"Let the church always be a place of Mercy and Hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved, and forgiven."
—Pope Francis

JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

Parish Kit

DIocese OF SYRACUSE | WWW.SYRDI0.ORG
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To the People of the Diocese of Syracuse:

Dear Friends:

“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy.” With these words our Holy Father, Pope Francis, begins the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, *Misericordiae Vultus*. With these same words I happily greet you.

On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th, the patronal feast of our diocese, we will begin the Year of Mercy, the theme of which is “Merciful like the Father” (Lk 6:36). Pope Francis describes this time as one in which “the Church feels the urgent need to proclaim God’s mercy” and a time “dedicated to living out in our daily lives the mercy which the Father constantly extends to all of us” (MV, 25).

**Pope Francis’ Call to Mercy**

Mercy is not blind tolerance or justification of sin. Like the words, actions and person of Jesus Christ, mercy presumes sin and denounces it. It is precisely in this way that it loves the sinner and calls him to conversion so that he can experience the grace of God and participate in his divine life. Thus, mercy is a person, Jesus Christ, and it is found both in him and in his Church, particularly in the sacraments.

During this Jubilee Year the Holy Father is calling us to contemplate the mercy of God, to recognize that the Father’s mercy is greater than any sin, to ask for and receive his mercy, and to be merciful to others. In other words, the Holy Father is calling us during this extraordinary moment in the life of the Church to encounter God’s mercy and to extend it to others. Therefore, our focus in the Diocese of Syracuse during the Year of Mercy will be *Mercy Encountered, Mercy Extended*.

**Mercy Encountered**

In *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis says that we can encounter God’s mercy first by reacquainting ourselves with the sources of mercy: the Scriptures, the teachings of the Church, prayer, and the sacraments. Moreover, he reminds us that we can encounter the Father’s mercy primarily by celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, and also by obtaining a jubilee indulgence, making a pilgrimage to the Holy Door of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, rediscovering
and reflecting on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, turning to the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, and living Lent in a more intense way this year.

**Mercy Extended**

The Holy Father says that we extend God’s mercy by taking part in the New Evangelization and proposing the theme of mercy again and again with new enthusiasm. Furthermore, he says that we extend God’s mercy by putting the corporal and spiritual works of mercy into action, by obtaining an indulgence for someone who is deceased, by taking part in ecumenical discussions and actions with regard to mercy, and by reaching out to those on the peripheries, spiritually, with regard to irregular situations and by inviting them back to the embrace of the Church, our mother.

**Year of Mercy in the Diocese of Syracuse**

Our diocese will offer many diocesan-wide opportunities for encountering and extending the Father’s mercy. Among these opportunities, this year I will open the Holy Door of Mercy at the 9:45 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on December 13th. I will close the Holy Door of Mercy next year on November 6, 2016, at the 9:45 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral. Also, I will designate four special days of pilgrimage this year to our Cathedral on which I will invite a different region of the diocese to come and join me in celebrating the infinite mercy of God. Moreover, we as a diocese will celebrate the Church’s universal campaign “24 Hours for the Lord” on the Friday and Saturday before the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

As the rest of our plans for the Year of Mercy unfold, they will be publicized in the Catholic Sun and on our diocesan website and social media. To learn more about the Year of Mercy, the Holy Door, or find additional resources and a calendar of events, please visit the diocesan website, www.syracusediocese.org, and click on the Year of Mercy icon on our homepage.

May this year be for all of us a time grace in which we turn to the Lord more deeply. I pray that Mary, Our Lady of Mercy, will accompany each of us along the way.

*Sincerely yours in Christ,*

**Most Reverend Robert J. Cunningham**
OUR MISSION

The mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse is Evangelization. The three goals of evangelization are:

- To live our faith and freely share our faith with others.
- To invite all people to hear the message of Jesus Christ as expressed in the Catholic parish.
- To foster Gospel values in our society so that our nation and the world will be transformed by the saving power of Jesus.

*What does our mission have to do with the Year of Mercy?*

The Year of Mercy is an excellent opportunity for us to live out our mission! As a diocese, we have created two hashtags that will be used on all related social media posts throughout the year: 
*MercyEncountered* and *MercyExtended*.

But they are more than just hashtags.

As a diocese, our mission calls us to not only extend mercy by living our faith and sharing our faith with others, but to also encounter mercy through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Scripture.

Your parish is invited to join us as we encounter and extend mercy throughout this special Jubilee Year. We hope that this kit will provide information and resources that will be helpful to you.

Please contact the [Office of Communications](#) with questions about the Year of Mercy.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We encourage each and every parish in the seven counties of the diocese to participate in this extraordinary Jubilee Year! There are a number of ways to observe the Year of Mercy as a parish community:

- Display diocesan Year of Mercy logos throughout your Church building
- Talk about mercy in your Homily
- Provide additional opportunities for your faith community to make confession throughout the year
- Include related Intercessions at each Mass
- Host a special prayer service or Holy Hour
- Use the official Jubilee Hymn during Mass (available on our website)
- Emphasize the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Explain the process of obtaining a Plenary Indulgence
- Organize a parish pilgrimage to the Holy Door at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse
- Host small group studies on the topic of encountering and extending mercy
- Make regular pulpit announcements related to the Year of Mercy
- Pray the official Year of Mercy Prayer at Mass
- Include special announcements and inserts in every Church bulletin
- Send monthly e-mail communications related to mercy to all parishioners

The opportunities to observe the Year of Mercy are endless. We encourage you to share ideas or events that you are hosting at your parish by contacting the Office of Communications and submitting all events to the diocesan events calendar.
BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements are intended for use in your Church bulletin. We encourage you to include mention of the Year of Mercy in each and every bulletin, and create your own announcements. Be sure to check the weekly Wednesday email from the Office of Communications for other related bulletin announcements. These and other bulletin announcements will be available on our website anytime by visiting the Year of Mercy Resources page.

BULLETIN INSERTS

Special bulletin inserts will be available each month for inclusion in your parish bulletin. They will be available on our website anytime by visiting the Year of Mercy Resources page. We encourage you to use these inserts along with the provided bulletin announcements to keep the conversation about the Jubilee Year alive in your faith community! *Inserts will be available mid-February.*

INTERCESSIONS

Special intercessions for Ordinary Time, Lent, and the Easter season will be included in the weekly Wednesday email and on our website. They are also available below:

ORDINARY TIME

That we may feel the loving embrace of God each day during this Year of Mercy, and that we may become more generous as we extend mercy to others, we pray to the Lord.

That we may encounter God’s love and mercy each day and become ever more aware of the blessings in our lives, we pray to the Lord.

That, every day, we will be deliverers of mercy and that this Year of Mercy will be a time of hope and spiritual revitalization for our world, our communities, our parish community and the people of the diocese, we pray to the Lord.

For those who seek mercy and renewal, that this Year of Mercy will find their desires fulfilled and their hope restored, we pray to the Lord.

For all who feel that they are undeserving of God’s love and mercy, for those who linger in guilt and in shame, and for those who hide and are fearful of seeking God’s bright light of forgiveness, that this Year of Mercy will find them accepting of new hope and new life, we pray to the Lord.

That in this Year of Mercy we will confidently acknowledge our own sins and seek the mercy of God and others, and that we may also extend forgiveness to the people who have wronged us, we pray to the Lord.
INTERCESSIONS

That we accept the gift of God’s Divine Mercy and extend this gift to others as we carry out the mission of evangelization as part of the faith community of the Diocese of Syracuse, we pray to the Lord.

LENT

That during this Year of Mercy, we will surrender our hearts to the Lord and accept God’s forgiveness and love, we pray to the Lord.

For all who struggle to accept God and his mercy, for those who find it difficult to forgive others, and for those who are weighed down by resentments and hurts, may they find healing and solace during this Year of Mercy, we pray to the Lord.

That all who seek conversion of their minds and hearts will find the strength and courage to embrace God’s love and mercy, we pray to the Lord.

That through fasting and almsgiving, our Lenten prayers will allow us to see Christ in the people around us, and that we may continue to extend mercy to all those in need, we pray to the Lord.

That those who need God’s love and forgiveness most will encounter Him during this Year of Mercy, we pray to the Lord.

EASTER

That as we celebrate the Lord’s conquering of sin and death, our faith will be renewed, our trust restored, and our joy fulfilled during the Year of Mercy, we pray to the Lord.

That during this Year of Mercy we will be filled with a spirit of reconciliation and peace, and extend this feeling of God’s love and mercy to our families, friends, co-workers, and all those in our community, we pray to the Lord.

For all who bear heavy hearts, for all who live in fear, and all who doubt God’s presence in each day, that this Year of Mercy and Easter season will assure them of God’s closeness and bring them a sense of peace, we pray to the Lord.

That, as we remember the promises of our Baptism, we may continue to walk in the light of Christ and bring God’s love to all we encounter during the Year of Mercy, we pray to the Lord.
As a parish community, consider the ways that you can put the Works of Mercy into practice on a regular basis. Some suggestions to get you started:

- **Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked:** collect food and drink items, clothing, and personal hygiene items and bring them to the Catholic Charities in your county (or distribute them via your parish pantry or other organization)
- **Shelter the homeless:** contact the Catholic Charities in your county and inquire about promoting their many programs for homeless men and women, especially during the cold winter months
- **Visit the sick:** reach out to the ill and homebound in your parish community and make arrangements for parishioners to visit them
- **Visit the imprisoned:** include a special intercession and pray for those who are incarcerated
- **Bury the dead:** obtain indulgences for the deceased; consider creating a funeral luncheon ministry to provide food for families following services at your parish

- **Instruct the ignorant:** dive deeper into our faith as a parish community by hosting Bible studies or workshops on Catholic teaching, specifically mercy and the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- **Counsel the doubtful:** encourage parishioners to “go forth and evangelize” by living out the mission of the diocese
- **Admonish sinners:** offer increased opportunities for confession
- **Comfort the afflicted:** create opportunities for your faith community to reach out and minister to members of the parish who may be suffering because of a loss, addiction, divorce, or other painful experience
- **Forgive offenses:** talk with your community about the importance of not only extending forgiveness to others, but accepting forgiveness in their own lives
- **Bear wrongs patiently:** include mention of “turning the other cheek” and allowing the gift of mercy into our lives during the Homily
- **Pray for the living and the dead:** offer special intentions for the deceased and those who are suffering, especially those who may be suffering alone

Consider displaying the Works of Mercy in a prominent place during the Year of Mercy and focusing on one or two in particular each month.

The diocesan website offers additional, related resources.
The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy declared by Pope Francis has created renewed interest in the topic of indulgences, defined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) as “a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven.”

“Every sin has consequences. It disrupts our communion with God and the Church, weakens our ability to resist temptation and hurts others. The necessity of healing these consequences, once the sin itself has been forgiven, is called temporal punishment” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCA 2006). Prayer, fasting, almsgiving and other works of charity, which are emphasized especially during Lent, can take away entirely or diminish this temporal punishment. “Because of the fullness of redemption obtained for us by Christ, the Church attaches to certain prayers and actions an indulgence as pardon, that is, the full or partial remission of temporal punishment. Christ, acting through the Church, brings about the healing of the consequences of sin when an individual uses such a prayer or engages in such an action.” (USCCA).

The Church has recognized from its earliest times, the importance of atoning to God for sin. The Apostles themselves urged their disciples to pray for the salvation of sinners. In the early centuries, when seeking forgiveness of serious sin was a public affair, penitents customarily asked for the intercession of the faith community. The Church of the Fathers taught the practice of offering good works for the salvation of sinners, even the deceased. The Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences (ACI, 1967) says of these early practices: “In all this, there was no thought that the individual members of the Church were acting through their personal powers for the pardon of the sins of others. The belief rather was that the Church itself precisely as it is the one Body joined to Christ the Head made expiation in its individual members.” Therefore, in the case of indulgences, the Church “authoritatively dispenses to the faithful who are rightly disposed, the treasury of the expiatory works of Christ and the saints for the remission of temporal punishment.” (ACI)
INDULGENCES EXPLAINED

The Church has created Norms for Indulgences (The Handbook of Indulgences, 1988).

1. An indulgence is either plenary or partial, i.e. it frees a person either from all or from some of the temporal punishment due to sins.

2. Only the Holy Father has the authority to grant indulgences or persons recognized in law or granted the power by the Pope. Diocesan Bishops can grant partial indulgences.

3. To be capable of gaining indulgences a person must be baptized and in a state of grace and must have at least the general intention of gaining the indulgence. The person must perform the acts at the times stipulated and in the manner required.

4. In addition to #3, the gaining of a plenary indulgence requires fulfillment of three conditions: sacramental confession, Holy Communion, prayer for pope’s intentions.

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PILGRIMAGES DURING THE YEAR OF MERCY

An important part of the Year of Mercy is pilgrimage. Catholics in the Diocese of Syracuse are encouraged to make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception – the Mother Church of our diocese – and enter through the Holy Door. The Holy Door is open weekdays from 7:00 am until 2:00 pm, Saturday from 4:30 pm until 6:30 pm, and on Sunday from 7:00 am to noon and again from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. To arrange a pilgrimage to the Cathedral, contact cathedral@syrdio.org, call 315-422-4177, or visit www.cathedralsyracuse.org.

Other Pilgrimage Destinations

- The St. Marianne Cope Shrine & Museum - Syracuse: www.SaintMarianne.org
- Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – Syracuse: www.SacredHeartBasilicaSyr.org
- Church of the Sacred Heart & St. Mary, Our Lady of Czestochowa – New York Mills: www.SacredHeart-SaintMary.org
- The Crosses of Divine Mercy at St. John's Church – Camden: www.StJohnCamden.org
- Lourdes Virtual Tour: www.LourdesVolunteers.org
- Carl H. Roesch Archives & Museum – Syracuse: www.syrdio.org

Visit www.syrdio.org and click on ‘Events’ for more information about pilgrimages throughout the Year of Mercy. Please contact the Office of Communications if you have suggestions for additional pilgrimage destinations here in the diocese.
IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

Visit [www.syrdio.org](http://www.syrdio.org) and click on 'Year of Mercy' for the latest, related events. This list is subject to change. The most recent events will be posted on our website and shared via the weekly Wednesday communication. The * indicates an event where Bishop Cunningham will be present.

*January 31 2016:* 9:45 am Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception – Syracuse: Jubilee for Consecrated Life, the annual Mass to honor religious men and women.

**February 10 2016:** Ash Wednesday

**March 4-5 2016:** 24 Hours for the Lord

**March 21 2016:** The Light is On for You: 4-7 pm at parishes throughout the Diocese of Syracuse

*March 25 2016:* 6:30 pm Good Friday Living Stations of the Cross – St. Matthew Church, E. Syracuse: featuring youth from throughout the diocese

**April 3 2016:** Divine Mercy Sunday

*June 6 2016:* 4:00 pm Mass at Immaculate Conception Church – Fayetteville: Jubilee for Priests

*July 16 2016:* Mass: Jubilee for Deacons

**November 1 2016:** Pope Francis to celebrate Mass in memory of the departed

*November 12 2016:* Crowne Plaza Hotel – Syracuse: Jubilee for Catechists

*November 13 2016:* Closing of the Holy Door at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception – Syracuse and around the world

*November 20 2016:* 9:45 am Mass, Solemnity of Christ the King and close of the Year of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception – Syracuse
THE YEAR OF MERCY CALENDAR

A joint effort between the Diocese of Syracuse and the Diocese of Steubenville, the Year of Mercy calendar provides daily inspiration for extending and encountering mercy each day!

Visit www.LiveMercy.org to learn more, to download a calendar, request a hard copy, or sign up for daily email and text messages.

For more information, contact the diocesan Office of Evangelization at 315-470-1429.
RESOURCES

A complete list of resources is available by visiting www.syrdio.org and clicking on ‘Year of Mercy.’

Diocesan Resources

- Letter from Bishop Cunningham
- Diocese of Syracuse Year of Mercy logos
- Bulletin announcements
- Intercessions
- Year of Mercy Calendar
- The Works of Mercy Explained [created by St. James Emmaus Ministry]
- #MercyExtended: Kirk’s Story (video)
- Indulgences Explained, written by Msgr. Timothy Elmer, JCL
- How to Make a Good Confession during the Year of Mercy (graphic)
- Important dates and events in the diocese
DIOCESAN LOGOS AND USAGE GUIDE

The diocese has created a unique Year of Mercy logo for use in parishes, ministries, schools, and affiliated organizations. The logo is suitable for web and print use.

The logo is available in several sizes and can be downloaded by visiting portal.syrdio.org.

We encourage you to use the logo throughout the Year of Mercy in your bulletin, on your website and social media, on letterhead and other print communications, and displayed in your parish and school.

Please contact the diocesan Office of Communications if you have questions regarding the logo, at 315-459-7170.
**Contact**

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