

What is a **Holy Door**?

“A door that opens in the Church in order to reach out to those who for many reasons are far away.”
— Pope Francis

A Holy Door is a special door designated in a cathedral or significant church that stands as a symbol of Jesus Christ who said, “I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved...” (John 10:9). Pilgrims pass through the Holy Door as a sign that they are leaving past sin behind and entering into a new Christian way of living.

St. John Paul II notes that, “To pass through the door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; it is to strengthen faith in him in order to live the new life which he has given us.” Passing through a Holy Door with a firm resolve to follow Christ in our life brings with it a plenary, or total, indulgence.

What is an **Indulgence**?

The word ‘indulge’ means to treat with excessive kindness. An indulgence is the excessive gift of God’s forgiving mercy given by the Church whom the Lord has entrusted with the power to bind and loose sins (Matt. 18:18).

Even after receiving forgiveness from our sins against God, the effects and consequences of our sins remain and need to be removed before we can share eternal life with God in heaven. Purgatory is the purification from the effects of our sin, also called “temporal punishment.” A plenary indulgence remits all temporal punishment for past sins.

“In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives our sins, which he truly blots out; and yet sin leaves a negative effect on the way we think and act. But the mercy of God is stronger even than this. It becomes indulgence on the part of the Father who, through the Bride of Christ, his Church, reaches the pardoned sinner and frees him from every residue left by the consequences of sin, enabling him to act with charity, to grow in love rather than to fall back into sin.” (MV, 22)

Archdiocese of Washington prayer for the **YEAR OF MERCY**

Almighty God and Father,
You have created all things and
know the desire of every heart.
In this Year of Mercy, we reflect
on your great love for us, and
acknowledge our sinfulness
and need for your healing mercy.
Trusting that you never tire of
forgiving us, we open our hearts to
receive your forgiveness and love.
Having encountered you, Mercy itself,
and guided by the Holy Spirit,
may we witness to the love
we have received by sharing it
with those most in need:
the hungry, the homeless,
the afflicted, and the oppressed.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.
Amen.



#EncounterMercy

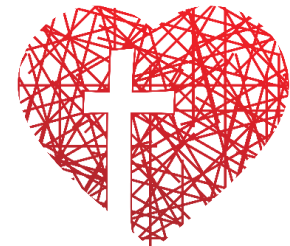
Find more ways to celebrate the Jubilee
Year of Mercy at mercy.adw.org

PILGRIMAGE to the **HOLY DOOR** at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle



“The Holy Door will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope.”

— Pope Francis



YEAR OF MERCY
ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

#EncounterMercy

What is the **Year of Mercy**?

Pope Francis called for a Jubilee Year of Mercy “dedicated to living out in our daily lives the mercy which the Father constantly extends to all of us”

Misericordiae Vultus, 25

The Year of Mercy...

- Begins on December 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, and closes on November 20, 2016, the Solemnity of Christ the King.
- Is about getting back to the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus — receiving God’s love and sharing it with others.
- “Is the opportune moment to change our lives! This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched!” (Pope Francis)
- Is the time to reflect on our need for God’s mercy, to be confident that we can receive God’s mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to share mercy with those most in need.
- Imparts special indulgences and graces to help us live a holy life. One of these special opportunities includes making a pilgrimage to a Holy Door.

The Archdiocese of Washington is blessed with two Holy Doors! One is here at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle. The other is at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Mercy:
the **bridge** that **connects**
God and **man**,
opening our **hearts**
to the **hope**
of being **loved** forever
despite
our **sinfulness.** 
-Pope Francis



How to make a **pilgrimage** to the **Holy Door** and receive an **indulgence**

To receive the plenary indulgence associated with passing through the Holy Door for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, you must:

- Prepare your heart in prayer and form a deep desire for true conversion.
- Cross the threshold of the Holy Door.
- Receive the Eucharist within 20 days of passing through the Holy Door (either before or after.)
- Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation within 20 days of passing through the Holy Door (either before or after.)
- Pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. (Consider offering an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.)
- Make a Profession of Faith (use the Apostles Creed or Nicene Creed.)

Indulgences may be obtained once a day and may be applied to oneself or to the souls of the deceased.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Reflect on God’s **mercy** at St. Matthew’s Cathedral

Once you have passed through the Holy Door, we encourage you to spend some time in prayer at the Cathedral. Use a Cathedral brochure to explore its beautiful chapels or visit their online tour at: StMatthewsCathedral.org/about/tour.

How do the different elements and areas of the Cathedral express and encourage us to reflect on God’s unfailing mercy? In particular, look for:

Our Lady’s Chapel

“Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception.” (MV, 24)

The statue of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

What does Mother Teresa teach us about how we are called to share mercy?

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Spend some time in prayer before the Lord in the Eucharist. Adoration is offered on the first Friday of each month (12:45pm-5:15pm) and on the third Monday of each month (6:00pm-7:00pm)

The Wedding Chapel

Pray where Pope Francis prayed during his visit to St. Matthew’s! How can your family be a privileged place to receive and share mercy?

The bust of St. John Paul II

Did you know that St. John Paul II instituted the Feast of Divine Mercy on the first Sunday after Easter? Learn more about the devotion of Divine Mercy.

The St. Anthony of Padua Chapel

The words carved in marble around the chapel are from the *Canticle of the Sun* by St. Francis of Assisi. This prayer inspired the title of Pope Francis’s encyclical, *Laudato Si’*.

The St. Francis Chapel

Pray for the Holy Father and ask the intercession of his namesake!

The Baptistry

Baptism is our first Christian encounter of Mercy through the forgiveness of original sin and initiation into the Christian community. Do you know your Baptism date?