



The Holy See

CELEBRATION OF FIRST VESPERS OF THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER OR DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

*Vatican Basilica
Saturday, 11 April 2015*

[Multimedia]

The greeting of the Risen Christ to his disciples on the evening of Easter, “Peace be with you!” (*Jn* 20:19), continues to resound in us all. Peace, especially during this Easter season, remains the desire of so many people who suffer unprecedented violence of discrimination and death simply because they bear the name “Christian”. Our prayer is all the more intense and becomes a cry for help to the Father, who is rich in mercy, that he may sustain the faith of our many brothers and sisters who are in pain. At the same time, we ask for the grace of the conversion of our own hearts so as to move from indifference to compassion.

Saint Paul reminds us that we have been saved through the mystery of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is the Reconciler, who is alive in our midst offering the way to reconciliation with God and with each other. The Apostle recalls that, notwithstanding the difficulties and the sufferings of life, the hope of salvation which Christ has sown in our hearts nonetheless continues to grow. The mercy of God is poured out upon us, making us just and giving us peace.

Many question in their hearts: why a Jubilee of Mercy today? Simply because the Church, in this time of great historical change, is called to offer more evident signs of God’s presence and closeness. This is not the time to be distracted; on the contrary, we need to be vigilant and to reawaken in ourselves the capacity to see what is essential. This is a time for the Church to rediscover the meaning of the mission entrusted to her by the Lord on the day of Easter: to be a sign and an instrument of the Father’s mercy (cf. *Jn* 20:21-23). For this reason, the Holy Year must keep alive the desire to know how to welcome the numerous signs of the tenderness which

God offers to the whole world and, above all, to those who suffer, who are alone and abandoned, without hope of being pardoned or feeling the Father's love. A Holy Year to experience strongly within ourselves the joy of having been found by Jesus, the Good Shepherd who has come in search of us because we were lost. A Jubilee to receive the warmth of his love when he bears us upon his shoulders and brings us back to the Father's house. A year in which to be touched by the Lord Jesus and to be transformed by his mercy, so that we may become witnesses to mercy. Here, then, is the reason for the Jubilee: because this is the time for mercy. It is the favourable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and to touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone, everyone, the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.

May the Mother of God open our eyes, so that we may comprehend the task to which we have been called; and may she obtain for us the grace to experience this Jubilee of Mercy as faithful and fruitful witnesses of Christ.