



Pastoral Letter for Sunday 1st September 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Holy Father Pope Francis has proclaimed that 2025 will be a Holy Year of Jubilee, something which happens ordinarily every 25 years. The spiritual theme for the 2025 Holy Year of Jubilee is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. The Holy Year of Jubilee will begin in the 'Local Churches' (Dioceses) around the world on Sunday 29th December 2024 with Diocesan Bishops celebrating Holy Mass in their Cathedrals, and it will conclude on Sunday 28th December 2025.

The Bull of Indiction¹ (the formal announcement or proclamation) published by Pope Francis for the Jubilee of 2025 is called *Spes non confundit*, meaning 'Hope does not disappoint'. In the Bull, Pope Francis proclaims: "Pilgrimage is of course a fundamental element of every Jubilee event. Setting out on a journey is traditionally associated with our human quest for meaning in life. A pilgrimage on foot is a great aid for rediscovering the value of silence, effort and simplicity of life. In the coming year, pilgrims of hope will surely travel the ancient and more modern routes in order to experience the Jubilee to the full."

I hope that in the Holy Year of Jubilee as many people as possible will try to take part in our annual diocesan pilgrimages to Lourdes (4th to 10th July 2025) and Walsingham (27th September 2025), the Batley Torchlight Procession in Honour of Our Lady (6th October 2025), our new Walking Pilgrimage for Vocations between Keighley and Ilkley (29th March 2025) and the St Wilfrid's Way Camino from Leeds to Ripon (10th to 11th October 2025). Additionally, the Vicariate for Education is organising a Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome in 2025 for some of our young people.

In response to Pope Francis' encouragement to embrace this historic tradition of pilgrimage, and using the provisions given by the Apostolic Penitentiary, I have designated also the following churches within the Diocese of Leeds as Jubilee Pilgrimage Churches for the Holy Year:

1. Leeds Cathedral Church of St Anne
2. St Mary of the Angels Church, Batley
3. St Patrick's Mission Church, Bradford
4. St Mary's Church, Halifax
5. St Patrick's Church, Huddersfield

6. St Joseph's Church, Keighley
7. St Austin's Church, Wakefield
8. St Wilfrid's Church, Ripon + Chapel of Our Lady of the Crag, Knaresborough
9. St Stephen's Church, Skipton
10. St Edward the Confessor Church, Clifford

Additionally, I have designated the Chapels at HMP Leeds, New Hall, Wakefield, Wealstun, and Wetherby Young Offenders Institute, as 'Places of Pilgrimage' for their respective prison populations during the Holy Year of Jubilee. This will enable prisoners to join with the Holy Year celebration as Pilgrims of Hope.

The churches have been selected on the basis of their centrality in the respective areas of the diocese, historic resonance and seating capacity. Each Jubilee Pilgrimage Church will host opportunities at advertised times during the Holy Year for either groups or individual pilgrims, to take part in various liturgical celebrations, devotions, and heritage days.

Central to every pilgrimage and to participating in its spiritual benefits, is the need for conversion and reconciliation. During the Holy Year, I encourage each deanery to facilitate penitential celebrations to take place in their local Jubilee Pilgrimage Church, which end with the individual confessions of the penitents, as established in the second form of the Rite of Penance. Laity, clergy and religious, all of whom constitute 'Pilgrims of Hope' will be able to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence granted by the Holy Father if, either individually or in a group, they devoutly visit one of the Jubilee Churches of Pilgrimage in our diocese during the Holy Year, and "for a suitable period of time, engage in Eucharistic adoration and meditation, concluding with the Our Father, the Profession of Faith in any legitimate form, and invocations to Mary, the Mother of God, so that in this Holy Year everyone will come to know the closeness of Mary, the most affectionate of mothers, who never abandons her children."

The Jubilee Indulgence is one of the special "signs" of the Jubilee Year, "a priceless gift of divine mercy" and "a Jubilee grace" which allows us to discover "the unlimited nature of God's mercy." During the Holy Year, I will visit each of the Jubilee Pilgrimage Churches to preside at a sacred liturgical celebration or devotion and, on that occasion, "impart the Papal Blessing with the ascribed plenary indulgence, obtainable by all the faithful who receive this Blessing under the usual conditions."

For all of us, may the Jubilee of 2025 be a truly Holy Year when we renew and strengthen our faith and trust in Almighty God, be an occasion for us to seek healing and reconciliation, and a pilgrimage of hope.

+ Marcus, Bishop of Leeds