News
Vatican
Pope Francis closes the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to mark the closing of the jubilee Yea

Pope Francis closes the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to mark the closing of the jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican, Nov. 20, 2016. (CNS photo/Tiziana Fabi, pool via Reuters)

Cindy Wooden

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

February 11, 2022
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

VATICAN CITY — The Holy Year 2025 should focus on "restoring a climate of hope and trust" after the coronavirus pandemic and helping people repair their relationships with God, with each other and with the Earth, Pope Francis said.

"We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision," the pope wrote in a letter formally entrusting preparations for the Holy Year to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization.

Held every 25 years since 1470, a holy year or jubilee is a time of pilgrimage, prayer, repentance and acts of mercy, based on the Old Testament tradition of a

jubilee year of rest, forgiveness and renewal. A formal "bull of indiction" proclaiming the Holy Year will be released closer to 2025.

Writing to Archbishop Fisichella, in a letter released Feb. 11, Pope Francis noted that "in the last two years, not a single country has been unaffected by the sudden outbreak of an epidemic that made us experience firsthand not only the tragedy of dying alone, but also the uncertainty and fleetingness of existence, and in doing so, has changed our very way of life."

"Together with all our brothers and sisters, we Christians endured those hardships and limitations," he said. "Our churches remained closed, as did our schools, factories, offices, shops, and venues for recreation. All of us saw certain freedoms curtailed, while the pandemic generated feelings not only of grief, but also, at times, of doubt, fear and disorientation."

Fortunately, he said, scientists quickly developed vaccines, "an initial remedy that is gradually permitting us to resume our daily lives."

Advertisement

With vaccinations, he said, "we are fully confident that the epidemic will be overcome, and that the world will return to its usual pattern of personal relationships and social life," but that will happen more quickly if vaccines and COVID-19 treatments are shared with the world's poorer countries.

Coming after the pandemic, he said, "the forthcoming jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire; that is why I have chosen as the motto of the jubilee, 'Pilgrims of Hope.'"

A "sense of universal fraternity" and a refusal to ignore "the tragedy of rampant poverty that prevents millions of men, women, young people and children from living in a manner worthy of our human dignity" will be necessary to enkindle real hope, the pope wrote.

The basis of Catholic Holy Year celebrations is the biblical jubilee year, "which is meant to restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone," the pope noted. For that reason, no Holy Year celebration can be authentic without involving and

assisting the poor, including migrants and refugees.

"In the realization that all of us are pilgrims on this earth, which the Lord has charged us to till and keep," Pope Francis also expressed his hope that Christians' jubilee pilgrimage also would include time "to contemplate the beauty of creation and care for our common home."

Within the church, he said, people should prepare for the Holy Year with prayer and by promoting synodality and "a renewed awareness of the demands of the universal call to responsible participation by enhancing the charisms and ministries that the Holy Spirit never ceases to bestow for the building up of the one church."

Pope Francis also asked that 2024 be devoted "to a great 'symphony' of prayer. Prayer, above all else, to renew our desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and to adore him."

Included in the yearlong prayer program, he said, should be prayers "to thank God for the many gifts of his love for us and to praise his work in creation, which summons everyone to respect it and to take concrete and responsible steps to protect it."

Joined in prayer, Christians express that they are of one, "which then translates into solidarity and the sharing of our daily bread."

"May it be an intense year of prayer in which hearts are opened to receive the outpouring of God's grace and to make the 'Our Father,' the prayer Jesus taught us, the life program of each of his disciples," the pope wrote.