

From Bill Easterling + Nov. 12, 2015

Jubilee Year of Mercy

**Dec. 8, 2015 (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) to
Nov. 20, 2016 (Feast of Christ the King)**

24 HOURS FOR THE LORD

The Papal document establishing this Jubilee Year of Mercy itself calls for a very special sacramental experience called: 24 HOURS FOR THE LORD.

The Pope personally invites us to this on the Friday before the 4th Sunday of Lent --- thus from 12:00noon on Friday, March 4, 2016 to 12:00noon on Saturday, March 5, 2016.

My personal take on this is:

This is NOT about confessions

This is about RECONCILIATION

I know that seems like a silly game of words. Please indulge me for a moment.....my first thought was that this was about "confessions" as in Saturday confessions. I thought (maybe even feared) that the only people who would come would be those who come every week, every Saturday, with the same routine week after week. I love those good people, I admire their zeal. But 24 hours of their goodness and zeal? I don't think so!

Then I realized that it was about those who have been away for a long time, who need more than to just confess this weeks or even this month's sins.....they needed a total and complete RECONCILIATION with the Lord and with His Church, with the family of God. These are the people who need our time, our patience, they need counseling and healing along with forgiveness. These will not be two minute confessions but rather may 15 minute reconciliations....maybe longer.

This program has been done in cities around the world now --- it is not done in every parish, but all the priests and deacons help at the several parishes chosen in each area. We may then select two or three parishes in our deanery but all the priests of the deanery will help with the sacrament and all the deacons of the deanery will help with possible prayers (Adoration) during the full 24 hours.

The San Gabriel Regional Planning Committee for the Year of Mercy would like to run an ad in local newspapers advertising the parishes open for 24 HOURS FOR THE LORD and announcing that all the priests of the pastoral region will participate.

HOW IT MIGHT WORK + ONE POSSIBLE EXAMPLE

I am willing to volunteer Sacred Heart, Covina as one of the sites in our deanery; if you agree. We probably need at least 3 sites, maybe 4, for Deanery 11. I am open to any; it does not have to be here. But just in case.....

We have reserved our Cavanagh Hall for Friday's 5:30pm Mass and for Saturday's 8:15am Mass. We have blocked out the calendar so that there can be no funerals during this period and no weddings. Thus the church building is totally set aside for this one purpose and only this one purpose.

From 12noon Friday to 12noon Saturday, in the church there would be:

- Eucharistic Adoration (in silence or maybe some very soft prayers)
- Reconciliation

Deacons from all parishes in the deanery would be asked to cover the Adoration, to vest simply, and have 1 or 2 present perhaps praying the rosary &/or other devotions but in a very soft voice so as not to disturb Reconciliation. Perhaps we could open with hymn & prayer at 11:30am and then close with the same plus Benediction (the blessing) at 12:15pm the next day.

Priests from all the parishes & orders would be stationed to celebrate Reconciliation. We would be in teams covering different blocks of time.

I have already shared with our daily Mass people and several groups such as the Legion of Mary, etc., that "they are not allowed to go to confession" during this 24 hours. HOWEVER, they have a very-very important ministry. They are to be working for weeks and months in advance to get people here who have not been to Reconciliation for a long time. They are to reach out to their families, neighbors, co-workers, friends, anyone and everyone and invite them to come.

Hopefully we will produce a great hand out (flyer – card) of some kind to give to people. Maybe even teams can cover shopping centers and walk neighborhoods and pass them out.

The faithful – the regulars – who come to confession often, I am asking them instead to bring someone, or several. And to stand in line with them praying for them, answering any questions, calming any fears, encouraging the person long away from Reconciliation. And when that person enters the Reconciliation Room, for the "regular" to go into the pews and pray for them.....then when that special guest leaves / comes out.....the "regular" person takes them out for coffee and pie to celebrate!!! --- **Perhaps it would be a good idea to preach all the Masses a few Sundays before to help make this point!**

When the regulars hear all this, they love it, they get it. At a meeting of our Readers, several of the Spanish readers began to cry with joy. The regulars understand.

We could have teams of volunteers in the church to pray (very quietly) --- all 24 hours. Maybe teams that welcomed people; maybe teams that set up a table of coffee and cookies = all 24 hours. And perhaps the wives of our deacons would like to help in some of these areas along with the Legion of Mary, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Men's Fellowship.....

Even if too few people take advantage of this great opportunity, even if we sit there alone many of those hours, this will produce at least two lasting, positive effects:

- 1) Our faithful, our regulars will be moved and encouraged by such a dynamic effort by the priests. They will be renewed and will receive energy from this.
- 2) Those who have been away from the Church, who do not come, will from learning about this be moved a little closer to the Church....they will begin to realize that the Church does love them and welcomes them home. It will be a beginning for many, the healing process will have started.