



JUBILEE OF MERCY MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION



Opening of the Holy Door in Saint Peter's Basilica

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At 11:10 on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica. Immediately before, in the atrium, he greeted Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

The two embraced and exchanged a few words. Ratzinger was the first pilgrim to cross through the Holy Door. There were more than 200 celebrants for the rite of opening the door, and the readings and prayers of the faithful were multilingual: in Spanish, Italian, English, Chinese, Arabic, French, Swahili, and Malayalam.

“Entering through this Door signifies discovering the depths of the mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out to meet each one personally. It is he who seeks us! It is he who comes to meet us! This will be Year in which to grow in our assurance of mercy. How much wrong is done to God and to his grace when we affirm above all that sins are punished by his justice, without first affirming that they are pardoned by his mercy (cfr. Augustine, *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 12, 24)!” – declared Pope Francis - “But that is the truth. We have to put mercy before judgment, and in any event God's judgement will always be in the light of his mercy. In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love, of tenderness. Let us set aside all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. Instead, let us experience the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things”.