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THE JUBILEE YEAR ENDS, THE WORK OF MERCY GOES ON

At the beginning of the Jubilee Year members of the Mercy family gathered at the doors of our sacred spaces to welcome the holy year and the possibilities it held for us. As the year comes to a close, we gather again, this time to give thanks for all we have experienced and shared as we mark the ending of this specially designated time. But we do this with the conviction that the work of Mercy never ends. You are invited to use this prayer creatively, to adapt it to local circumstances and to enhance it in any way you choose.

Begin with a welcome. You might recall the ceremony last year as the holy doors were blessed and opened, or some special things that have happened in your location or other places. You could mention the wonderful images that Mercy ENews provided of ceremonies to open the doors. You might mention the Mercy International Reflection Process which formed a bond across the Mercy world as groups focused on hearing the cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor.

The primary image for this prayer is a door that remains open so please include in your introduction the reality that, for those of us called to Mercy, the work of Mercy goes on, even though this special year comes to an end. To emphasize this point, this prayer is structured on the prayer for the opening of the doors and even repeats some of the same elements. The things that we prayed for, the tasks to which we committed ourselves are the same as they were then. We gather to recognize that fact and to take up, once again, that work.

Sing: "What Mercy May Yet Be" Verses 1 and 2
Text and music by Cynthia Serjak, RSM. 2003

Reading 1. Four optional readings are provided or you could substitute one of your own choosing.

Response: "Open Wide the Doors" John Angotti

You can use just the refrain or the whole song. The verses are in both Spanish and English

Reading 2. From the optional readings

Reflection/Homily

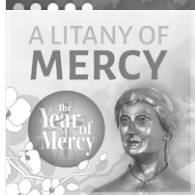
You could invite someone to reflect on the reading or, if it's feasible, invite the group to go back to the questions posed last year. You might ask the group to reflect on how they have answered these questions in their living this year

- What do we hope Mercy will open in the coming year?
- What thresholds does Mercy need to cross?
- What door of Mercy can you enter?

Ends and Ongoing

A poem by Mary Wickham RSM

The great door in Rome will be sealed,
jubilee revert to ordinary,
and the surge of Mercy words subside to quieter waters.
But we, who are claimed by the word and carry it as name,
we will stir the waters and make yet the ordinary jubilant,
since every year is of God's favour, every day waits for mercy.
We will not close the Door of Mercy.
We will stand as keepers, attuned, disposed.



We will hold the door ajar for the desperate and the disruptive, the stray and the strange, the wounded wise and the child old too soon. They are looking for the door, waiting by the door, hoping for the door, and we must, with them, and for them, keep faith.

We will not close the Door of Mercy. There will be room at our inn, we will make space at the table, the cooking pot holds ample. Through the door is feast and safety, hope and shelter. My friend, one of the wounded wise, says: You only have to knock once and you only have to knock lightly. The God of mercy, whose door it is, is always home.

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The Work of Mercy Goes On

To prepare for this part of the prayer, you will need to decorate a small box –like a shoe box and weight it in some way. At this point in the prayer, ask participants to write on a small piece of paper something they commit to doing that will keep the doors of Mercy open and to put it in the box. During the singing of the final song use the box to prop the door open as a symbol of ongoing work of Mercy.

Intercession

Leader: At the opening of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, we gathered in our holy places and prayed for the energy and the courage to “take up the joyful call to mercy” and to respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers. Conscious that these needs continue to call out for our response, we ask once again – **May we be signs of your mercy.**

Your people thirst for justice, for clean water—and so we pray: **May we be signs of your mercy.**

Your people long to be known, they long for a homeland, for right relationships, for welcome. They long to see your face,—and so we pray: **May we be signs of your mercy.**

Your people suffer from ills of body, mind and spirit. Your Earth suffers from pollution and degradation—and so we pray: **May we be signs of your mercy.**

Your people are imprisoned in unjust structures and political regimes, in dangerous relationships, in demeaning work environments. Your people seek compassion, comfort, companionship and counsel—and so we pray: **May we be signs of your mercy.**

We come to the end of this Jubilee Year, so conscious of the ongoing and insistent cries for Mercy in our world. For ears attentive to those cries, hearts of compassion and hands ready to respond we pray: **May we be signs of your mercy.**

Invite additional prayers

Concluding Prayer

Our good God, as we bring to a close this Jubilee Year of Mercy, we thank you for the insights and graces that have accompanied our observances. May the doors of our hearts, the doors of our lives remain open and ready to be living signs of your welcoming presence. We pray for the generosity and courage needed to enfold your mercy in our world and our prayer is filled with trust for we know that your love calls forth our action. And to this we say: Amen.

Concluding Song

What Mercy May Yet Be

Verses 3 and 4

What Mercy may yet be is wanting to come free. It's hard to know what must let go and how we shall agree.

How Mercy may be formed is gospel in its core. The path unfolds in minds and souls and shapes us more and more.

What Mercy may yet be is bound in Trinity: Creating, saving, all embracing presence of the Three. How Mercy may yet serve is wisdom to be earned. As God allows, our time is no to God's will let us turn.

Become the door of Mercy through which those who enter experience the love of God.

Pope Francis