



WHAT IS THE JUBILEE?

“Jubilee” is the name given to a particular year; the name comes from the instrument used to mark its launch. In this case, the instrument in question is the *yobel*, the ram's horn, used to proclaim the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This (Jewish) holiday occurs every year, but it takes on special significance when it marks the beginning of a Jubilee year. We can find an early indication of it in the Bible: a Jubilee year was to be marked every 50 years, since this would be an “extra” year, one which would happen every seven weeks of seven years, i.e., every 49 years (cf. Leviticus 25:8-13). Even though it wasn't easy to organise, it was intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, and involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields.

Quoting the prophet Isaiah, the Gospel of Luke describes Jesus' mission in this way: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord,” (Luke 4:18-19; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus lives out these words in his daily life, in his encounters with others and in his relationships, all of which bring about liberation and conversion.

In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII called the first Jubilee, also known as a “Holy Year,” since it is a time in which God's holiness transforms us. The frequency of Holy Years has changed over time: at first, they were celebrated every 100 years; later, in 1343 Pope Clement VI reduced the gap between Jubilees to every 50 years, and in 1470 Pope Paul II made it every 25 years. There have also been “extraordinary” Holy Years: for example, in 1933 Pope Pius XI chose to commemorate the 1900th anniversary of the Redemption, and in 2015 Pope Francis proclaimed the Year of Mercy as an extraordinary jubilee. The way in which Jubilee Years are marked has also changed through the centuries: originally the Holy Year consisted of a pilgrimage to the Roman Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, later other signs were added, such as the Holy Door. By participating in the Holy Year, one is granted a plenary indulgence.

THE JUBILEE LOGO

The logo shows four stylized figures, representing all of humanity, coming from the four corners of the earth. They embrace each other to indicate the solidarity and fraternity which should unite all peoples. The figure at the front is holding onto the cross. It is not only the sign of the faith which this lead figure embraces, but also of hope, which can never be abandoned, because we are always in need of hope, especially in our moments of greatest need. There are the rough waves under the figures, symbolising the fact that life's pilgrimage does not always go smoothly in calm waters. Often the circumstances of daily life and events in the wider world require a greater call to hope. That's why we should pay special attention to the lower part of the cross which has been elongated and turned into the shape of an anchor which is let down into the waves. The anchor is well known as a symbol of hope. In maritime jargon the ‘anchor of hope’ refers to the reserve anchor used by vessels involved in emergency manoeuvres to stabilise the ship during storms. It is worth noting that the image illustrates the pilgrim's journey not as an individual undertaking, but rather as something communal, marked by an increasing dynamism leading one ever closer to the cross. The cross in the logo is by no means static, but it is also dynamic. It bends down towards humanity, not leaving human beings alone, but stretching out to them to offer the certainty of its presence and the security of hope. At the bottom of the logo is the motto of the 2025 Jubilee Year: *Peregrinantes in Spem* (Pilgrims in hope), represented in green letters.

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