



CHAPLAIN'S *report*

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS *In service to One. In service to all.*

LEARNING THE FAITH, LIVING THE FAITH ♦ 1 COLUMBUS PLAZA, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-3326, USA

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

To Know the Gift of God

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The Jubilee Year of Mercy offers each of us the fitting opportunity to both receive mercy and to become its instrument for others. Pope Francis, in his prayer for the Jubilee Year (see PRAYER, page 4), highlights the inestimable treasure that is mercy by invoking Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman at the well: "If you knew the gift of God!"

We must recognize the greatness of the gift God offers. The Scriptures are filled with descriptions of many who called out, climbed up and sought out the merciful gaze of Jesus. Seeing the face of Christ freed those enslaved by money or trapped by creaturely happiness, as well as betrayers and the unjust. To meet the face of Christ is to know the invisible face of the Father. A spirit of gratitude pervades the soul of one truly forgiven,

opening him to meet the Lord again and again. The Scriptures also describe those who missed their opportunity to follow Christ; such persons preferred to cross the road rather than come close to those who needed mercy.

Pope Francis underscores that we are "clothed in weakness" so that we may recognize our own need for mercy and thus approach others with the spirit of humility and compassion when we come up against their errors and ignorance. Knowing that the Father's merciful gaze is upon us, how can we do anything but forgive, love and seek after those we meet who have also sinned?

The task this Jubilee Year is to assist our brother Knights and their families in receiving the great gift of mercy on offer. Likewise, we must challenge them to become more and more merciful. Like the father of the Prodigal Son, they must be able to recognize, even at a distance, those persons — whether family members, former brother Knights or neighbors — who want to return. They must take great steps to help bring about the merciful encounter with God.

Throughout the Jubilee Year, each council should be at the forefront of giving and receiving mercy. The corporeal and spiritual works of mercy should become the barometer of how we measure success among our brother Knights. Let us encourage them to personally give and seek mercy, especially amid those from whom they are estranged. May our own preaching on mercy motivate our brother Knights to seize the gift of God offered to them in this great Jubilee Year!

Vivat Jesus!

The Holy Jubilee Year

What is a Jubilee?

A special anniversary originating from the Jewish practice of celebrating God's favor every 50 years. For Catholics, a jubilee is a time of special solemnity and piety. Ordinarily, a jubilee is held every 25 years. An extraordinary jubilee year may be declared by the pope to solemnize a particular period of prayer and rejoicing.

Why is it called a "Year of Mercy?"

Pope Francis has called it a "Year of Mercy" in order to highlight the importance of God's loving message of compassion and pardon. The year-long celebration confirms the Church's role in sharing God's mercy, from which no person touched by grace can be excluded. Through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, the faithful concretely participate in extending this message of mercy.

What is a Holy Door? Where are they located?

Holy Doors are specially designated doors that symbolize the entrance into the presence of God. They offer an opportunity for concrete action: As each person physically enters through the doorway, he displays his desire to enter a new life of grace.

Seven major Holy Doors are located in basilicas throughout the world. In addition, every diocese will have a special door or doors designated

as a "Door of Mercy" to serve as a reminder that the experience of conversion and mercy is open to everyone throughout the world. An indulgence may be obtained by making a pilgrimage to the Holy Doors.

What is an indulgence?

An indulgence is the remission of temporal punishment due to sin. In the same way that priests may forgive sins through the sacrament of penance, the Church has the authority to remit the punishment of sin outside the sacrament. While indulgences are associated with certain acts, these acts do not "earn" or "buy" forgiveness; they instead teach us that we must strive to make amends for our sins and show us the effect of good works in the life of God's grace.

What are the works of mercy?

These are works or acts by which we offer others physical or spiritual aid.

The corporal works are: to give food to the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to visit the imprisoned, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick and to bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy are: to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead.

The Family, School of Mercy

By Father Luis Granados, DCJM

In a few days we will start the Year of Mercy. It is meaningful that the Holy Year will begin on Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Pope Francis has explained that this feast day “recalls God’s action from the very beginning of the history of mankind.” After the original sin, God did not leave humanity alone and wounded. On the contrary, he turned his gaze to Mary and chose her to be the Mother of the Redeemer. She became the Door of Mercy.

But there is a second good reason to begin the Year of Mercy with the Immaculate Conception. Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. Who taught him mercy? Mary, his mother. Where did he learn it? In his family, in Nazareth. For sure, Jesus, the Son of the Father, was not a “typical kid.” However, we know that this child “grew and became strong, filled with wisdom” (Lk 2:40). Watching his parents, he learned to be really merciful.

The family is called to be the first and best school of mercy. At our home, looking to our parents, we learn about unconditional love and its transforming power. For that reason, this Year of Mercy is also a very special time for the family.

The mercy we learn from our families is not just tolerance. Our parents have not just tolerated us and our mistakes and weaknesses. When we were suffering, they suffered with us; when we were rejoicing, they rejoiced with us. The Latin word for mercy, *miser cordia*, means to have a heart close to the weak, the poor, the miserable. Mercy requires compassion — what Aquinas could call affective mercy (cf. *Summa Theologica* II-II.30.1).

But true mercy is much more than compassion: It is effective. The good father — the merciful one — not only suffers or rejoices with his child, but also offers a path of growth and maturity by lovingly correcting and admonishing his child. True mercy is a compassionate love that regenerates and transforms. For that reason, our parents have shown us mercy when they have admonished, counseled or instructed us, in those times when we have been doubtful and ignorant.

The family is called to be the best school of mercy. It is not just a place where we are embraced and we find compassion. In our home, we experience mercy as true love that transforms and heals us. We can then “grasp and rightly understand by whose love we have been created, through whose Blood we have been redeemed, and by whose Spirit we have been reborn” (*Roman Missal*, Collect for the Votive Mass on the Mercy of God).

In a few days we will start the year of Mercy. As priests, we know that many times the family is not a school of true mercy but a place of anger, resentment and ingratitude. The Lord has granted us these 12 months to help the family remember its vocation. “Family, become what you are!” (John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 17).

A member of Dr. Earl C. Bach Council 3340, Father Granados helped establish the Toward a Family Friendly Parish program at St. Mary Catholic Parish in Littleton, Colo. The 12-month program, whose focus is to draw families closer to each other and to their parish family, was the model of the Knights of Columbus’ Domestic Church initiative. *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* booklets (#10162, available in packs of 300 booklets per order, shipping charges apply) can be obtained by contacting the Supply Department at 203-752-4214. An online copy of this booklet and additional resources are available at kofc.org/familyfullyalive. To order additional items mentioned in this newsletter, please visit knightsgear.com.

The Necessity of Forgiveness

From a general audience of Pope Francis,
4 Nov. 2015



Pope Francis greets the crowd during the general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican, Nov. 4.

Following the recent Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which reflected on the vocation and mission of the family, today we reflect on the importance of the family as the place where we learn the value of forgiveness. Each day, in the words of the Our Father, we ask God to forgive us and to grant us the grace to forgive others. As difficult as forgiveness may be, it is essential for our personal growth, our capacity to acknowledge our failures and to mend broken relationships. It is a virtue we learn first in the family. Forgiveness strengthens families in love and through them makes society as a whole more loving and humane. It is a solid rock on which to build our lives and an eloquent sign of our Christian discipleship and obedience to the Father’s will. May the coming Jubilee of Mercy encourage families everywhere to rediscover the power of forgiveness and enable the great family of the Church to proclaim the power of God’s reconciling love at work in our world.

Upon you and your families I invoke the Lord’s blessings of joy and peace. God bless you all!

Merciful Like the Father

The scriptural motto of the jubilee year, “Merciful Like the Father” (cf. Lk 6:36), invites us to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us to neither judge nor condemn, but to forgive without measure.

The jubilee logo, designed by Jesuit Father Marko I. Rupnik, brings this motto to life through an image of Christ carrying a lost soul. As he once carried the cross up to cavalry, he now carries man — with all his burdens and pains. The Good Shepherd looks with love into the eyes of man, inviting him to discover, in Christ, the merciful love of the Father.



The image of Christ and the lost soul is placed within an almond-shaped depiction of light, frequently used in early and medieval Christian iconography. The colors progressively lighten, suggesting Christ’s movement as he carries us away from the darkness of sin toward the light of the Heavenly Father’s love.

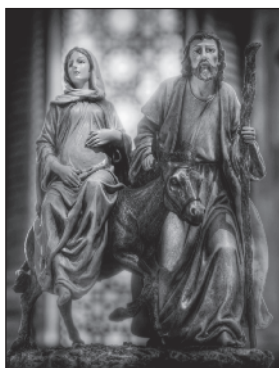
Conversely, the dark color also suggests the depth of the Father’s love.

Best Practice of the Month

An admirable practice is inviting your parish and community to keep Christ at the center of their Christmas celebrations. In an increasingly secular world, many Catholics are faced with the difficulty of sharing the faith. Visibly support these Catholics through hosting holiday celebrations that observe the fact that Christ exists and is with us.

If your fellow brother Knights have already planned a celebration, such as one based on the *Journey to the Inn: An Advent Celebration* (#9898), offer to take part in the event and discuss the possibility of making it a regular parish program. Conclude your Christmas celebration by offering thanks for God's mercy through singing the *Hymn of the Jubilee of Mercy*. The lyrics and music of this hymn may be found at iubilarummisericordiae.va, beneath the "JUBILEE" option on the menu bar.

We would like to produce a listing of other commendable practices that we can consider for possible publication each month. If you or your council has established a practice that demonstrates a chaplain's role in enhancing the spiritual life of Knights and their families, evangelization and outreach, or membership growth and retention, please send the information to chaplains@kofc.org.



Monthly Suggested Activities

December

- Focus on the spiritual importance of Christmas by offering an Advent retreat for Knights and parishioners. Your retreat might include prayer and discussions on the Nativity passages of the Gospels, periods for personal reflection and individual spiritual direction, confession and the celebration of Mass. For additional Advent and Christmas ideas, turn to the booklet *Journey to the Inn: An Advent Celebration* (#9898, available for \$1 each).
- Share Pope Francis' message for the Jubilee of Mercy, beginning on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, celebrated Dec. 8, 2015, the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council.
- Celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12, through a parish showing of *Guadalupe: The Miracle and Message*. Consider planning the event to coincide with the broadcast dates and times on your local station. Or, work with your council to order a copy of the DVD (available at knightsgear.com) for your parish and council library.

January

- Assist your parishioners and council members in organizing a trip to Washington, D.C., for the March for Life on Thursday, Jan. 22, the 43rd anniversary of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. If you are unable to go to Washington due to parish obligations, offer to say the Blessing for Travelers for your brother Knights before their departure.
- Lead council members and parishioners in praying for life through a rosary novena from Jan. 14-22, 2016. Prayer cards (#2072) may be distributed during this novena.
- Educate parishioners and members of your council on Church teachings regarding the sanctity of life as outlined in the *Study Guide to Evangelium Vitae* (#2914, available for 25 cents each).
- Offer your council's support to your diocese during its jubilee activities. Help promote the events, or serve as guides to pilgrims visiting the designated Door of Mercy in your local churches.

Major Events of the Year of Mercy

- Dec. 8** — Opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica
- Dec. 13** — Opening of the Holy Doors in St. John Lateran, St. Paul Outside-the-Walls and the cathedrals throughout the world
- Jan. 1** — Opening of the Holy Door of St. Mary Major on the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and the World Day for Peace
- March 4** — 24 Hours for the Lord, a daylong eucharistic adoration
- April 1** — Jubilee of the Divine Mercy spirituality
- May 5** — Dry the Tears, a prayer vigil for all those in need of consolation
- June 1** — Jubilee for priests
- June 10** — Jubilee for the sick and persons with disabilities
- July 26** — Jubilee for youth, which will include World Youth Day in Kraków, Poland
- Sept. 2** — Jubilee for volunteers of mercy
- Sept. 23** — Jubilee for catechists
- Oct. 8** — Jubilee in honor of Mary
- Nov. 6** — Jubilee for prisoners
- Nov. 13** — Closing of the Holy Doors in the basilicas in Rome and in dioceses throughout the world
- Nov. 20** — Closing of Holy Door in St. Peter's on the solemnity of Christ the King

In addition to these events occurring in Rome, councils throughout the Order are now planning events to celebrate the extraordinary jubilee in their own dioceses. If you are interested in sharing the details of your council and parish's Year of Mercy events, please send information and photos to chaplains@kofc.org.



The Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica, which Pope Francis will open during a Mass, Dec. 8, marking the opening of the Holy Year of Mercy.



*The Holy Door is pictured in
St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican prior
to its opening for the Year of Mercy.*

Prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God!"

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

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