Gathering: January 13, 2016

The Year of Mercy

During Lent of 2015, Pope Francis announced an extraordinary jubilee year, a very special event in the Catholic Church, called the Holy Year of Mercy!

**First, let’s talk about the word jubilee. What do you think it means?**

* Celebration!! Usually lasting about a year.
* In the days of Jesus, Jubilee years were a time in which debts were forgiven, slaves were set free, and stolen land was returned to its owners.
* In the church now, a jubilee year is one to receive a blessing and pardon from God.
* This jubilee year began on December 8, 2015 and will close on November 20, 2016, the feast of Christ the King.
* Jubilee years happen every 25 years. Last one was 2000. **If there was an Ordinary Jubilee in 2000 and they are every 25 years, when should the next one be? 2025! This year is an *Extraordinary* Jubilee because it has been only 15 years!**
* The Holy Year of Mercy celebrates being a witness of mercy and invites us all to follow the example of God as merciful, forgiving and loving followers.
* So from now until November 20th, 2017, we are being asked to focus on mercy and to become people of mercy.
* **Pope Francis envisions a year when people will become more merciful in their own lives and bring God’s mercy to others.**

**WHAT IS MERCY?**

* **Any ideas?**
* **Forgiveness, Compassion-** Being merciful frequently includes forgiveness of others, just as God the Father demonstrates forgiveness of our sins through love.
* **Mercy desires the good of those we love**
* **BUT, not just the people we *know!***
* **We are called to love *all people* because GOD LOVES ALL PEOPLE!**
* **MERCY WANTS THE GOOD OF ALL PEOPLE!!**
* Pope Francis tells us there is a tremendous need for mercy in our world today. He wants us to bring comfort to the poor, freedom to those trapped in sin or sadness, light to those in darkness, Jesus to those who don’t know Him.
* Mercy is acts of love by which we care for the bodily and spiritual needs of others.
* Check out the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy!

**JUBILEE HOLY DOORS**

* A major aspect of the Holy Year has always been that of making a pilgrimage to Rome to make reparation for sin and renew the conversion of one’s life.
* Part of that pilgrimage always involved passing through the Holy Door.
* Think about all the doors you go through every day.
* We enter and leave by so many doors without even noticing.
* The Jubilee Holy Door is a special door at St. Peter’s Basilica that is normally sealed with cement from the inside and is only opened during Jubilee years.
* By passing through this door we are saying with firm conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.
* We acknowledge that Jesus stands at the door of our hearts knocking**.**

**SIGNIFICANCE OF A DOOR:**

* Reminds us of Jesus – go through Jesus to get to heaven
* Reminds us of change- walk into a new space, become a new person
* Door opening- invitation to enter into something new
* Doors all over our country- every diocese has a set of special doors

**THINK ABOUT DOORS TODAY!! HOW ARE YOU GOING TO BE A NEW AND MERCIFUL PERSON? WHAT WORKS OF MERCY ARE YOU GOING TO TRY THIS WEEK?**