
From the Pastor's Desk.....

This coming Tuesday (8 December) we will celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary which will mark the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The Jubilee Year will end on the feast of Christ the King (20 November 2016). The papal bull announcing this extraordinary jubilee *Misericordiae Vultus* ("Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy") is a brief document but in it Pope Francis outlines a number of themes, images and gestures which will give shape and meaning to this Year.

In his pastoral letter on the Jubilee Year Archbishop Christopher Prowse mentions that since their origin in the church about 700 years ago, there have been 26 Jubilees and only three have been 'extraordinary' including this one. Obviously Pope Francis is placing great hope and importance on the importance of God's mercy and it is an invitation to us all to explore and enter into this mystery of God's love.

Gestures are important. We use them every day. The handshake, for example, expresses friendliness to the other person, or it may seal an agreement. So with the jubilee year there will be a number of symbolic gestures. The first will be the opening of the Holy Door in St Peter's Basilica in Rome to mark the opening of the Jubilee Year. At St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra, a local Door of Mercy will also be opened at this time. To open a door is a symbolic act. On a theological level it is a profound signal that God's mercy and forgiveness can always be found and God never shuts out or withholds his love.

And while we may not have a designated 'door', nevertheless, may the doors of our parish be a place of welcome for all who enter.

Peace and blessings,
Gerard