Pilgrims of Hope

Jubilee Newsletter



The Jubilee of Hope and Living God's Grace by the Most Reverend Edward C. Malesic, Bishop of Cleveland

My dear friends in Christ,

The end of the calendar year typically serves as a catalyst for remembrance and reflection on the joyful happenings of the months that have gone before. This year is no exception. The year 2025 was designated by the Church as a Jubilee Holy Year, the 2,025th anniversary of the Incarnation of our Lord, an "event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church." Pope Francis designated the 2025 Holy Year as a time to renew ourselves as "Pilgrims of Hope," a theme meant to fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision.

Here in the Diocese of Cleveland, we worked hard to live that motto throughout this past year through prayer, processions, pilgrimages to sacred sites, holy Mass and dedicating ourselves to being ambassadors of hope through Jesus Christ, who is the hope of the world and light in our darkness.

I offer my sincere gratitude to all those, our clergy, religious, diocesan and parish staffs, and all the faithful, whose tireless efforts made the celebration of this special Jubilee a truly extraordinary year, filled with the immense joy and hope we have in Christ Jesus. Now, let us go forth into this coming new year 2026 continuing to live our lives as fervent witnesses to the boundless grace of God which we have received, sharing His grace with one another.

May God bless you and those you love.

+ Edward C. Malesia



Witnesses of Hope St. Stephen

St. Stephen is widely known as the first Christian martyr and is recorded as being a great preacher and miracle worker, but his prominence gained him enemies among the members of the synagogue. They accused him of blasphemy and conjured up false stories about his guilt. But Stephen spoke of the prophets and the history of Israel, proclaiming that Jesus came to fulfill the law of Moses. At the conclusion of his defense, he looked up and saw a vision of Christ sitting at the right hand of God; upon hearing this, the Jews carried him out of the city and stoned him to death. Stephen's last words were a prayer asking God's mercy upon those who killed him.

St. Stephen's witness to the faith is perhaps the most striking as he did not have the example of other Christian martyrs before him, besides the witness of Christ Himself. Yet Stephen was not afraid, and clung close to the example of Our Lord, making his final words mimic those of Christ on the Cross. Stephen did not shy away from proclaiming the Gospel, even when doing so put him in danger; may his witness, the first witness of a Christian, give us the hope and strength to preach the truth in charity, even – and especially – when it may be uncomfortable. May St. Stephen intercede for us so that we may likewise obtain the sanctity he has received.

Joy in the Everyday

God's love for us is endless, as we will experience again in the birth of his Son, Jesus. Because of this love, he wants us to feel joy in our lives. As we journey through Advent and the end of the year, it is a good time to take stock of the joy we have experienced as a gift from God. As a family, prepare and decorate a joy jar or basket and during the month have family members fill it with small notes of things that have brought joy and happiness, or helped see God's presence. This can include memories from throughout the year or moments during the month. At the dinner table each week, or on New Year's Eve, take time as a family to read and talk about the joys that have been added. As you relive these memories, thank God for the depth of joy you have had in just one year!



"GOD PUT US IN THE WORLD TO KNOW, TO LOVE, AND TO SERVE HIM, AND SO TO COME TO PARADISE."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1721

Jubilee Sites

Please prayerfully consider participating in a pilgrimage with your family before the closing of the Jubilee on December 28.

- Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Cleveland
- Immaculate Conception Parish, Madison
- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Lorain
- Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, Euclid
- Queen of Heaven Parish, Uniontown
- Queen of the Holy Rosary Shrine, Parma Heights
- · Shrine of Saint Ann, Highland Heights
- · St. Edward Parish. Ashland
- St. Colette Parish, Brunswick
- St. Mary Parish, Chardon
- · Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Doylestown

How does being a Pilgrim of Hope lead to Joy?

As we come to the close of the Jubilee of Hope, we remember that we have been invited to renew our faith with hearts full of trust in God's promises. One of the most powerful ways we can witness that in this holy year is by living the fruit of the Holy Spirit - joy. Unlike fleeting happiness, joy is rooted in our confidence in God's love and the hope of eternal life. It remains steady, even in times of trial, because it springs from Christ's victory over sin and death. We live this joy by embracing gratitude in daily life, celebrating the gift of the Sacraments, and sharing God's goodness with others. A joyful heart is contagious; it encourages, uplifts, and reminds the world that hope is alive. By showing joy in our families, parishes, and communities, we become living witnesses of the Gospel, shining the light of Christ and continuing to draw others closer to Him even beyond the Jubilee of Hope.



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