Crossing the Threshold...

**REACHING OUT: RECEIVING AND GIVING MERCY**

There are many stories in the Gospels about receiving and giving mercy. A few include:

- The blind man (Mark 8: 22ff)
- The woman with the hemorrhage (Luke 13: 10ff)
- The cure of the demoniac (Mark 5: 1-20)
- The raising of the daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9: 18ff)

Physical healings are accompanied by spiritual healing of a confession of sin, followed by a firm resolve to amend one’s life and follow God’s commandments. Reaching out, begging for mercy and forgiveness, usually precedes the physical healing.

**FROM THE HOLY DOOR TO THE CONFESSIONAL**

The Holy Door is located in the Shrine Church, mirroring the location of the Holy Door at the Papal Basilica St. Mary Major.

Walking through, veer to the left. You will pass by three side-aisle shrines before arriving at the Confessional.

After receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, take a moment at each of the side-aisle shrines and reflect on the Lord’s most powerful message: Mercy.

The first painting on your right is that of Saint Peregrine.

Saint Peregrine rebelled against the Church and authority. Upon experiencing the mercy of God, he confessed his sin, amended his life, and followed God’s call as a member of the Servite religious order. Later, a cancerous sore developed on his leg, and the doctor told Peregrine that the leg would need to be amputated. During the night, before surgery, Saint Peregrine was healed - there was no need for the surgery.

A physical healing!

The next painting is of the vision of Alessandro, who stabbed Saint Maria Goretti.

Saint Maria Goretti appeared to him in his prison cell. Alessandro had no remorse for killing Saint Maria Goretti. But she wanted him in Heaven with her.

When the vision occurred, he reached out for the gift of mercy that Saint Maria Goretti was extending to him in the form of fourteen lilies.

Saint Maria Goretti’s mother also forgave Alessandro, saying: “my daughter forgives Alessandro, how can I not?”

Saint Maria Goretti is known as the Little Saint of Great Mercy.

**EVANGELIZATION OF DIVINE MERCY**

Saint Faustina Kowalska is known as the Secretary of Divine Mercy. She was a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Poland. Jesus appeared to her, revealing the image of His Divine Mercy, which He ordered her to have painted. She was also told to write down everything she saw, heard, and experienced. Her Diary, “Divine Mercy in My Soul,” is the message of mercy given to the whole world.

Saint Faustina prayed and lived mercy in her life. Imitating her example, we not only “reach out” to receive and to give mercy; we are also called to “go deeper,” nourishing the life of mercy in our souls, and then to spread the mercy message and to share the “mercy experience.”

From our reflection at each of the three paintings situated between the confessional and the Holy Door, we are ready to exit. It is as if it is “now the hour” to come down from the mountain and go out into the valley with the love and joy of mercy!
JUBILEE OF MERCY

Pope Francis has declared a Jubilee of Mercy! He is giving us a year to focus on and to deepen our gratitude for the loving mercy of God.

The Jubilee of Mercy includes the use of a Holy Door, a specially designated entrance that has spiritually symbolic meaning. Passing through the Holy Door is part of the pilgrimage that we are encouraged to make, whether during a trip to Rome or a trip to cathedrals or specially designated churches or shrines.

These pilgrimages come with special graces. “By crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us” (Pope Francis, Misericordiae Vultus).

Each of the four papal basilicas in Rome (St. Peter’s, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran, and St. Paul Outside the Walls) has a Holy Door.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in La Crosse, Wisconsin, is spiritually linked with the papal basilica St. Mary Major. Bishop William P. Callahan, of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, designated the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe to have a Holy Door. The Holy Door was opened on December 13, 2015, by Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, founder of the Shrine.

Crossing the threshold of the Holy Door is rich in spiritual symbolic meaning: 1) Jesus said of Himself, “I am the door for the sheep” (JN 10:7); 2) Passing through the Holy Door symbolizes our leaving the world outside and entering into the realm of salvation; 3) We are invited to pray that our own personal “shut doors” of sin and temptation may be opened and that we open our hearts to others in need of God’s mercy.

SACRAMENT OF MERCY

A Jubilee provides an opportunity for each of us to participate in and experience the healing Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Sacrament of Mercy.

After having both confessed our sins and received absolution, we may also receive a Plenary Indulgence, which lessens the effects of our sin here on earth. Pope Francis explains, “To gain an indulgence is to experience the holiness of the Church, who bestows upon all the fruits of Christ’s redemption, so that God’s love and forgiveness may extend everywhere. Let us live this Jubilee intensely, begging the Father to forgive our sins and to bathe us in His merciful ‘indulgence’ (MV).”

JUBILEE INDULGENCE

Along with the journey to a Holy Door, there are four other conditions required to obtain the indulgence:

• receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation (as near as possible to the pilgrimage);
• participating in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and receiving Holy Communion (as near as possible to the pilgrimage);
• making a profession of faith (i.e. the Apostles’ Creed or Nicene Creed);
• praying for the Holy Father and for his intentions.

• having complete detachment from sin, even venial sin (if this detachment is lacking, the indulgence is partial, not full).

Our Holy Father has also attached the Jubilee of Mercy Indulgence to performing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Upon exiting the church by passing through the Holy Door, we are called to share the experience of mercy that we ourselves have received.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

• Feed the hungry
• Give drink to the thirsty
• Clothe the naked
• Shelter the homeless
• Visit the sick
• Visit the imprisoned
• Bury the dead

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

• Admonish the sinner
• Instruct the ignorant
• Counsel the doubtful
• Comfort the sorrowful
• Bear wrongs patiently
• Forgive all injuries
• Pray for the living and the dead

MODELS OF MERCY

Pope Francis has entrusted the Jubilee of Mercy to Mary, the Mother of Mercy, “that she might turn her gaze upon us and watch over our journey.”

Saints of Mercy include:

• Saint Faustina Kowalska
• Saint Maria Goretti
• Saint Maximilian Kolbe and Saint Francis Xavier
• Saint Philip Benizi and Saint Peregrine
• Saint Therese of Lisieux and Saint Gemma Galgani
• Saint Martin of Tours and Saint Vincent de Paul
• Saint John Mary Vianney
• Saint Padre Pio and Saint Leopold
• Saint Catherine of Siena
• Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati
• Saint John XXIII and Saint John Paul II
• Saint Peter Claver and Saint Teresa of Calcutta

THE HOLY DOOR

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O BLOOD AND WATER, WHICH GUSHED FORTH FROM THE HEART OF JESUS AS A FOUNTAIN OF MERCY FOR US, I TRUST IN YOU!”

Diary 84

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