



# BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT *because we are Catholic.*



“I have decided to announce an Extraordinary Jubilee which has at its centre the mercy of God. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live in the light of the word of the Lord: “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (cf. Lk 6:36). And this especially applies to confessors! So much mercy! – excerpt from a homily by Pope Francis announcing the extraordinary Jubilee”

– Pope Francis

## Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy Begins

As the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy commences on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8), we are surrounded by charitable opportunities and, because we are in Advent, may feel just a bit more inclined to perform works of mercy.

We may volunteer at our local soup kitchen, adopt a needy family or, with the abundance of bell ringers in front of shops, make a quick contribution that may lessen our “guilt” at buying so many gifts.

In reality, because God has shown mercy on all of us, we are encouraged to incorporate mercy into our daily life. Everyday deeds – taking care of children, teaching adults and children about faith, caring for an elderly parent or visiting a sick friend in the hospital – are true works of mercy. As Saint Teresa of Avila said,

*Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks,  
Compassion on this world*

But after the holidays, for some of us, it may seem difficult to incorporate mercy into our pressure-filled, hectic daily routines. Yet Pope Francis –

echoing the call of the Gospel – continually challenges us to reach out and encounter those in need and those living on the margins of society.

*Because We Are Catholic* will focus on these works of mercy throughout the Jubilee Year of Mercy, highlighting a different one each month. First, an introduction:

*Continued on next page*

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY	SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed the hungry</li> <li>• Give drink to the thirsty</li> <li>• Clothe the naked</li> <li>• Shelter the homeless</li> <li>• Visit the sick</li> <li>• Visit the imprisoned</li> <li>• Bury the dead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counsel the doubtful</li> <li>• Comfort the sorrowful</li> <li>• Bear wrongs patiently</li> <li>• Forgive all injuries</li> <li>• Pray for the living and the dead</li> <li>• Instruct the ignorant</li> <li>• Admonish the sinner</li> </ul>

## THE WORKS OF MERCY

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are charitable actions we perform for others. Spiritual works of mercy include: instructing, advising, consoling and comforting others. The corporal works of mercy focus on helping those in need.

By performing these works, it helps alleviate human misery in all forms – poverty, oppression, physical and psychological illness and emotional or spiritual distress. Misery does not discriminate – it afflicts all at some point. The choice is ours on how we improve our situation.

## WHAT IS A JUBILEE YEAR?



The jubilee year is a “Holy Year” marked by acts of faith, charity and “brotherly communion” according to the Vatican’s website. Ordinary jubilee years occur every 25 or 50 years, an extraordinary jubilee is declared for a momentous occasion, the last one occurred in 1983.

The concept of a Jubilee stems from ancient Hebrew tradition where a Jubilee was celebrated every 50 years. It was a time intended to restore equality among the Israelites. It provided opportunities for families to regain control over property and even gain their personal freedom if enslaved.

The start of a Jubilee year is marked with the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica. This door is normally cemented shut. This symbolic rite indicates that the faithful are offered an extraordinary path towards salvation during the Jubilee

Kicking off this year of Mercy, the California Catholic Conference would like to highlight the mercy that takes place all around us. During the next year, we are asking our members to submit stories about the mercy they witness in their churches and communities. Please submit your story to [leginfo@cacatholic.org](mailto:leginfo@cacatholic.org).



**“I am confident that the whole Church, which is in such need of mercy for we are sinners, will be able to find in this Jubilee the joy of rediscovering and rendering fruitful God’s mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time. Do not forget that God forgives all, and God forgives always. Let us never tire of asking forgiveness.”**

– Pope Francis

*For more information, go to:*

**cacatholic.org**

Vatican Website:

**<http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>**

Year of Mercy Website

**<http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en.html>**