

2025: A New Year, and a Jubilee

As the children return to school in January, we will take time when praying together to reflect on the passing of another year and to look forward to the events of 2025.

This year is particularly important for us all as The Pope has declared a Jubilee year.

On Christmas Eve, he ceremonially opened the great door of St Peter's Basilica to mark the start of the Jubilee.

So what is a Jubilee, and how should it inform our intentions for 2025?

We normally consider a Jubilee to mark a milestone in the reign of the monarch, and her late majesty Elizabeth II was fortunate to celebrate a silver, gold and diamond and platinum jubilee in her long reign.

In the Church, the Jubilee is usually celebrated every twenty-five or fifty years. A pontiff can call a Jubilee for a number of different reasons. For example, in 1933 Pope Pius XI declared a Jubilee to commemorate the 1900th anniversary of the Passion. The most recent Jubilee was in 2000, and called the 'Great Jubilee'.

Pope Francis calls us to look forward in this Jubilee year with renewed energy, enthusiasm and hope. It is a time for reconciliation. We can all take stock of our place in the Church, and what we can do to deepen our faith and the faith of those around us. For those with the means and who are well enough, the faithful are encouraged to travel to Rome to gain an indulgence. Doors of the great Cathedrals of Christendom will be opened, so a shorter pilgrimage is possible.

The theme of this Jubilee is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. Pope Francis has recognised that with the darkness in the world at the moment, we may be discouraged. He urges us all to look forward with hope, and to strive to include Jesus in our lives at every opportunity. He has written, *"For everyone, may the jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere, and to all as 'our hope.'"*

In our school, we will be following a programme of events that mirror the grander activity in Rome. Our first simple step is to decorate the doors of each classroom, and throw them wide open in an act of welcome and friendship. In each month of 2025, the children will engage with one activity to deepen their relationship with God, in a spirit of hope.

What can be done from the family home? Keeping a close eye on activities in our parishes is important. Also, we are fortunate to have St George's Cathedral in Southwark and Westminster Cathedral close by, so a visit in this special year is appropriate. Greater involvement in parish life is something we can all do. It is important to remember that we can be facilitators to help our children understand the importance of this special year.

I wish you all a happy new year, and the opportunity to enjoy the Jubilee, and to look forward in hope.

The official Vatican pages for the Jubilee start here:

<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en.html>