
**SOUND THE TRUMPET! BEAM WITH JOY!
THIS IS THE GREAT JUBILEE!**



On December 25, 1999, we shall inaugurate together the Jubilee of the Year 2000, and this festival will go on until January 6 of the year 2000. These then are my Christmas 1999 wishes to you, on this exceptional occasion marking our entrance into the Holy Year. I have made mine words from the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, and from the fourth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. In marking the 2000 years of the coming of Christ among us, may we continue together his work of compassion and love. *His love is from age to age.*

A JUBILEE TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Sound the trumpet!
Beam with joy!
Free the captives!
Forgive debts!
Respect the earth!
This is the Great Jubilee!

"I have freed you,"
Says the Lord,
"In return, free your neighbour,
And you will change the world!"
Lord, make me a channel of your peace!

"I have forgiven you,"
Says the Lord,
"In return, release those
Indebted to you,
And you will change the world!"
Lord, make me a channel of your joy!

"I have satisfied your hunger,"
Says the Lord,
"In return, give rest to the earth,
And you will change the world!"
Lord, make me a channel of your hope!

"From age to age
You shall celebrate
The Lord's sacred Jubilee,"
Says the Lord,
"And you will change the world!"
Lord, make me a channel of your love!

"The Spirit is upon me,"
Says the Lord,
"Scripture is being fulfilled
in your presence,"
And we will change the world!
Lord, make me a channel of your kindness!

Sound the trumpet!
Beam with Joy!
Free the captives!
Forgive debts!
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A CHALLENGING MESSAGE

As we read the words from Deuteronomy and Saint Luke we come across three main convictions to stimulate us throughout this Jubilee Year: respect for others, forgiveness of things past, and protection of our land and environment. These were social measures aimed at helping the chosen people go forward. Can they not also still help us today? So many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world cannot live in dignity, so bad are their living, health, and working conditions compared to what is acceptable for humans; even in our own country we meet people, especially children, who live in extreme poverty.

FORGIVENESS

Through a world-wide campaign we have been apprised of the remittance of foreign debts owed by poverty-stricken countries, but the Jubilee goes even further: One must forgive and start back at zero! The Jubilee allows us to turn back the page by engaging in true reconciliation in our milieus. The past should not be a ball and chain tied to one's leg forever. A misunderstanding can gradually become an insurmountable wall between family members, a fight over invitations can lead quickly to a dead-end and complete destruction of mutual ties. If only we dared forgive as we ourselves would like others to forgive us...

RESOURCES

It may seem strange that the Jubilee year described in Deuteronomy mentions giving rest to the earth. But if we do not take care, resources we long thought limitless, inexhaustible, will be depleted in the short run. We but have to think of our water resources: who could have predicted at the turn of the century that we would so soon commercialise such a commodity as water? May the Year 2000 remind us that we are but stewards of the land and not its owners. In other words, the Jubilee reminds us that the earth is the Lord's, while too often we believe ourselves to be its exclusive owners.

EMMANUEL

The words spoken by Jesus at Nazareth are as timely as ever: *"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 release to the captives and sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour"* (Luke 4:18-19).

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« From A Bishop's Journal » (310) (22 December 1999)