

SOURCE ⊕ SUMMIT

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Jubilee: Don't Miss this Moment of Miracle and Grace

By Dr. John Bergsma

On May 9, 2024, Pope Francis announced to the world that 2025 would be a Jubilee year for the Catholic Church worldwide, beginning on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 2024, and lasting until Epiphany, Jan. 6, 2026. There was no way, at that time, that we could have known that the pilgrimage of Pope Francis' life would come to an end during this Jubilee and that we would continue our own Jubilee pilgrimage in hope under his successor, Pope Leo XIV.

I'm convinced in my heart that the proper response to Jubilee 2025 should be joy, hope, and excitement. While these Jubilee days have been overshadowed with mourning and anticipation, we can renew our dedication to this Journey of Hope the Church is on. Lived well, this Jubilee can be a moment of miracle and grace for all of us, a kind of year-long spiritual "Christmas Season" in which we daily awake to open the gifts of grace that our Father gives us so lovingly.

What Is a Jubilee Year?

The Jubilee lies at the center of Scripture, salvation history, and Jesus' mission as the Messiah. The Church's Jubilee years are ultimately grounded in the biblical Jubilee year, which—according to Leviticus 25—came around every fifty years and was celebrated by forgiving all debts, granting freedom to all in bondage, returning everyone to their homes and family, and allowing everyone to rest in God's fullness. Forgiveness, Freedom, Family, Fullness—these were the goals of the Jubilee, and those goals were reached by four actions: Redemption, Release, Return, and Rest.

What Did Jesus Say About It?

In Luke 4, we read of Jesus returning to his hometown, Nazareth. Shockingly, Jesus enters the synagogue and chooses to read and preach on Isaiah: "The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim liberty... to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor" (Is 61:1-2 ESV). Jesus pours fuel on the tinder of their expectations by announcing provocatively: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing!" In other words, "I am the anointed one of whom Isaiah speaks!"

Immediately after this sermon, he departs to Capernaum and there casts a vicious demon out of a man, in public view, in the great synagogue that stood in that city (Lk 4:31-37). This constitutes freeing Israelites from slavery to Satan. Then, in the next chapter, a paralytic is lowered in front of him as he teaches, and Jesus declares, "Man, your sins are forgiven you" (Lk 5:20 RSV). Jesus brings the final

Jubilee, which would forgive sin-debts and free God's people from slavery to the devil.

Not only that, in the rest of the Gospel, Jesus ensures that his jubilee powers of exorcism and forgiveness of sin would never be lost. He entrusts these same powers to the Apostles as his representatives and successors. The Apostles, in turn, will later choose men called bishops and priests with whom to share the authority they received from Christ. These men celebrate the sacraments, perpetuating the gift of liberation from Satan and forgiveness of sins down to the present day. The age of the Church is the age of perpetual Jubilee.

Nonetheless, the Church is wise to exercise her authority and set aside special years of jubilee, in continuity with this tradition going back to Moses in Leviticus 25. In Jubilee years, we can renew our focus on the reality of jubilee and plunge ourselves more deeply into practices like frequent reception of the Sacraments, acquisition of indulgences, undertaking pilgrimages, and performing works of mercy.

5 Ways to Live this Jubilee with Joy

This Jubilee Year, therefore, is an astounding time of grace. For some of us, it may be our last Jubilee Year! Here are five tips to live it well:

- **Lean into the Sacraments:** If you are only going to Mass on Sundays, add a weekday Mass. If you are only going to Confession once a month, start going bi-weekly. Whatever you are doing, level up!
- **Go on Pilgrimage:** God is not outdone in generosity. You will never regret it. Rome, if possible; the Holy Land, if it opens up; a national shrine, or else go to the churches your bishop has designated in your diocese.
- **Indulge in Indulgences:** Try to gain a plenary indulgence every day, for yourself but most especially for the faithful departed. Practical ways to do so are a group Rosary, a half hour in Eucharistic adoration, a half hour of reading Scripture, always meeting the usual conditions—Confession, Communion, detachment from sin, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope.
- **Forgive Someone:** "If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions" (Mt 6:15 NABRE). Reconcile with someone and put away grudges.
- **Help Someone Out of Debt:** If you have friends or family members struggling with debt, donate generously to help them get free. Through this work of charity you can obtain the plenary indulgence.

Eucharistic resources for you

“The Eucharistic celebration is an encounter with the Risen Jesus. At the same time, it is a way of opening ourselves to the world as He taught us.”
—Pope Francis



St. Katharine Drexel Route: EWTN coverage of the 2025 Pilgrimage.



Adoration Playlist: Eucharistic songs for young adults on YouTube.

The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church

The document *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church* was developed by the Committee on Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It was approved by the full body of the USCCB at its November 2021 General Meeting and

has been authorized for publication by the General Secretary of the USCCB. We are reprinting short excerpts of this document. The excerpt below is part **12 of 12**. We encourage you to read this document in full online at <https://eucharisticrevival.org/>.

Sent forth

56. Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that the “love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all.”⁸⁰ We are not the only ones in need of the love that Christ has shown us. We are called to help the rest of the world experience it. “What the world needs is God’s love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in him. The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church’s life, but also of her mission.”⁸¹ Jesus is sent by the Father for the salvation of the world. At the very end of the celebration of the Eucharist, we who have received the Body and Blood of Christ and have been incorporated more profoundly into his Mystical Body are likewise sent out to proclaim the Good News for the salvation of the world: “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”

57. Pope Francis has insisted that evangelization—spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ—is a task that belongs to every member of the Church, not just a few specialists: All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized.⁸² He exhorts us all to become missionary disciples: “Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples.’”⁸³ What is essential is not that one have advanced training, but rather that one discover through Christ the love that God has for us and that one desire to lead others to that same joyful discovery: “[A]nyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.”⁸⁴ All that is needed is for one who has known that love—the love that is displayed most preeminently in the Eucharist—to tell other people about it. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others.⁸⁵

58. We have offered these reflections on the Eucharistic faith and practice of the Church as a starting point. There is much more that could be said, but what is most important is that we enter more deeply by faith and love into this great Mystery of Mysteries. Let us all ask the Lord to call us into a time of Eucharistic renewal, a time of prayer and reflection, of acts of charity and sincere repentance. The Lord is with us in the Eucharistic Mystery celebrated in our parishes and missions, in our beautiful cathedrals and in our poorest chapels. He is present and he draws near to us, so that we can draw nearer to him. The Lord is generous to us with his grace; and so we, by his grace, should always humbly ask him to give us what we need.

59. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Risen Christ says to us, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water (Rev 21:6). Brothers and sisters, let us thirst for the Lord who first suffered thirst for us (Jn 19:28). Let us adore Jesus who ever remains with us, on all the altars of the world, and lead others to share in our joy!

80 Pope Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, no. 84. 81 Pope Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, no. 84. 82 Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, no. 120. 83 Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, no. 120. 84 Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, no. 120. 85 Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, no. 121..



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