

YEAR OF MERCY BULLETIN MESSAGES

From: The Archdiocese of Dubuque Worship Commission

Parish bulletin coordinator: The Archdiocesan Worship Commission of the Archdiocese of Dubuque invites you to publish one of the paragraphs below on the weeks indicated in your parish bulletin. Throughout the Archdiocese, we have the opportunity to offer these meditations on how to embellish our merciful behaviors in order to be merciful as is God and to share the presence of Christ in all we say and do. Thank you.

December 6th, 2015 Second Sunday of Advent

Every few years the Catholic Church celebrates a Jubilee Year (a special holy year celebration) based upon Jewish tradition discussed in Leviticus 25:8-13. Pope Francis has decreed that an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy will be observed beginning Tuesday, December 8th, 2015 (Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary) with the opening of the Holy Door at the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome through November 20th, 2016 (Solemnity of Christ the King). This start date marks the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Pope Francis stated, "How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God!" Watch your bulletin for messages on mercy with and go to: www.dbqarch.org/yearofmercy/. In the meantime, it is good to review our goals:

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- To feed the hungry.
- To give drink to the thirsty.
- To clothe the naked.
- To Shelter the Homeless
- To visit the sick.
- To visit the imprisoned
- To bury the dead.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

- To instruct the ignorant.
- To counsel the doubtful.
- To admonish sinners.
- To bear wrongs patiently.
- To forgive offences willingly.
- To comfort the afflicted.
- To pray for the living and the dead

December 13th, 2015 Third Sunday of Advent:

Year of Mercy Scripture for Meditation from Pope Francis: Eph 2:4. On Tuesday, December 8th Pope Francis inaugurated the Extraordinary Year of Mercy with the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Today the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome and the cathedrals throughout the world are opened for this holy year. Holy Doors for Jubilees have been in use for almost 600 years and they represent a passing from sin, slavery, and darkness into grace, freedom, and light. Ultimately Jesus is the fullness of which all Holy Doors represent as Pope Francis explains, "There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God: this is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation" (Psalm 118:20). The Liturgy will be celebrated in the Archdiocese of Dubuque at St. Raphael Cathedral today at 5:30 pm. Whether or not you are able to attend, consider praying Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Mercy today and throughout the year:

Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Mercy

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,

and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
 Show us your face and we will be saved.
 Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;
 the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;
 made Peter weep after his betrayal,
 and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.
 Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:
 “If you knew the gift of God!”
 You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
 of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
 let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.
 You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness
 in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:
 let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.
 Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,
 so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,
 and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,
 proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,
 and restore sight to the blind.
 We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,
 you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

December 25th, 2015 Solemnity of Christmas:

Year of Mercy Scripture for Meditation from Pope Francis: Gal 2:16. As we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus in the midst of this Extraordinary Jubilee, the Year of Mercy, reflect upon what Pope Francis teaches: “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. By his words, his actions, and his entire person [Jesus] reveals the mercy of God. In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us.” Consider making a daily habit this coming year of recognizing and embracing God’s mercy, a freely given gift to us sinners. Perhaps choose one of the following: look on the cross and thank Jesus for dying for your sins, pray Psalm 136, reflect on John 3:16, pray the Act of Contrition at the end of each day, offer the Divine Mercy Chaplet on behalf of those you have hurt and those who have hurt you.

January 1st, 2016 Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Lk 7:15. This Holy Day marks the World Day for Peace and the opening of the Holy Door of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome for the Year of Mercy. Blessed Pope Paul VI proclaimed, “If you want peace, work for justice.” In this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has called special attention to both the corporal works of mercy and the spiritual works of mercy. Will you commit this year to performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in concrete ways on a regular basis? Today, at the start of the year, is a great time to practice the spiritual work of mercy, forgiving injuries. Let us begin this year freed of the baggage that a lack of forgiveness creates in our souls; let us begin this year full of mercy and compassion.

January 17th, 2016 Second Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Mt 15:37. The Jubilee for the Year of Mercy includes smaller jubilees throughout the year for groups of people. This week from the 19th-21st is the Jubilee for those Engaged in Pilgrimage Work. Pope Francis teaches us, “Everyone, in fact, without exception, is called to embrace the call to mercy.” Consider marking a door in your home as a holy door. You can make a sign saying, “Door of Mercy – Anyone who passes through this door will experience, through our family, the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope.” Have all members of the family sign it as a pledge and commitment to make it a reality. Mercifully hold one another accountable when mercy is absent in the home, and acknowledge in one another when mercy is demonstrated.

January 24th, 2016 Third Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Hos 11:5. On Monday, January 25th, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, the Holy Door will be opened at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. Not all of the Holy Doors in Rome were opened at the same time in December. Today all of the doors are now opened, and they invite us to make a pilgrimage for this holy year. Pope Francis explains such pilgrimage: “The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: 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." Schedule a date to make a pilgrimage to one of the Holy Doors for the Year of Mercy, such as the Cathedral of St. Raphael in Dubuque, and plan to practice the devotion to receive the plenary indulgence attached to such a pilgrimage. Learn more about the indulgence at www.archdbq.org

January 31st, 2016 Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Jn 14:9. The Jubilee for Consecrated Life will be celebrated this week on Tuesday at the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. To "be merciful just as our Father is merciful" implies a conversion, taking up a new way of existing and being. This Year of Mercy is not simply about being led to a new kind of devotion. It is not simply about performing acts of mercy. Nor is it only about participating in a yearlong devotion. It is about being led into a new way of living where mercy is reflected in your entire lifestyle. In what ways might you be called to the Christian lifestyle? If mercy became more fully your lifestyle, what change would need to take place within you? How would you be different? How might you better see the world and others as Jesus sees it? Which Saint or person from Sacred Scripture could become your role model of a merciful lifestyle?

February 14th, 2016 Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Mt 18:22. This week we begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Lent is a penitential season; it is in this context in which we encounter the merciful God who wills for all to be saved. This also has significance for our relationships with others. Jesus tells us, "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). This is, in fact, the motto for this holy year: "Merciful like the Father" which Catholics the world over sing in the official hymn for the Year of Mercy, "Misericordes Sicut Pater". Consequently, just as we encounter the love of our merciful God, we are to share that mercy with the rest of the world. Schedule time this week to reflect each day on the mercy of God in your life and how you will commit to being merciful to those in need of your mercy. Forgive those who have hurt you and pray for them just as Christ, our model of perfect mercy, did on the cross.

February 21st, 2016 Second Sunday of Lent:

Year of Mercy Scripture for Meditation from Pope Francis: Psalm 51:11-16. Monday is the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter and the Jubilee for the Roman Curia. On the week of this feast and still at the dawn of Lent, we listen to the successor to St. Peter, Pope Francis as he shares, "It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty." Most especially this week, let us focus especially on the spiritual work of mercy, bearing wrongs patiently. We humans inevitably will hurt others and be hurt, whether intentional or innocent. We will live a life of greater holiness by dealing with others' offenses against us the way our merciful Father deals with our offenses against him. Recall the prayer Jesus taught us, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." How merciful are we?

February 28th, 2016 Third Sunday of Lent:

Year of Mercy Scripture for Meditation from Pope Francis: Rom 11:32. This week, parishioners in the Archdiocese of Dubuque are focus on the corporal work of mercy to visit the imprisoned. Consider praying for the imprisoned, their families, and their victims; support persons and programs involved with rehabilitation and abolishing the death penalty; visit those in prison; take the Eucharist to the homebound; and make a schedule to bring an elderly neighbor to Mass with your family. In addition, Pope Francis has called for a "24 Hours for the Lord" Friday into Saturday, March 4-5 to focus on the sacrament of reconciliation. We open ourselves to the mercy of God by making the time to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation either individually or in a communal penance service and by praying the Act of Contrition on a regular basis.

March 13th, 2016 Fifth Sunday of Lent:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Rev 7:4. As Lent enters its final phases, we recall the motto for this Year of Mercy Jubilee, "Merciful like the Father." This week concentrate on the spiritual work of mercy, converting sinners. It is the supreme law and purpose of the Church to save souls by putting people in relationship with the risen Christ and fostering that relationship. Continual conversion is our active participation in salvation and continues all throughout our lives. The process of sanctification unfolds throughout our Catholic lives. We face thousands of choices every day and we choose to turn from sin to joyfully conform to the will of God, which brings us authentic freedom and happiness. May we begin by seeing to our own conversion and then reach out to others to share the beauty and power of conversion in their lives too. Let also pray for the Elect as they journey toward the celebration of Initiation in the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

April 3, 2016 Divine Mercy Sunday:

Year of Mercy Scripture for Meditation from Pope Francis: Psalm 136. In recognition of Divine Mercy Sunday, the Archdiocese of Dubuque is offering a Holy Hour at the Cathedral of St. Raphael in Dubuque at 3:00 pm on April 3rd followed by confessions and Mass at 5:30. The origin of this devotion finds roots in St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish sister who lived in the twentieth century. She received messages from Jesus that she recorded in her published diary. According to the Vatican website, her mission was to remind the world of God's merciful love for all, to establish devotions and celebrations of divine mercy such as the Divine Mercy Chaplet, to encourage veneration to Christ as the image of Divine Mercy, and to establish a Sunday as Divine Mercy Sunday which Pope John Paul II assigned to the Second Sunday of Easter. She encouraged the apostolic movement of Divine Mercy to share the Lord's message of his mercy with the world.

April 10th, 2016 Third Sunday of Easter:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Mt 5:7. This week, in participation with the Universal Catholic Church's celebration of the Year of Mercy, the Archdiocese of Dubuque focuses on the corporal work of mercy to feed the hungry. In the Gospel, the risen Jesus feeds the Apostles fish and then charges them to "feed my sheep." This week consider educating yourself and family about world hunger, volunteering at a soup kitchen, donating food to a food pantry, attending to the proper nutrition of your loved ones, and avoiding wasting food. Consider those who are spiritually hungry and patiently listen to their hunger for fulfillment.

May 29th, 2016 Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Eph 4:26. In the Year of Mercy, this Sunday is the Jubilee for Deacons (the Jubilee for Priests is this Friday, June 3rd, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). This week meditate on mercy so that we may become merciful as God the Father is merciful in our lives. As stewards of God's mercy, we receive mercy so that we can give it to others. Pope Francis says, "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy." Plan to participate in the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ celebrations in your parish, attend adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and pray before a crucifix. Meditate on where you might be called to better give mercy to others in your daily life. How can you more effectively be a witness to God's mercy?

June 12th, 2016 Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Gal 4:4. This weekend we recognize the Jubilee for those who are ill and for persons with disabilities. People experiencing such challenges carry a cross and with joy and patience they teach us how to suffer with grace like Christ taught us. However, others experience despair, depression, and sorrow in illness and disability. They need comfort. Most especially this week, let us focus on the spiritual work of mercy to comfort the sorrowful. We can help the sorrowful to be thankful for evidence of God's blessings in their lives. We can help them to make a list of all of the things for which to be thankful. We might do the same and take that attitude into our relationships with those who are in a state of sorrow. Let us be the presence of hope, love, and mercy of our compassionate Father.

July 10th, 2016 Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Lk 15:1-32. This week, we of the Archdiocese of Dubuque focus on the corporal work of mercy to clothe the naked. A man fell victim to robbers who stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. The Samaritan, a social outcast among the Jews, went out of his way to care for the victim's needs. Who are the victims on our streets waiting for our acts of mercy? Seek out those in need of food, clothing and shelter and attend to their needs. Consider leading or participating in a clothing drive for the poor. Sort through your own clothes and household items and donate cleaned and gently used items. Donate new diapers for babies and donate food to the local food pantry. In addition, explore, with your family, what it means to dress modestly in all places. Help our children to become aware of the consequences of over-exposure of body parts. Instill the gracefulness of seeing every person as a temple of the goodness of God.

July 24th, 2016 Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Mk 5:19. From Tuesday through next Sunday the special jubilee during the Year of Mercy is the jubilee for young people, coinciding with the World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland. Youth are prone to doubt, but recent sociological data indicates that they often embody the attitudes and beliefs of their parents and close relatives. During this special jubilee, let us be attentive to our youth, pray for them, and practice the spiritual work of mercy, to advise the doubtful. Let us mercifully listen to youth and others in our families, workplaces, and communities and dispel doubts by sharing our faith in the hope Christ promises. Youth long to be inspired by heroic examples of faith and authentic stories of faith. They long to be

understood, to be listened to, and to be heard. Engage in dialogue about faith and truth with a young person in your life.

August 28th, 2016 Twenty-Second Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Heb 2:17. This week, parishioners in the Archdiocese of Dubuque focus on the corporal work of mercy to shelter the homeless. Consider the needs of homeless children and discern about becoming a foster parent. Consider the needs of new immigrants in our midst and meditate on ways to practice God's mercy and hospitality in their presence. Look for and notice the homeless in your community who live on the streets, under bridges, or in dilapidated buildings. Advocate for legislation and policies so that, as a city, the community can provide housing for low-income people. Help needy neighbors with home repairs. Get to know your neighbors and help pay others' utility bills via your utility company. Donate needed items to shelters and to Catholic Charities and Habitat for Humanity and offer your time and money. Donate to organizations that provide support after natural disasters. Who in your family is in need of shelter?

September 4th, 2016 Twenty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Is 58:6-11. With the Memorial of Blessed (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta on Monday, the Year of Mercy recognizes the jubilee for workers and volunteers of mercy this weekend. Make a daily habit of beginning your day with a pledge to be merciful to others: avoid judging or harming others through envy or harsh words and deeds. Be positive and recognize the good that is present in everyone you meet. Forgive others and be generous. Spend time with the sick and dying and listen attentively to their caregivers. Volunteer to adopt an elderly person in a nursing home as your family's adopted grandpa or grandma. Visit the person weekly and affirm and pray for the people who work in the nursing home. Take your adopted grandpa or grandma to school concerts or plays, to a shopping area for a slow walk, or to a park. Volunteer to hold and rock babies in acute care. Saturday, September 8th and Sunday the 9th are the Marian jubilee recognizing the Blessed Virgin Mary in this Year of Mercy. In her willingness to say, "yes" to God's invitation to be the Mother of Jesus, Mary participated in God's will to send his Son in the flesh to live among us. In her merciful concern for the salvation of the world, Mary agreed to be pregnant and face assumed judgments of the state of her virginity and fidelity to her espoused husband, Joseph. As she faced the discomfort of pregnancy and the work of birth, she opened her heart and body to be a vessel of the presence of Christ. Let us open our hearts and bodies, too, and be a vessel of the presence of Christ. Consider visiting recent widows and offer to help with children, money, time, and talent. Let us commit to a renewed relationship with the Mother of God and ask her prayers for world peace, for a loving family life, and for the safety and dignity of girls and women throughout the world. Let us make a pledge to pray the rosary once each week as a family and consider an image of the Blessed Mother and the Holy Family in our homes.

September 25th, 2016 Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Mt 5:48. This weekend we recognize the jubilee for catechists who teach the Catholic faith. In reality, all of us are catechists; we all teach faith and Gospel values through our actions and our words. Draw attention to the spiritual work of mercy to instruct the uninformed. Are we willing to ask others how God is present in their life, talk about our faith, and teach them? In 1 Pet 3:15, Peter writes, "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." In this Year of Mercy let us cultivate a new habit to be generous not only in charity of deeds but also in charity instructing others about faith, hope, and the love of God when opportunities arise.

October 9th, 2016 Twenty-Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Rom 10:3-4. This week parishioners in the Archdiocese of Dubuque focus on the corporal work of mercy to visit the sick. In the Gospel Jesus heals the lepers who ask for healing. Volunteer to drive the sick to appointments visit with the sick, volunteer with Hospice, and send get well and "thinking of you" cards to those who are alone in their sickness. Spend quality time with those who are sick or homebound praying with them, cooking and delivering meals to them, and asking them to pray for others in the world who suffer due to mental and physical illness. Visit your biological or adopted grandma or grandpa in the nursing home weekly. Lift the spirits of the sick by playing cards and other games with them, asking elders to tell you stories about their deceased spouse, reading books to them, and recalling their past family life.

October 30th, Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, 2016

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Mt 9:13. On Tuesday, Nov. 1, it will be a holy day, All Saints Day. We will celebrate the lives of the saints and on Nov. 2, remember those who have died during the Year

of Mercy. We give thanks for God's mercy in our lives and the life of the Church, especially as shown through the lives of the Saints and the dead whose lives expressed mercy for others. We offer our intercession as participants in the Communion of Saints and practice saintly ways in daily life. Pope Francis said, "We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness."

November 6th, 2016 Thirty-Second Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for meditation from Pope Francis: Psalm 70. This weekend Pope Francis will celebrate the jubilee for prisoners at St. Peter's Basilica. The Archdiocese of Dubuque will focus on the corporal work of mercy to bury the dead. This week pray for the dead. Review your opportunities to attend parish wakes and funerals, visit and help widows and widowers with housework, volunteer to help at the parish cemetery, provide food for wakes and funerals, participate in bereavement ministry, and pray for deceased family and community members. Also, consider mercy toward family members who are in prison, visit them, and pray the rosary together.

November 13th, 2016 Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time:

Year of Mercy Scripture for Meditation from Pope Francis: Lk 6:37-38. This weekend the Year of Mercy is almost over and the Holy Doors in the Basilicas of Rome and the Dioceses of the world will be closed. Pope Francis asks us to "contemplate God's mercy and adopt it as our own lifestyle," by meditating on the Word of God. To do that, get in the habit of *Lectio Divina* (Latin for "divine reading") to pray with the Sunday's Scriptures weekly and/or pray with the daily readings every day. To learn more about this meditative Catholic practice, visit:

<http://ocarm.org/en/content/lectio/what-lectio-divina>

November 20th, 2016 Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe:

Year of Mercy Scripture for Meditation from Pope Francis: Psalm 147. This Sunday the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica is closed and the Jubilee of Mercy concludes. In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, the Cathedral of St. Raphael will celebrate Mass at 5:30 p.m. to close the Jubilee year. At the conclusion of this Holy Jubilee Year of Mercy, we practice the spiritual work of mercy and pray for the living and the dead. We pray that all people may open their hearts and minds to the love and mercy of God and will experience the Kingdom of Heaven. The last work of mercy, burying the dead, comes from the Book of Tobit. This year, we have celebrated the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Let us continue practicing these works as a regular habit in our daily lives:

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- To feed the hungry.
- To give drink to the thirsty.
- To clothe the naked.
- To Shelter the Homeless
- To visit the sick.
- To visit the imprisoned
- To bury the dead.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

- To instruct the ignorant.
- To counsel the doubtful.
- To admonish sinners.
- To bear wrongs patiently.
- To forgive offences willingly.
- To comfort the afflicted.
- To pray for the living and the dead