

OPENING OF THE HOLY DOOR OUTSIDE OF MASS  
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN  
13 DECEMBER 2015

## REFLECTION

With deepest joy, I welcome you to the Opening of the Holy Door of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy at this the Church of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Diocese of La Crosse. While the Holy Door of a Jubilee Year is ordinarily found at the major papal Basilicas in Rome, Pope Francis has directed that the Holy Door, in an extraordinary manner, also be provided “in every local Church, at the cathedral – the mother church of the faithful in any particular area – or, alternatively, at the co-cathedral or another church of special significance.”<sup>1</sup> He has further directed: “At the discretion of the local ordinary, a similar door may be opened at any shrine frequented by large groups of pilgrims, since visits to these holy sites are so often grace-filled moments, as people discover a path to conversion.”<sup>2</sup> Responding to the Holy Father’s directive, Bishop William Patrick Callahan, Bishop of La Crosse, has asked that the Holy Door be provided at this church and that I, on his behalf, open it this morning.

Every Jubilee Year is a time of strong grace for the conversion of our hearts. By the devout observance of the Jubilee Year, we, the faithful, receive the grace of repentance of our sins which leads us to seek the forgiveness of our sins at the Throne of Divine Mercy, that is, in the glorious pierced Heart of God the Son Incarnate. In a particular way, the Jubilee Year enriches and strengthens our understanding of the Sacrament of Penance, and thus leads us to a more fruitful encounter with Our Lord in the Sacrament: confessing our sins and making a firm purpose of amendment, and then receiving from the priest, who acts in the person of Christ Himself, a penance and the words of absolution, of liberation from our sins.

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<sup>1</sup> “... in ogni Chiesa particolare, nella Cattedrale che è la Chiesa Madre per tutti i fedeli, oppure nella Concattedrale o in una chiesa di speciale significato.” Papa Francesco, *Misericordiae Vultus. Bolla di Indizione del Giubileo Straordinario della Misericordia* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), pp. 5-6, n. 3. [Hereafter, VM]. English translation: Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus: Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), pp. 5-6, no. 3. [Hereafter, VMEng].

<sup>2</sup> “A scelta dell’Ordinario, essa potrà essere aperta anche nei Santuari, mete di tanti pellegrini, che in questi luoghi sacri spesso sono toccati nel cuore dalla grazia e trovano la via della conversione.” VM, p. 6, n. 3. English translation: VMEng, p. 6, no. 3.

The strong grace of the Jubilee Year, connected with the Sacrament of Penance, is also experienced by gaining the indulgences granted by the Holy Father for the Jubilee Year. In these days, the Friars of the Immaculate who have the spiritual care of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe will make known the special indulgences granted by His Holiness and will remind us of the ways in which the special indulgences can be gained. Opening the Holy Door this morning, I encourage you, in particular, to have frequent access to the Sacrament of Penance and to gain the indulgences of the Jubilee Year for yourselves and also to apply them to our beloved brothers and sisters in Purgatory.<sup>3</sup>

La Puerta Santa o la Puerta de la Misericordia, en palabras del Papa Francisco, simboliza el tiempo de nuestra conversión de corazón y la confesión de nuestros pecados, y la misericordia de Dios con la absolución de nuestros pecados. Nos acercamos a Dios Nuestro Señor a través de la Puerta Santa para significar sea el dolor que tenemos por nuestros pecados como el firme deseo de no pecar más, y nuestra confianza en la respuesta de Dios a través de un perdón misericordioso. Nosotros dejamos atrás el sendero de nuestros pecados, el sendero que conduce a la muerte, con el fin de entrar con Cristo al la vía de la santidad, el camino que conduce a la vida eterna.

Nos acercamos a Nuestro Señor a través de la Puerta Santa, gracias al don de Su gracia. Es nuestro encuentro con Él en la oración y en los Sacramentos que nos lleva a vivir el dolor por nuestros pecados y nos da la fortaleza de la conversión: arrepentimiento y satisfacción. Al mismo tiempo, nuestro encuentro con Él nos asegura que la misericordia de Dios Padre va hacia el pecador arrepentido. Hay tantos pasajes en las Sagradas Escrituras que vienen a nuestras mentes tal como nosotros reflexionamos acerca de la importancia de la Puerta Santa, por ejemplo, las Parábolas del Hijo Pródigo y la del Fariseo y el Publicano, y el encuentro de Nuestro Señor con la Samaritana en el Pozo de Jacob, y con la mujer descubierta en adulterio. Al mismo tiempo, las palabras del Acto de Contrición viene a nuestros pensamientos, para expresar todo el rico significado de la misericordia, la cual Dios nunca falla en mostrarnosla, cuando nos arrepentimos de nuestros pecados y los confesamos con verdadero dolor y con el firme propósito de enmienda.

Finally, in this church, the Virgin of Guadalupe bids us to enter through the Holy Door of God's mercy and forgiveness. As she announced at her first apparition to Saint Juan Diego, she

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1471.

is the “Virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the God of truth through which everything lives,”<sup>4</sup> and “[our] merciful Mother”<sup>5</sup> who desires to show us her Divine Son, Divine Mercy Incarnate. Her mosaic image on the back wall of the sanctuary draws us to altar of sacrifice upon which Our Lord makes present His Sacrifice on Calvary and its incomparable fruit, His true Body, the Heavenly Bread of our earthly pilgrimage, and to the tabernacle in which He remains always for the Holy Communion of the sick, Holy Viaticum for the dying, and for the worship of His Real Presence in our midst. Drawing us to the Holy Eucharist, the Virgin of Guadalupe draws us, at the same time, to the Sacrament of Penance by which we are disposed to receive more worthily the Body of Christ. Entering the Holy Door, the Door of Mercy, we behold immediately the infallible signs of God’s mercy toward us, especially in the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

I cannot fail to mention also the side altar to the left as you enter the Holy Door. It is the altar dedicated to the apparitions of Our Lord, Divine Mercy Incarnate, to Saint Faustina Kowalska. In a particular way, Saint Faustina, through her *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul*, teaches us to immerse ourselves in “the ocean of divine mercy.”<sup>6</sup> May Saint Faustina intercede for us, so that the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, be a time of strong grace for the conversion of all hearts which are far from Our Lord.

May our act of devotion, the opening of the Holy Door, be the occasion for us to give our hearts anew to Our Lord throughout the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. May the ever faithful, immeasurable and all-merciful love of God, through the observance of the Extraordinary Jubilee, reach more and more hearts for the conversion of our lives to Christ, for the confession of our sins, and for the reception of divine grace as “rivers of living water” flowing from our hearts into the hearts of our neighbors.<sup>7</sup>

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

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<sup>4</sup> “... la Perfecta siempre Virgen Santa María, Madre del Verdaderísimo Dios por quien se vive.” *Nican Mopohua (Aquí se cuenta,)*, tr. Mario Rojas Sánchez (México, D.F.: Design & Digital Print S.A. de C.V., 2001), pp. 3, n. 26. [Hereafter, NM]. English translation: “Nican Mopohua: Original Account of Guadalupe,” *Handbook on Guadalupe* (New Bedford, MA: Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, 1997), p. 194. [Hereafter, NMEng].

<sup>5</sup> “... [nuestra] madre compasiva.” NM, p. 4, n. 29. English translation: NMEng, p. 194.

<sup>6</sup> Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul* (Stockbridge, MA: Marians of the Immaculate Conception, 2001), nos. 631, 654 and 718.

<sup>7</sup> Jn 7, 38.