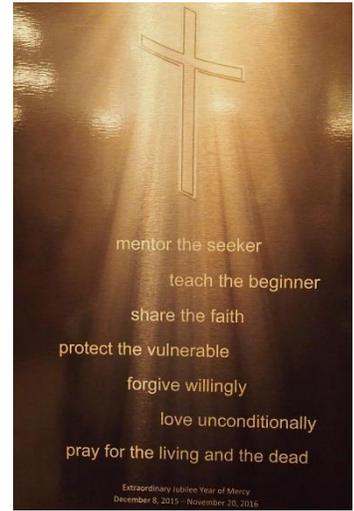


Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP



Mercy Within Mercy Within Mercy

December 22, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ of the Diocese of Saskatoon,

Grace and peace to you in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose birth we are about to celebrate.

In an address given yesterday, Dec. 21st, in Rome, Pope Francis noted that "Christmas is truly the feast of God's infinite mercy." He went on to quote a homily from St. Augustine, expressing how great a mercy it was that the One who can fill our thirst became thirsty, the One who was all-powerful took on human weakness, the One who was the source of life embraced death. "All this he did to assuage our hunger, alleviate our longing, strengthen our weaknesses, wipe out our sins and enkindle our charity."

Friends in Christ, this year our Christmas celebration is shaped by the Jubilee Year of Mercy which is now upon us. At the Cathedral of the Holy Family, at St. Paul's Co-Cathedral, and at several other places in the diocese, holy doors have been opened and ways of marking the year of mercy have been initiated. The photographs on the right and left of this letter, depicting the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, are from the engraved plates which decorate the holy doors at the Cathedral, under the banner of 'mercy within mercy'.

With the birth of Jesus, mercy takes flesh in an altogether extraordinary and intimate way. May we know and be touched by that mercy in our liturgies, our worship, and our family celebrations of the Lord's birth. And may that same mercy also take flesh in our lives, that those we live and work with, and all who come across our paths, may experience something of the mercy which we ourselves have encountered. Pope Francis extends the challenge in this way: "What good would it do to open all the Holy Doors of all the basilicas in the world if the doors of our own heart are closed to love, if our hands are closed to giving, if our homes are closed to hospitality and our churches to welcome and acceptance?"

Wishing you profound joy as you celebrate the great feast of the Incarnation, and the generous blessings of God on you and all you hold in your heart in the new year about to begin.

Yours in the Christ Child,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Bolen".

† Donald Bolen

Bishop of Saskatoon