



A MESSAGE FOR THE DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY FOR THE JUBILEE OF MERCY

TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2015

Dear friends,

“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy” (MV,1).

With this declaration Pope Francis announces to us an extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, commencing 8 December 2015 (Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception) and concluding 20 November 2016 (Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe).

To look upon the face of Jesus- that is, to listen to his words, to see his deeds, to recognise his presence - is to experience the love of his Father. It is a love that is shaped entirely by mercy. Jesus displays this mercy through the story of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32), and in his meeting with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:4-26); we share in the mercy of Jesus, himself, as he stands with the woman condemned by others (Jn 8:1-11) and the man he welcomes into paradise from the Cross (Lk 23:39-43).

God is constantly turning his face towards us, and his face is always one of compassion, forgiveness and kindness. God knows no other way. Mercy brings to our broken, darkened world the gift of a healed, enlightened destiny. Mercy is our hope that sin will not overwhelm us because that is not what God wants for those he loves. Mercy is our way to God. As Pope Francis puts it: “Our salvation depends on it.” (MV,2)

It is not unusual, however, to find that our family, friends and neighbours have little sense of this invitation and possibility. Many of our brothers and sisters find it hard to believe that God - made visible in Jesus - might love them with unsurpassing passion and generosity. God, however, never tires of looking to befriend us; God never tires of hearing our worries and concerns, and even the sins of which we are weighed down and overburdened. Yet, the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ call us to recognise this

reality. In this Year of Mercy may we hear once more: “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.” (Jn 8:11)

I invite you to join with me as we make this pilgrimage of grace through the coming year, so that we may all become ambassadors of Gospel mercy. Whatever your state in life and whatever the circumstances in which you find yourself, embark with me as a humble pilgrim of mercy this year. Let our words be: compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, and simple trust.

May we learn to show real patience to the conflicts and pressures of our family, friends and neighbours, and be bearers of mercy to them, remembering that justice and mercy go together. Justice is attentive to the truth of a situation, and mercy is always attentive to the truth of the persons involved. By showing others mercy, we show them the truth not just of themselves, but of the Lord who loves us.

Our Diocesan family will celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy in a number of ways that are detailed overleaf.

Let us pray for one another as we embark on this beautiful pilgrimage of mercy over the year ahead. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy!” (Matt 5:7)

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Bishop of Broken Bay