with His anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Before the Holy Door

Before crossing the threshold of mercy at the holy door.

Initial Reflection

We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. Anyone who enters the *Door of Mercy* will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope." (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2-3)

Pray Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me, his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits. It is the Lord who forgives all your sins, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with mercy and compassion.

Pray Psalm 24

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The clean of hands and pure of heart, whose soul is not set on vain things, who has not sworn deceitful words. Blessings from the Lord shall he receive, and right reward from the God who saves him. Such are the people who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! Who is this king of glory? The Lord, the mighty, the valiant; the Lord, the valiant in war. O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! Who is this king of glory? He, the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory.

Inside the Church

After crossing the threshold of mercy at the holy door and taking some time to pray.

Gospel Reflection (Matthew 16:13-19)

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man

is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Quiet Reflection – who do you believe Jesus to be? Do you let Jesus cross the threshold of your heart? Ask for the grace to become a more faithful disciple.

Pray

Asking the intercession of Saint Peter, let us profess our Faith: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Let us likewise pray for the intentions of the Holy Father:

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Glory be...

Prayer Before the Crucifix

Most High, glorious and merciful God, enlighten the darkness of my heart; Give me right faith, sure hope, and perfect charity. Fill me with understanding and knowledge, that I may fulfill your command, and with mercy that I may love and serve you with my whole heart. Amen.

Blessing

Traditional blessing of a priest or deacon. If a layperson is leading the pilgrimage – "May almighty God bless us, protect us and bring us to everlasting life." Amen

Dismissal

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Go in peace.

A plenary indulgence may be obtained, in accord with the usual norms, if a pilgrim completes these prayers; makes a good confession; and receives Holy Communion within seven days of passing through a Holy Door.