



NewsLetter

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Administrative Assistant

**USCCB Secretariat of
Divine Worship**
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel: (202) 541-3060
Fax: (202) 541-3088
www.USCCB.org

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Pope Francis Announces Ordinary Jubilee Year *December 24, 2024 – January 6, 2026*

On May 9, 2024, Pope Francis released the Bull of Indiction *Spes non confundit* (“Hope does not disappoint”) announcing the Ordinary Jubilee Year of 2025. The Jubilee will begin in Rome on the vigil of the Lord’s Nativity, December 24, 2024, and in local dioceses on Holy Family Sunday, December 29. It will conclude in local dioceses the following Holy Family Sunday, December 28, 2025, and in Rome on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, January 6, 2026. The text of the Bull is available at Vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html.



Structure and Theme of Jubilee Celebrations

A Jubilee Year is a significant moment in the life of the Church in which she celebrates the year of messianic favor inaugurated by Christ through his Incarnation and Paschal Mystery (cf. Lk 4:19; John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, nos. 11-16). Proclaimed every twenty-five years since the thirteenth century, the celebration of jubilee years typically includes pilgrimages, processions, celebrations of Mass, and an invitation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These liturgical celebrations are opportunities to receive the Lord’s mercy, especially through the practice of the Jubilee indulgence, and lead to the performance of works of mercy.

The theme for this Jubilee is *Pilgrims of Hope*, and the Bull suggests several ways to bring Christ and his message of hope to the world, for example, by working for peace and an end to conflicts, promoting human life, showing amnesty to prisoners, upholding the dignity of migrants, healing the sick, and accompanying the elderly – or even through the forgiveness of debts, a custom of jubilee years in the Old Testament. Those planning diocesan liturgies will need to take into account the Bull’s indications regarding the Opening Mass to be held in each diocese (cf. no. 6) as well as the *Jubilee Celebration Calendar* found at USCCB.org/resources/Jubilee_Celebration_Calendar.pdf. Throughout the Jubilee Year, there will be celebrations for different groups, for example, workers, youth, artists, persons with disabilities, catechists, etc., and resources from the USCCB for these celebrations will become available this fall.

Several aspects of the Bull touch more directly upon the liturgy, and a summary of those points is presented below: baptismal fonts, Holy Doors and indulgences, the common date of Easter, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Missionaries of Mercy.

Baptismal Fonts

Christian hope is rooted in the saving work of Christ and our participation in that work through the sacrament of Baptism: “The death and resurrection of Jesus is the heart of our faith and the basis of our hope” (no. 20). In this light, the Jubilee Year is an opportunity for the Christian faithful to appreciate the gift of Baptism more deeply, and the Holy Father proposes the baptismal font as an object for further reflection. In particular, the ancient custom of building eight-sided fonts manifests the Sacrament of Baptism as a work of creation and resurrection. In the words of the Holy Father, “Baptism is the dawn of the ‘eighth day,’ the day of the resurrection, a day that transcends the normal, weekly passage of time, opening it to the dimension of eternity and to life everlasting: the goal to which we tend on our earthly pilgrimage” (no. 20).

Holy Doors and Indulgences

The Lord Jesus is the door of our salvation (cf. no. 1), a fact which is symbolized through the spiritual practice of passing through specially designated doors of various churches. The Ordinary Jubilee will begin with the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica on December 24, and the Holy Father will then open Holy Doors at the other major Roman Basilicas: St. John Lateran on December 29, St. Mary Major on January 1, and St. Paul Outside the Walls on January 5. Additionally, the Holy Father hopes to open a Holy Door in a prison, since the year of the Lord’s favor is a year when liberty and release are proclaimed to captives and prisoners (cf. Lk 4:18). The opening of the Holy Door at St. John Lateran on December 29 will coincide with the diocesan opening of the Jubilee Year, when diocesan bishops or their delegates are to celebrate Mass in every cathedral and co-cathedral. Ritual indications for these diocesan celebrations are forthcoming.

While the Bull of Indiction inaugurating the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy (2015-2016), *Misericordiae vultus*, explicitly noted the opening of Holy Doors in cathedrals, co-cathedrals, churches, and other places of pilgrimage, a similar note is not present in the Bull inaugurating the Jubilee Year of 2025. Thus, unless other indications are given, it does not appear that the Diocesan Bishop may open holy doors during this Jubilee. Nevertheless, according to section I of the Decree on the Granting of the Indulgence, the Jubilee indulgence may be obtained by visiting cathedral churches or other churches or sacred places designated by the local Ordinary.

Common Date of Easter

This year marks the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea, which, among other things, discussed the method for calculating the date of Easter. Providentially, the dates for the celebration of Easter on the Julian and Gregorian calendars will coincide in 2025; East and West will celebrate the Lord’s resurrection together. This concurrence is an appeal for all Christians to take a step toward unity on this most important feast. May our celebration witness to our unity in Christ, heal divisions, and be a sign of communion.

Reconciliation and *Missionaries of Mercy*

The liturgical year is marked by moments of greater intensity such as the season of Lent, and Jubilee years are a similar time in the life of the Church. In Jubilee celebrations throughout the Church, “the power of God’s forgiveness can support and accompany communities and individuals on their pilgrim way” (no. 5). The sacrament of forgiveness, in particular, fosters hope, heals present woes, frees the soul, and opens the way to eternal life. According to Pope Francis, “The sacrament of Reconciliation is not only a magnificent spiritual gift, but also a decisive, essential and fundamental step on our journey of faith. There, we allow the Lord to erase our sins, to heal our hearts, to raise us up, to embrace us and to reveal to us his tender and compassionate countenance” (no. 23).

For this purpose, the Holy Father established *Missionaries of Mercy* during the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Pope Francis encourages these specially designated priests to continue their mission and emphasizes the importance of their work in places where hope is tested, for example, “[in] prisons, hospitals, and places where people’s dignity is violated, poverty abounds and social decay is prevalent” (no. 23).

Decree on the Granting of Indulgence during the Ordinary Jubilee Year 2025

On May 13, 2024, the Apostolic Penitentiary issued a decree on the plenary indulgence which may be obtained during the upcoming Jubilee Year by making a pilgrimage, piously visiting a sacred place, or performing a work of mercy and penance. This indulgence is subject to the usual conditions – sacramental confession, reception of Holy Communion, prayer for the intentions of the Pope, and total detachment to all sin, including venial sin – and the full decree is available at [Vatican.va/roman_curia/tribunals/apost_penit/documents/rc_penitenzieria-ap_20240513_norme-indulgenza-giubileo2025_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/tribunals/apost_penit/documents/rc_penitenzieria-ap_20240513_norme-indulgenza-giubileo2025_en.html).

Pilgrimages

An indulgence may be received by those who travel to any sacred Jubilee site and participate in a Mass, a Liturgy of the Word, one of the major hours from the Liturgy of the Hours (Office of Readings, Morning Prayer, or Evening Prayer), devotional prayers such as the Way of the Cross, the Rosary, the Akathist hymn, or a penance service that ends with sacramental confession. Additionally, an indulgence may be obtained by a pilgrimage to one of the four Papal Major Basilicas in Rome, one of three Basilicas in the Holy Land, a cathedral, or another church or sacred place that has been designated by the local Ordinary.

Pious Visits

In addition to pilgrimages, the Jubilee indulgence may also be obtained by piously visiting a Jubilee site and engaging in Eucharistic adoration and meditation for a suitable period of time, concluding with an Our Father, a Profession of Faith, and invocations to Mary. In addition to those places of pilgrimage noted above, several Jubilee sites have been designated in Rome, Assisi, and Padua. Additionally, an indulgence may be obtained by making a pious visit to any minor basilica, cathedral or co-cathedral church, Marian shrine, or other churches or places of prayer designated by the Diocesan Bishop, Eparch, or Conference of Bishops. Those who are unable to take part in pilgrimages or pious visits for serious reasons, such as cloistered religious, the elderly, the sick and those who care for them, or the imprisoned, may obtain the indulgence by uniting themselves in spirit with those making pilgrimages or pious visits, reciting an Our Father, a Profession of Faith, and other prayers in harmony with the purpose of the Jubilee year, and offering up their sufferings and hardships to the Lord.

Works of Mercy and Penance

The performance of works of mercy and penance provide the most diverse opportunities to obtain the Jubilee indulgence, including participation in popular missions, spiritual exercises, formational activities on the documents of Vatican II or the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, or the performance of corporal or spiritual works of mercy. Additionally, while a plenary indulgence may normally be obtained only once a day, during the Jubilee a second plenary indulgence can be received on behalf of the souls in Purgatory, by those faithful who carry out an act of charity and receive Holy Communion a second time in the context of Mass. Diocesan bishops, eparchs, and those equivalent to them in law are permitted to give the Papal Blessing with its indulgence at the main Jubilee celebration in cathedral and Jubilee churches.

Special Faculties for Confessors

In order that both the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Jubilee indulgence may be received more widely, the Apostolic Penitentiary invites local Ordinaries to grant special faculties to priests who will hear confessions in cathedrals or churches specially designated for the Jubilee Year. These faculties concern absolution from undeclared *latae sententiae* censures not reserved to the Apostolic See (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 508 § 1; *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, can. 727 and 728 § 2). By mandate of the Holy Father and the decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, those priests granted these faculties by legitimate authority may exercise them on Jubilee pilgrimages outside their diocese. Special faculties will also be granted to penitentiaries of the Papal Basilicas in Rome and to canon or diocesan penitentiaries in particular churches.

These generous grants for the Jubilee indulgence afford the faithful many ways to obtain and apply the graces of Christ's sacrifice and God's mercy to themselves, to the faithful departed, and to others in the world in need of spiritual and physical care.

Resources for the Jubilee Year 2025

The Jubilee Year observance consists of many celebrations for age and social groups, and professional and vocational fields. The Vatican and USCCB websites will add resources over the course of the year, as they become available. The Jubilee Prayer, Hymn, and logo can be found on the Vatican website.

- From the Vatican: jubilaem2025.va (English, Spanish, and 6 other languages)
- From the USCCB: USCCB.org/committees/jubilee-2025 (English and Spanish)

Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair Retires; Archbishop Coyne Succeeds Him

On May 1, 2024, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Archbishop Leonard P. Blair as Archbishop of Hartford, and he was succeeded immediately by Coadjutor Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne.

Archbishop Blair is a current consultant of the Committee on Divine Worship and previously served as a member from 2013-2016 and as its Chairman from 2020-2023. During his tenure as Chairman, Archbishop Blair oversaw the promulgation of the *Abbey Psalms and Canticles*, the *Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons*, and the *Order of Penance*, and led the Committee and its Secretariat through important preparatory work for the upcoming editions of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care*. He has also worked closely with the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, serving as a member of the *Roman Missal* Editorial Committee, the Editorial Committee, and currently as the USCCB's Bishop-Member of the Commission.

Archbishop Coyne has served as a Committee member since 2016. From his ordination as a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston in 1986, he served in many pastoral and chancery roles, including in the liturgical field. He was ordained a bishop in 2011, serving first in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis before being appointed Bishop of Burlington in 2014.

Five Publishers to Print *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass*

Ritual editions of *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass* will go on sale in the United States beginning August 1, 2024. Five publishers will produce ritual editions, all of which are available for pre-order as of May 1; this information is summarized for the benefit of our readers:

Catholic Book Publishing Corp. (CatholicBookPublishing.com, 877-228-2665)

- 7¼" × 10¼", 152 pgs., hardcover, \$32.00

Liturgical Press (LitPress.org, 800-858-5450)

- 7¼" × 10½", 136 pgs., hardcover, \$39.95

Liturgy Training Publications (LTP.org, 800-933-1800)

- 7" × 10", 160 pgs., hardcover, \$42.00

Magnificat (bookstore.Magnificat.net, 970-416-6670)

- 5" × 7¾", 192 pgs., semi-leather hardcover, \$29.95

Midwest Theological Forum (TheologicalForum.org, 630-541-8519)

- 7.18" × 10¼", 124 pgs., synthetic leather hardcover, \$39.95

As a reminder, the liturgical book may first be used as of September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, with mandatory use beginning on the First Sunday of Advent, December 1.