



YEAR OF MERCY PILGRIMAGE RESOURCE

Archdiocese of Wellington

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Acknowledgements

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CONTENTS

Why Pilgrimage?	4
We are a pilgrim people, and pilgrimage is integral to this Year of Mercy.	
What Is Pilgrimage?	5
Pilgrimage is a journey that takes us closer to God.	
The Pilgrimage Experience	6
Prayer, song, reflection, travel together.	
Doors Of Mercy	7
For the Jubilee Year, each diocese has its own holy doors of mercy, as well as the Great Doors in Rome, so that all pilgrims may enter them, even if they can't travel to Rome. Our doors are at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, on Hill Street, in Wellington.	
Where To Go?	8
There are many sites in our Diocese which offer inspiring examples of the merciful works of others in honour of God.	
What Next?	9
After pilgrimage, we resolve to show mercy to others.	
Planning a Pilgrimage	10
What needs to be considered when planning?	
Resources	14
Music, books, websites, apps.	



WHY PILGRIMAGE?

Part of a Holy Year

A pilgrimage is a natural and integral part of any Holy Year. Pope Francis calls pilgrimage “one of the People of God’s most eloquent expressions of faith”.

Pilgrimage represents our personal life journey and enables a step-by-step approach towards the destination. A pilgrim can travel alone or with others, but there is always a sense of being in partnership with those who share a common goal.

Pilgrimages during the Year of Mercy bring people from the ‘four corners’ to pass through the ‘holy door of mercy’, arriving as returning children to a loving and merciful Father. This year, Pope Francis invites “everyone, each according to his or her ability, [...] to make a pilgrimage’. (*Misericordia Vultus*, 14)

Part of our Christian Journey

As Christians, we are part of a pilgrim Church, journeying to the fullness of the Kingdom as we each partake in our personal journey with Christ. As human pilgrims, our earthly bodies are what carry us through our spiritual journey to oneness with God. We are reminded that just as Christ is both human and God, our spiritual journey relies upon our human body. Walking helps to ground us in our humanity, so we are reminded that we are called upon to fulfill Christ’s will here on earth, alongside others.

A physical pilgrimage gives us a break from the distractions of our daily lives and helps us to regain our focus on what is important. The challenge of the journey strengthens us both physically and spiritually and gives us the opportunity to make a journey alongside the Lord.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...

...giving light to those who walk in darkness and the shadow of death

...guiding our feet onto the path of peace. [cf Luke 1:79]

WHAT IS PILGRIMAGE FOR US?

Pilgrimage is about the journeying

A pilgrimage is a ritual journey with a sacred purpose. It is not the journey of a tourist, but every step of the journey has its own meaning. The journey itself, travelled with Jesus, leads us to conversion, so that we can see the mercy of God in our lives, and be vessels for sharing God's mercy with others.

Pilgrimage requires commitment

Pilgrimage is not meant to be easy. This is appropriate, because as Pope Francis reminds us, mercy "requires dedication and sacrifice". We must reject sin and selfish desires. Our efforts help prepare us to meet God's grace, through which we are transformed. Our own sacrifice reminds us of our solidarity with those who most need God's mercy: those suffering in our midst. Our physical hunger and thirst, our longing for rest when we arrive at our destination reflects our hunger and thirst for God's mercy and peace in our lives.

True pilgrimage is also a prayer, a communication with the Giver, and it becomes a time of thanksgiving. As we journey, we pray, we sing, and we reflect.

Our arrival at our destination intensifies our thanksgiving, as God welcomes us and embraces us like the father of the prodigal son. We come to see mercy as the priceless gift that it is.



THE PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE

Each pilgrimage is different, but this is what a typical one might look like.

Before the pilgrimage

A parish meeting beforehand can help confirm who is planning to come on the pilgrimage and will give everyone information to help them to prepare.

Gathering

On the day of the pilgrimage, it is good to gather together. Praying together, singing together, and reflecting together on the meaning of the pilgrimage will bring the group together into one people and help form an awareness of the Spirit, who is always in our midst when we gather in God's name.

It may be helpful to have a gathering time as well as a clearly stated departure time.

The walk

A typical pilgrimage will be 1–2 hours long, although a longer or shorter route may be chosen as appropriate for the group. It can be difficult to keep large numbers of people together, so a few selected meeting points along the route will allow everyone to regroup. At these points, singing and communal prayer can help the group to refocus on the journey they are on, and the graces flowing from the pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage is communal, so sharing with one another during the walk is valuable. People may wish to discuss their reasons for coming on the pilgrimage, other pilgrimages they have taken, experiences of mercy they have had, or ways in which they hope to be part of sharing God's mercy in the future. Of course, the travelling together is also a time for learning about one another in other ways, and becoming closer to those we are journeying with; however it is important not to let the travel become merely a vehicle for casual conversation. Being mindful of the purpose of the journey and allowing others time for silent reflection and prayer is important.

Concluding

If possible, the pilgrimage will end at a church or other place where a liturgy is possible. Ideally the sacrament of Reconciliation will also be available to participants as a precious step in recognising God's mercy in our lives. After receiving the sacrament, we are renewed to continue our own journey of mercy, remembering Christ is always alongside us.

DOORS OF MERCY

The doors of Jesus' heart are always open

Pope Francis invites each of us to make a pilgrimage during this Holy Year of Mercy. In *Misericordiae Vultus* (14), he speaks of the holy doors open throughout the world. "By crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God's mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us."

There are holy doors in each diocese in New Zealand, since travelling to Rome is not possible for most. Bishop Drennan speaks of these doors as highlighting "the sense of pilgrimage and destination, and fits with Christ's own description of himself as a door or gateway (John 10:7) through whom we meet the merciful Father".

The Doors of Mercy for the Archdiocese of Wellington are part of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Hill St, Wellington. Located within the cathedral, they are glass doors linking the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to the main body of the church. They were blessed and opened on 8 December 2015. As well as being the formal beginning of the Holy Year and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, this date also marks the annual consecration of the Archdiocese to the protection of Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mother of Mercy. (The full title of the cathedral is the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St Mary His Mother.)

Throughout this special Holy Year there is an invitation for all to journey to the cathedral and enter the the holy doors is not the however. We are called doors to cross into other encounter the face of marginalised, physically



Doors of Mercy. Entering end of our journey to emerge from these doors, where we God in the poor and or spiritually.

SITES OF MERCY

Within Aotearoa, we have many examples of those who have practised works of mercy. Sites where they worked or where their lives have been commemorated are also ideal for pilgrimage, and can inspire us to reflect on our own actions. Do we welcome refugees? Care for the hungry? Minister to those in need?

This is just a small number of these sites. Each local community will have many more.

Sites for pilgrimage

Doors of Mercy, Sacred Heart Cathedral

This door is a focus for pilgrimage within our Archdiocese during this Year of Mercy. Passing through a holy door is a ritual act of conversion.

Sisters of Compassion Creche, Wellington

The first purpose-built creche in New Zealand, built by the Sisters of Compassion to care for the children of the working poor.



Catholic Cemetery, Ohariu Valley

This was set beside St Joseph's Chapel, on land donated by Joseph and Harriet Bassett, and built as a memorial to Bishop Viard. <http://goo.gl/cvUHxr>

Plaque to the Polish Refugee Children, Frank KiRs Park, Wellington

During World War II, 838 Polish children and their caregivers were given refuge in New Zealand, many eventually becoming citizens.

Garin Memorial Chapel, Wakapuaka, Nelson

Burial place of Fr Antoine Garin, who tirelessly ministered to the Nelson region in the early settler days of Aotearoa New Zealand, building many churches and schools.

St Mary's Pukekaraka, Otaki

The oldest Catholic church in continual use in Aotearoa New Zealand, and one of the early mission sites in this country.



Mount Street Cemetery, Wellington

The first cemetery in Wellington for Catholic burials. It contains the graves of the first nuns and priests in Wellington.

WHAT NEXT?

**“We are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us”
(Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*,9)**

A pilgrimage allows us to examine the role of God’s mercy in our own life and in the life and history of our community. As we return from our pilgrimage, we ourselves are called to show mercy as we continue the pilgrimage of our lives.

How can we live out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in our daily lives?
How can I make a difference? What group could I serve with in my community?
In what way will the graces we receive on our pilgrimage inspire us to show mercy to others?

Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit those in prison
- Comfort the sick
- Bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Admonish the sinner
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive offenses willingly
- Pray for the living and the dead

PLANNING YOUR PILGRIMAGE

Each parish and group within our diocese is encouraged to participate in a pilgrimage, either to the Holy Doors at Sacred Heart Cathedral or to other sites of mercy within the diocese. Planning well beforehand will allow those on the pilgrimage to focus on their spiritual experience. These suggestions and questions are not the definitive answers, but are designed to help your thinking as you plan your own pilgrimage.

How will the pilgrimage be promoted and to whom?

Is it intended as a full parish experience, or are there groups within the parish, perhaps the Catholic Women's League, Passionist Family Groups, a regular rosary group etc, who would like to undertake their own journey?

Giving people plenty of notice is helpful so they can prepare and can encourage others to come along as well.

Who will be on the pilgrimage?

Try to get a sense of the numbers who will be attending and the range of abilities of those interested. Are they avid walkers, or will some need assistance or only be able to walk short distances? Will there be children?

Route

The best route depends on who will be on the pilgrimage, and how many will be coming along. Try to consider:

- *The route and accessibility.* Depending on who will be on the pilgrimage, a route that takes about 1–1.5 hours is recommended. This will give a total time of 2 hours or so including gathering at the beginning and end of the journey. Shorter or longer routes may be appropriate depending on the sites of mercy that are chosen, the fitness of the pilgrims, and the ruggedness of the route itself. How will people know the exact route, especially if they drop back from the leaders? Perhaps maps of the route would be helpful.

The route should be planned to ensure that it can be walked safely by the numbers attending, with an eye to footpaths, traffic, and road crossings. Are there resting spots? If the weather is poor, will the walk still be possible? Is wind likely to be a factor (especially near Wellington!) Does it require a significant climb? How will you support those who can't do the full walk?

If it is in an urban area, could crowds be a problem along the route?

One or two gathering points along the route, perhaps at a reserve or a church or holy site along the way will give people a chance to regroup, and to pray and reflect together again. Try to ensure that those who arrive last at the gathering points (ie the slowest among your group) have a chance to rest before the group moves on again.

- *Endpoints.* It is recommended, if possible, the pilgrimage conclude at a church, as that is most suitable for the sacrament of Reconciliation and a closing liturgy. This will depend, however, on the route chosen and the reasons for choosing this route.

When choosing endpoints: where will you start from? How will everyone gather? What is the significance of the starting place? It may just be a large parking lot, or you may wish to start at another holy place, such as a local church or cemetery. Is parking available? How will people get from the end back to the start? At the end, is there a suitable waiting place for those who were not able to walk but want to join in the final prayer?

People may want to carpool to the start and leave their cars at the endpoint or vice versa, depending on parking availability.

If it is a large group—(over 150 – and will be gathering in a public space, event permits may be necessary. Your local council can advise on this.

- *Public and private spaces.* There are many places in our communities where works of mercy take place, such as hospitals, nursing homes, homeless shelters etc. While we wish to honour those who help others, it is important not to single out those they help in any way that diminishes their dignity, or imposes a loss of privacy on them. For this reason, it would not be appropriate to gather in or directly in front of such institutions. (Most of them are not public spaces.) A possible exception could be if the pilgrimage were to occur when the place was not in use, for example, when a soup kitchen is closed, or when only staff were present, but even then, respect would dictate clearing it with the organisation first.

If a route is chosen that goes past such places, a silent acknowledgement and thanks for the mercy shown, while continuing to walk, would probably be most appropriate.

Arrival

Arrival at the end of a pilgrimage is a special time mark marked by a spirit of reconciliation with God. Traditionally the sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to the pilgrims, if the pilgrimage ends at a church. If so, this will need to be discussed with the pastoral team(s) beforehand.

If the final destination is not a church, a formal liturgy to mark the arrival is still appropriate. You will need a suitable place (preferably indoors), to accommodate the pilgrims. If the destination is a location like a retirement home or hospital, of course, that will require discussion and permission from the facility managers.

Liturgy

The liturgies, the prayerful gathering together at beginning, end, and possibly at other times during the pilgrimage, are key elements of the pilgrimage. They remind us that we are there because of God's grace and mercy, and that it is through God's loving support that we continue on our journeys. They also draw us together and remind us that we are one people in God.

The liturgies might include any or all of

- Opening prayer
- Reading
- Psalm
- Hymn
- Reflective music (perhaps with a powerpoint projection if in a suitable space)
- Communal prayer
- Closing prayer and sending off.

If the pilgrimage does not include a church or building where projections are possible, then music and prayers that are known to the group, for example Taizé style chants, the Lord's prayer, etc. reduce the need for handouts to the group which would need to be carried and later disposed of.

Supplies

People may want to bring water, warm jackets, hats and sunscreen, particularly if longer distances are involved. A leader should also bring a small first aid kit. Ideally, a qualified first aider should be part of the group.

Return

How will the pilgrims return from the endpoint? Is there public transport available, should a bus be hired to return the pilgrims, or can vehicles be relayed to the endpoint ahead of time? What time of day will the return be? (Will it be after dark?)

Leaders and supporters

For a communal pilgrimage, travelling together is an important part of the journey. People both to lead and to bring up the rear will help ensure that the group stays together, and that no one gets lost or left behind. In a busy urban area, you may wish to have others within the group helping ensure no one is lost. For those unable to do the walk, having someone at the endpoint to wait with them, and lead prayers, reflection and songs, possibly with powerpoint presentations or images from the walk, will help them to remain connected to the community. It is essential that the leaders and supporters are attuned to the needs of those on the pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage is meant to be a challenge, but not one that endangers the health or well-being of those participating, however uncomplaining they may be.

Possible roles for leaders:

- *Logistics.* Route planning, arranging for first aid kit, water, maps, etc.
- *Communication.* Notifying the parish community of the event, keeping people informed of plans, ensuring that helpers all have the information they need, checking that those at the pilgrimage sites (beginning, ending, waypoints) know of the pilgrimage and that it is suitable, and that those on the pilgrimage are aware of what they will need to bring (sunscreen, jackets, water etc), and liaising with pastoral teams.
- *Liturgy.* Planning (alongside the pastoral team) liturgies at the start and end of the pilgrimage, arranging for priests to be available for Reconciliation, liaising with any musicians who will be needed for the pilgrimage or liturgies, ensuring that any materials (prayer sheets etc) are available.
- *Pastoral care.* People to walk on the pilgrimage, seeing to the needs of the pilgrims, including ensuring that people stay in groups, that everyone is well, that stops occur as needed along the route. Another person at the end to meet with any who may arrive early, for example by vehicle if they can't walk the whole route, can support them, and ensure the ending place is ready for the pilgrims.

Communication between these and other supporters of the pilgrimage will need to be good throughout the process, particularly during planning.

RESOURCES

Music

Music has the power to touch us deeply, open us to the Holy Spirit, and feel the love and mercy of God more tenderly. Music can be used on pilgrimage at the beginning, to help us focus on our coming journey, during the walk itself, or during any liturgy at the destination. Hymns and songs can connect us to one another, making us aware of God in each other, and instrumental music can help us to deepen our meditation and prayers. Here is some suggested music for pilgrimage.

Servant Song (Gillard)

Lord Jesus of You I will Sing (L'Arche/Somerville)

I will Sweep away your Transgressions (Salo)

Amazing Grace (Traditional)

Bread of Mercy (Holst/Lyons) (attached)

Misericordes Sicut Pater (Inwood) [The official hymn of the Year of Mercy.]

<http://goo.gl/1Q2A3p>

Blessed are the Merciful (Blycharz/Kurylewski) [Official hymn of WYD 2016]

<http://goo.gl/Fsk64l>

Te Wā (Rodgers, Howard, Bhatnagar) [Written for use in New Zealand schools and colleges]

<http://goo.gl/SrR6yo>

A very comprehensive list of music suitable for use during the Year of Mercy may be found in the document *Hikoi of Mercy*, published by the National Liturgy Office.

<http://goo.gl/jwlj9h>

Apps

There are apps for mobile devices which focus on the Year of Mercy, including :

365 Days to Mercy <https://goo.gl/jzFrnO>

Mercy-ing <https://goo.gl/TVHd63>

There are many other apps which offer support for prayer, meditation and many other aspects of spiritual life. This site has a good overview of Catholic apps. <https://catholicapptitude.org/prayer-apps-catholic/>

Podcasts

Podcasts allow one to listen to spoken word programmes, such as radio broadcasts. These can be a help to reflection and prayer. Some podcasts are regular reflections on the Year of Mercy, such as

<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/xt3-podcast-holy-year-mercy/id1074500196?mt=2>

while there are also web pages which collect lists of Year of Mercy-related podcasts

Written resources

***The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* by Henry Nouwen** uses Rembrandt's portrait of *The Prodigal Son* to explore our journey home to the Father. Reflective questions and notes are available alongside this book.

***Jesus: A Pilgrimage* by James Martin, S.J.** Through an account of two Jesuits' pilgrimage through the Holy Land in the footsteps of Jesus, it explores Jesus' life, taking the reader on a pilgrimage which leads to a deeper closeness with the Lord.

***Magnificat Year of Mercy Companion*.** (Ebook, available Kindle, Nook, iTunes) Daily resources to help you to encounter God's mercy, including poems, prayers, meditations from the saints, Catholic teaching, and reflections on scripture passages.

There are also many other written resources for the Year of Mercy. *Hikoi of Mercy*, a resource from the National Liturgy Office lists many of these. <http://catholic.org.nz/uploads/projects/109-c9f2b42f/user-assets/files/NLO/Year%20of%20Mercy/Hikoi%20of%20Mercy%20Final.pdf>

BREAD OF MERCY Fr James Lyons (to the tune of Holst's *Jupiter*)

In the search for peace and happiness we travel many paths
Some are filled with great delight and joy and some are very dark
In the darkness new light glimmers, gaze in wonder stand in awe
For the God of mercy beckons, come join the festival.
Bring whatever has been in your life and caused an aching heart
Lay it down before the Mercy Seat and watch the dark depart.

There are times in every lifetime when the past becomes a threat
And we doubt there's been forgiveness for what now disturbs our rest.
Tears of sorrow tell of hunger for the bread that will refresh
And a feast so rich in mercy restores a soul depressed
Though we've wandered far away from home, no need to be afraid
The bread of mercy speaks for us, our ransom has been paid.

At the table set before us, everyone can find a place
And the festive bread of mercy becomes a gift of grace.
By this food we can be strengthened, every daughter every son
In the splendour of this banquet, a new life has begun.
For the saving work of Jesus Christ let's fear and hurt be shed
And forgiveness served from grateful hearts, becomes our daily bread.

[Music from *The Planets*, by Gustav Holst (1874–1934)]

[Words by James B Lyons 2015, for the Year of Mercy 2015–2016]