

## 4. Uniting with all the baptized

Every Jubilee is an invitation to unity and to put aside the scandal of division, but this year's has a particular focus on this theme. The year 2025 is the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, held in 325 — the council provided us the Nicene Creed, prayed every Sunday in Masses worldwide. That council took place some seven centuries before the Great Schism, which divided Catholics from Orthodox. In other words, it was a council of the whole, united Church.

Providentially, this year East and West celebrate Easter on the same date, and Pope Francis hopes to mark the anniversary of the council by visiting Nicaea (in modern-day Turkey) with Orthodox leaders.

Even as we approach 1,000 years of this separation, one constant has continued to give testimony to our common baptism: martyrdom. Christians from East and West have given their lives for Christ all these centuries and continue to do so in great numbers today. The “ecumenism of blood,” as the pope calls it, is a force toward unity and one that will be especially highlighted during the Jubilee.



## 5. Filling our hearts with hope

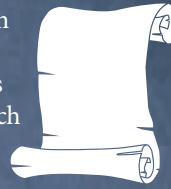
As he said in his letter declaring the Jubilee, Pope Francis wants this year to, especially, fill each of us with hope. He laments a sadness that “lodges in the heart” and that is too widespread today for many varied reasons, from wars in dozens of countries to loneliness fostered by excessive internet usage. Without hope, the pope notes, quoting the Second Vatican Council, “the problems of life and death ... remain unsolved.” But as Christians, he insists, we are a people of sure and steadfast hope, a hope that does not disappoint, because Christ has already conquered the last enemy — that is, death.

The Jubilee, then, is a time for families to be renewed in hope and share that hope with neighbors, classmates, colleagues, friends. The pope exhorts, “May the way we live our lives say ... in so many words: ‘Hope in the Lord! Hold firm, take heart and hope in the Lord!’ (Ps 27:14)” (*Spes Non Confundit*, No. 25).

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## History of the Jubilee

In ancient Judaism, the Jubilee Year began as a year that was declared holy. During this period, the Mosaic law prescribed that slaves could regain their freedom and land (of which God is the sole master) should be returned to its former owners. A jubilee year was typically celebrated every 50 years.



In the Christian era, after the first jubilee of 1300, Pope Boniface VIII fixed the frequency of jubilee celebrations to every 100 years, which was later reduced to every 50 years, and eventually every 25 years, beginning in 1475.

Although the Napoleonic wars prevented the celebrations of the ordinary jubilees of 1800 and 1850, the 25-year cycle has been recognized without fail since 1875.

The pope can also call an extraordinary jubilee for special Church events or to focus on a specific theme. The most recent two jubilees were:

### 2015

Recognizing the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis called an extraordinary jubilee dedicated to mercy. For the first time, a “door of mercy” was opened in the world’s cathedrals, sanctuaries, hospitals, and prisons. For the occasion, Pope Francis established a group of priests known as Missionaries of Mercy to whom he entrusted the power to forgive sins usually reserved to the pope.



### 2000

The ordinary Jubilee of 2000 did go by the name the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. During the year, Pope St. John Paul II made several pilgrimages and symbolic gestures not included in the usual celebratory practices. These included a public request for forgiveness for sins committed in history and the publication of a martyrology of Christians killed in the twentieth century. One of the main events of the Jubilee was World Youth Day, held in Rome, in which more than two million young people participated. The pope also made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, encouraging dialogue between the Catholic Church, Islam, and Judaism.



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# The Jubilee of HOPE

CHRISTUS  
HERI HODIE  
SEMPER



04/25

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“During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.”

Pope Francis used these words in his bull of indiction (*Spes Non Confundit*) for the ordinary Jubilee Year of 2025 to stress that the event is an opportunity for us to work on making the human connections so vital to living the Christian life.

The pope calls attention to several areas where signs of hope are urgently needed. “The need for peace,” for example, “challenges us all, and demands that concrete steps be taken” (No. 8), he said. While the world is certainly wracked with violent conflicts, there are also many other subtle threats to peace, such as political or other forms of factionalism in our own homes and parishes.

There are also marginalized groups needing signs of hope: prisoners, the sick, migrants, the elderly, the poor, and young people (see Nos. 10-15). And a critical area in need of hope, says the pope, concerns the transmission of life. He speaks of “an alarming decline in the birthrate” in many countries (No. 9) and locates the causes in “today’s frenetic pace” and “the quest for profit,” among other areas.

How can we become signs of hope to everyone in need during this jubilee year? Certainly, a number of spiritual gifts are available to us, but let’s consider five.

**1. Experiencing the Church as *Catholic***

Rome is expecting some 32 million pilgrims for the 2025 Jubilee. While that sounds like — and is — a huge number, it’s only a small portion of Catholics worldwide. Most of us won’t have the chance to visit St. Peter’s in 2025, but we can still be renewed in our awareness that our Church is *catholic* (universal). From Nigeria to South Korea to the United States, the whole Church will be united in this special year. Dioceses will be hosting their own local Jubilee celebrations and pilgrimages; participating in a local event is like adding your own thread to the worldwide tapestry of festivities, a reminder that the Church is much more than your parish.



**2. Recognizing the Church as mother of all**

The Jubilee highlights the motherly role of the Church, who gathers all her children around her in all the variety of their talents and missions. Not every possible vocation and career will be represented in Rome during the Jubilee, but many will be. From marching bands to artists, from seminarians to grandparents, the list of people who will travel to Rome for special events is long and varied. The Jubilee of Families, Grandparents and the Elderly is scheduled from May 30 to June 1. The Jubilee of Youth is slated for July 28 to August 3.



**3. Realizing that young people have gifts for the Church**

In fact, the Jubilee gives young people and even children a chance to realize that they have an essential role in the Church of today, not just the Church of the future. This is particularly highlighted by the Jubilee mascot, “Luce.” She and her friends are manga cartoons, representing young people from around the world. They are accompanied by an adorable pet dog and wear boots dirtied from the paths of life.

### The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,  
may the *faith* you have given us  
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,  
and the flame of *charity* enkindled  
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,  
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*  
for the coming of your kingdom.

May your grace transform us  
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.  
May those seeds transform from within both humanity  
and the whole cosmos  
in the sure expectation  
of a new heaven and a new earth,  
when, with the powers of evil vanquished,  
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee  
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,  
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.  
May that same grace spread  
the joy and peace of our Redeemer  
throughout the earth.  
To you our God, eternally blessed,  
be glory and praise for ever.  
Amen

### Pilgrimages and Indulgences

The Church encourages the faithful to make a pilgrimage to St. Peter’s Basilica during the Jubilee, but clearly the trip is not realistic for all. The U.S. bishops have provided a list of alternate pilgrimage sites throughout the United States ([www.usccb.org/jubilee2025/pilgrimage-sites-us](http://www.usccb.org/jubilee2025/pilgrimage-sites-us)) that can be substituted in lieu of a trip to Rome.

Taking part in Jubilee activities is a great way to gain a plenary indulgence, and the Church encourages a pilgrimage as the starting point. Requirements for gaining the indulgence include: having the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin; sacramentally confessing sins; receiving the holy Eucharist; and praying for the intentions of the pope.

According to the Vatican’s Jubilee website ([www.iubilaeum2025.va](http://www.iubilaeum2025.va)): “The Jubilee Indulgence is a concrete manifestation of God’s mercy, which goes beyond and transforms the boundaries of human justice. ... The Jubilee indulgence allows us to free our hearts from the weight of sin because the reparation due for our sins is given freely and abundantly. ...

“Those who cannot make [a] Jubilee pilgrimage due to illness or other circumstances are nonetheless invited to take part in the spiritual movement that accompanies the Jubilee Year, offering up the sufferings of their daily lives, and participating in the Eucharistic celebration.”

