

From Father Bill, Sacred Heart, Covina

A PROPOSAL:

Possible Parish Liturgy Uniting Us With the Opening of the Holy Doors in Rome JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

The Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica and 3 other Basilicas in Rome over the years have been sealed with bricks, wood on one side then on both....and now just a key. To close our doors before we open them if they can't be locked, one could use simple construction looking means: orange cones, yellow tape or nice pull cords as at the bank! Given that people routinely approach our door(s) from both sides, it would be best to "seal" them on both sides.

For the purpose of this local parish ceremony, we suggest using perhaps the "main interior door" meaning the door under the choir loft, the door between the vestibule and pews. Or whatever door the gathering procession usually enters from.

From the Catholic News Agency (CNA):

The rite of the opening of the Holy Door is intended to symbolically illustrate the idea that the Church's faithful are offered an "extraordinary path" toward salvation during the time of Jubilee.

The door is a symbol of Christ "the way" also "the gate" ----- and a symbol of leaving our past lives to enter a new life, a renewed life in Christ. Many of our rites begin at the door (or can begin at the door): Baptisms, Weddings, Rite of Acceptance and Funerals. The door is a symbol of our free choice to enter into Christ and his Church.

We should be aware that in no way should we imply that our doors are Holy Doors and in no way do they become a part of any pilgrimage or indulgence (unless the Bishops designates a few parishes for that purpose).

From the Bull of Indiction:

"I will announce that in every local church, at the cathedral.....or another church of special significance, a Door of Mercy will be opened for the duration of the Holy Year. At the discretion of the local ordinary, a similar door may be opened at any shrine frequented by large groups of pilgrims....."

Our local parish church will probably **not** have a "Door of Mercy", but this brief ceremony can serve to motivate the faithful to visit one of the appointed churches. It may also serve to encourage their full participation in our parish as we celebrate the Year of Mercy.

This ceremony is meant only to unite us in a symbolic and spiritual way with Pope Francis and with the Church throughout the world as we begin this Year of Mercy in a dramatic way, signaling that this is no ordinary year. It is a most special year -- a Jubilee Year of Mercy! We are not opening Holy Doors, we are instead using our doors to celebrate that the Church has opened a Holy Year of Mercy

Pope Boniface VIII, adapted the ancient Jewish tradition of a Holy Year in 1300. By 1475 the custom was established of celebrating a Holy Year every 25 years. An "Extraordinary Jubilee" (Holy Year) can be called for a special event or occasion of great spiritual importance. The last ordinary holy year was in 2000.

Pope Francis will open the Jubilee Year of Mercy (Holy Year of Mercy) by opening the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Holy Door at St. John Lateran will be opened on the Third Sunday of Advent, December 13th. The Holy Doors at St. Paul Outside the Walls and at St. Mary Major will be opened in the weeks following.

To honor the role of St. Peter's Basilica and to involve the greatest number of parishioners, I would suggest the local parish consider doing this on the Third or Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Parish Opening of the Year of Mercy

15 minutes before Mass, ushers:

Seal off both sides the door(s) selected for this purpose and in the manner chosen.

Pass to people as they enter copies of the "Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy".

5 minutes before Mass:

All the ministers normally in the gathering (entrance) procession wait in the vestibule; all except the priest / deacon.

At Mass time – COMMENTATOR / GREETER reads:

The Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica was opened this past Tuesday, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception....

.....to mark the beginning of a Holy Year of Mercy. Beginning this month and continuing through to the Feast of Christ the King on November 20, 2016, the Church throughout the world will celebrate a Year of Mercy. Pope Francis has called for this special year of grace, to celebrate God's love, in the light of the Gospel calling us to be "Merciful Like the Father".

Our parish church does not have a Holy Door, but today, with this special beginning of Mass, we unite ourselves with the Church in every corner of the world, a people hungry for God's mercy. We connect ourselves spiritually to each other and our shared profound need for God's love and mercy.

Today we symbolically unite with Pope Francis and the whole Church to celebrate for the next 12 months a call to grace so that we can be forever after: Merciful Like the Father.

The ushers have passed out or you may find in the pews copies of the "Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy". Please be ready to pray that prayer with the priest in a moment. Following the special opening of our main doors, please be prepared for our gathering hymn, number _____.

PRIEST (and Deacon if there is one):

Exits the sacristy through the sanctuary down the main aisle to the selected door (in silence).

There he invites the people to stand if they are not already standing, and to turn and face the selected door.

Next he invites everyone to pray aloud with him the Pope's Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

As the prayer ends he opens the door – the deacons & ushers help remove any barriers on both sides.

Music Ministry:

If needed announces again the gathering hymn and begins.

Procession:

The priest steps out of the way to allow the liturgical ministers waiting in the vestibule to enter, then follows in behind them in his proper place.

The Mass continues as usual.