

# Holy Year Reconciliation and Renewal

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

We should all have advanced gradually towards a more harmonious and renewed atmosphere in the period since the Hong Kong diocese commenced celebrating the Holy Year. Our Holy Father Paul VI has told us many times that reconciliation and true renewal must begin with ourselves and from our innermost hearts. First of all, we must reconcile ourselves with our brothers and sisters around us; then, we must reconcile ourselves with the Lord. As the scripture says: “Be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back to offer thy gift” (Mt. 5:24). If we really practice reconciliation and internal renewal, every action of ours will show forth that which we are practicing. The eight Beatitudes taught by Our Lord should be the model for our internal renewal. The spirit of the Beatitudes should be expressed in concrete action. “The poor in spirit, those who mourn, the gentle, those who hunger and thirst for what is right, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peace-makers, those who are persecuted in the cause of right” are always happy. This happiness they enjoy in their hearts is the fruit of practicing the Beatitudes. Consequently the faithful of God who take the Beatitudes as their model in life are “the salt of the earth”, “the light of the World” (Mt. 5:13-14)

To help the people of God of this diocese to practice in depth an internal renewal, the Diocesan Holy Year Committee has planned a variety of activities. On the Second Sunday of Advent, 9 December, at 3.30 p.m. a penitential rite will be held both in the Cathedral, Caine Road, and in St. Teresa’s Church, Kowloon. A penitential rite corresponds perfectly to the spirit of Advent. Now we invite all the Catholics, religious and priests of Hong Kong to make a pilgrimage to the churches and take part in this holy exercise. Such participation, shows forth reconciliation, first in the whole Church of Hong Kong and then in society, and so bears witness to reconciliation with all mankind.

In virtue of Pope Paul VI’s declaration to the Churches of the whole world, from the beginning of Advent this year onward the faithful who take part, individually or in groups, in pilgrimages to these two churches, may obtain the “gift of the indulgence”. This indulgence is an expression of the free gift of God to man. It is also designed to emphasize that, the faithful, having obtained this gift of God, are enabled to act towards their brothers and sisters in such a way so as to show God’s love and concern for them. As St. John said: “Our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active” (I John 3:18). Therefore if we want to gain the indulgences of the Holy Year our prayers must match our actions. Prayer means that we, individually or in groups, should meditate, examine our daily lives, attend Holy Mass, and cultivate a sense of belonging to the Church. We can go on pilgrimage to the Cathedral, Caine Road, or to St. Teresa’s Church, Kowloon. During the pilgrimage suitable devotional exercises may be performed - a Bible service for instance, or the Way of the Cross or the recitation of the Rosary, or a penitential rite.

Practical action can take the form of social work, either individually or collectively, for example visiting the sick, the poor, and the old, serving them and supporting them materially and morally. In addition to all these good works we may also study the Gospel

individually or collectively, and take part in various parish activities.

May you, our brothers and sisters in Christ, take advantage of all the Holy Year activities to affect an internal renewal so as to become messengers of reconciliation for all.

+ Bishop Peter Lei  
Vicar Capitular of Hong Kong  
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