

# The Holy Year of Jubilee 2025

## *Pilgrims of Hope*

BY JOHAN VAN PARYS, PHD

On February 11, 2022, Pope Francis sent a letter to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, asking him to start the preparations for a Holy Year of Jubilee to be celebrated in 2025. In this letter, the Holy Father referenced some of the many difficulties humanity has been facing since the last Year of Jubilee, celebrated in 2000. And he expressed his hope that “the forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire.” Because of this, Pope Francis chose as the motto for the Year of Jubilee, *Pilgrims of Hope*.

The Catholic Church has a long tradition of observing periodic Holy Years. The first documented Holy Year of Jubilee was called by Pope Boniface VIII in the year 1300. Between 1300 and 1475 several Popes declared a Holy Year at different intervals. Since 1475 there has been a Holy Year every 25 years unless prevented or interrupted by war. In addition, we have had several extraordinary Holy Years, such as the Holy Year of Redemption declared by Saint John Paul II in 1983 and the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy declared by Pope Francis in 2016.

The spiritual practice of a Holy Year of Jubilee is rooted in Judaism. As described in Leviticus 25:8-13, a Holy Year of Jubilee is all about righting relationships. It is a time to right our relationship with God, re-establishing that everything comes from God and belongs to God. It is also a time of righting relationships with one another by striving for peace, justice, and equality. In *Spes Non Confundit* or “Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5), the Papal Bull that officially established the Holy Year of Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis implores us to be “tangible signs of hope for those brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind” and thus right our relationship with God and one another.

The highpoint for individual Catholics during a Holy Year has traditionally been a pilgrimage to Rome. Pope Francis made the all-important pilgrimage more accessible by declaring that those who cannot make it to Rome are invited to make a pilgrimage to their local cathedral or to other important



churches including Marian Shrines. The Blessed Virgin Mary, according to Pope Francis in *Spes Non Confundit*, is a “supreme witness of hope to whom so many people commend their cares, their sorrows, and their hopes.” Because of that,

Marian Shrines are “privileged space for the rebirth of hope.” As a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, may The Basilica of Saint Mary indeed be a “privileged space for the rebirth of hope” for the many people who will visit in 2025 and beyond.

The Year of Jubilee 2025 is to begin with the opening of the Holy Doors at Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome on December 24, 2024, and will end with the closing of the Holy Doors at Saint Peter’s Basilica on January 6, 2026. ✚

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