**REMINDER: What is a year of Jubilee?**

A Jubilee Year is an extraordinary event – spiritually and practically – for you and your family, for the Church and for our society. **Jubilee Years are an ancient tradition yet their purpose remains ever needed**. They are a year focused on justice and forgiveness, and right relationship with God, with each other, and with the land. You might be surprised to learn that Jubilee Years bring God’s expectations of us into the nitty gritty of farming practices, the property market, wages and salaries, debt relief, and the settling of invoices and bills (see chapters 25 and 26 of the book of Leviticus).

Into this mix Pope Francis has added mercy. He has done this because **being merciful is a sure way of being and acting like God**, **like Jesus, and like the saints.** Pope Francis is acutely aware, as we all are, that mercy is what our world needs today and what we Christians can offer. In the face of callousness, bullying, greed, excessive profit making, excessive rents and substandard housing etc the power of mercy stands out as a great gift for the world. I too am convinced that in a practical Kiwi way we can give people a break, give them another chance, give them a hand up.

**FOCUS: Corporal Works of Mercy -** feed the hungry

In many Christian communities Advent and Christmas have a strong focus on feeding the hungry. How can we celebrate, feast, if my neighbour is starving? Good King Wenceslaus, saw the man starving in the snow AND FED HIM; Boxing Day, a day in which boxes of food were given to the staff, who served on Christmas, and then to the poor; the Latin American’s fast and have open meals to those passing by, as Mary and Joseph passed by. In most of our cities there is a Christmas meal for those who do not have.

Let us ALL feed the hungry this Advent and Christmas: take one dish off your table (the chicken, the ham, the salmon, the bottle of wine) and give to Vincent de Paul; invite someone to your table, to share food and remove the hunger of loneliness; support the Food Bank through Vincent de Paul; take scones to the shut in neighbour (take the grand kids with you).

**PILGRIMAGE: to the Holy Doors**

Pope Francis has asked, as part of the Jubilee Year celebrations that a Holy Door be set aside for pilgrimage in the diocesan Cathedral. You are invited to journey from your homes, parishes, schools and colleges, passing through the Holy Doors of the Jubilee of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North and be inspired to make acts of mercy daily.
Everyone is invited by Bishop Charles and the Cathedral Parish to make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral and through the Holy Doors during the Jubilee of Mercy. Individuals will be able to make a pilgrimage visit any day!!

From +Charles:

*“Central to the Jubilee Year is the experience of being a pilgrim and passing through a Holy Door (every Cathedral in the world will have one). During the year, school and parish pilgrim groups will come to our magnificent Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Palmerston North. It is your holy place. You will be spiritually renewed and inspired by your visit.*

*Some ask what differences will this make. In one sense that is over to you. But if you step through the holy door with a desire to be renewed and to realign your life – especially your attitudes towards those who struggle – with God’s vision for us, you will indeed leave strengthened in your resolve to give a hand, your hand, to those in need.”*

Book your parish or school groups times: 06 357 2891 or visit www.pncathedral.org.nz

**Newsletter/Bulletin Notices**

Week ending December 06
Preparing for the Jubilee of Mercy: This is the perfect time to start our final preparation for the opening of the year of mercy. Prepare the way of the Lord cries John the Baptist in the Gospel this morning. Prepare, make ready, an action, and a choice. And what and how are we to prepare? Paul says: Pray, focus on increasing your love for all; study, increase your knowledge; figure out what is of value and then do it, in a blameless way. So Prepare the Way of the Lord and on Tuesday pray with Francis for mercy in this world.

Week ending December 13Opening the Jubilee of Mercy: This morning Bishop Charles will open the Holy Door of Mercy at the Cathedral. We are all asked this morning to open the door of our hearts to a life of mercy. It is Gaudate, Rejoice Sunday, and we are called to rejoice because the Lord is near. But listen to the Gospel, the Lord is near in our neighbour, is revealed in the one to whom we are called to act with justice. The heart of our faith is that Righteousness and Justice have met; we are holy because of the Lord’s love and presence, and we show such in our love of our neighbour and the least of the brethren. This is a cause of Rejoicing.

Week ending December 20

Celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy: Who is the one who carries the Lord? The least, the youngest, the unknown: Bethlehem-Ephrathah, Mary! This is the stamp of the Lord’s presence: he calls us, the least, the insignificant, to say “Yes” to his will, to say “let it be done in me”. To do this we must listen in prayer to the Word of God and when we hear the call, “Do this, shun that” we respond “thy will be done”. It is when the least hear and respond that the kingdom of mercy is born in our midst.

Week ending December 27

Celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy: Today is the feast of the Holy Family and in the midst of the readings there are two calls for us in this year of Mercy. The first is a call to all of us who were born of parents, oh that is all of us. There is a call to nurture the special love of a child for their parent: “when they are old, even if their mind fails”; and the second call is in respect of the manner in which our lives, especially our family life is to be lived: with “heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another”. This call to mercy is practical and real.

**Links to Resources**

[**www.pn.catholic.org.nz/mercy**](http://www.pn.catholic.org.nz/mercy)

**The Diocesan site with many resources for prayer and ideas for action, dates and how to make a pilgrimage. Look out for the hymns of mercy that have been added there.**

**Major Events**

**Tuesday, 8 December 2015** – Opening of Jubilee Doors at St Peter’s, Rome*. Suggestion of simple Liturgy to finish preparations for the year and to pray for the year ahead.*

**Sunday, 13 December 2015** – 9.30am Mass and diocesan opening of Holy Doors for Jubilee Year – Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. *All invited to join the Celebration to begin this extraordinary year.*