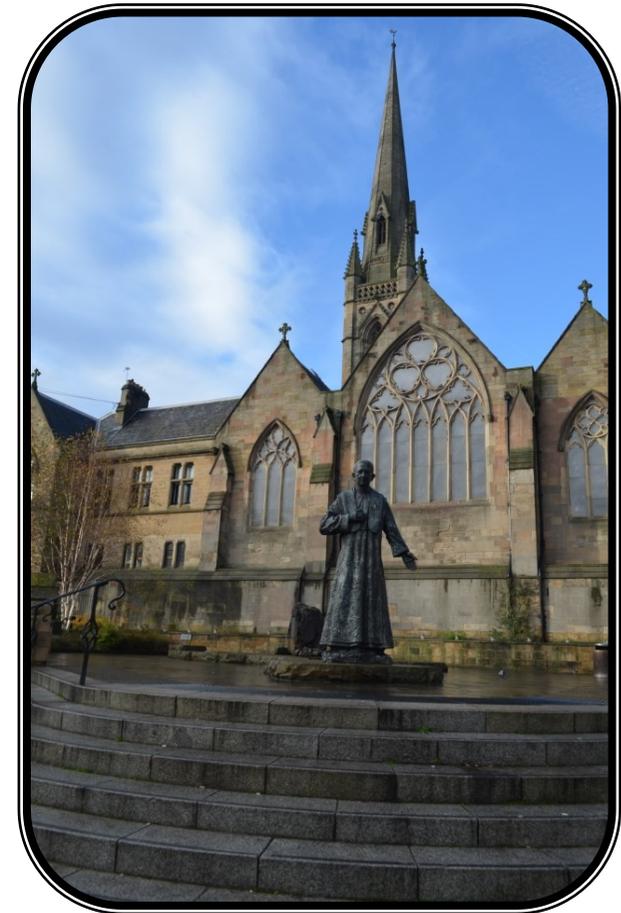


DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

Pilgrimage of Mercy

around St Mary's Cathedral,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne



Welcome and Introduction

Pope Francis has announced that this year is a **Jubilee Year of Mercy**.

It is an invitation for everyone in the Church
to look at their own need for God's love and forgiveness.

It is also an invitation to reach out to other people—
especially those who have been hurt
(perhaps by someone in the Church) —
who feel that their life is so bad that nothing can be done about it—
anyone who is in need of love, kindness and healing.
These—and many other things—are what we mean by needing mercy.

In this Jubilee Year, Pope Francis asked every Cathedral
in every diocese around the world
to have a Holy Door as a sign of Welcome
and of offering a space for people to come
to encounter the God of Mercy.

The Door of Mercy at St Mary's is clearly marked
on the right of the cathedral (looking to the front).

It was opened by Bishop Séamus Cunningham.

Bishop Séamus says:

"I invite you to come to the Cathedral during the Year of Mercy
and when you come bring others with you.

'These visits, as you enter through the Holy Door,
will be opportunities to pray and reflect upon your journey of faith
and how we all have a home in God.'

**This booklet invites you to take a journey round the Cathedral
to see the many ways in which we can meet the mercy of God.**

As you leave, please receive this ancient blessing

**The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.**

And leave prepared to share it with others...

The Door of Mercy—again...

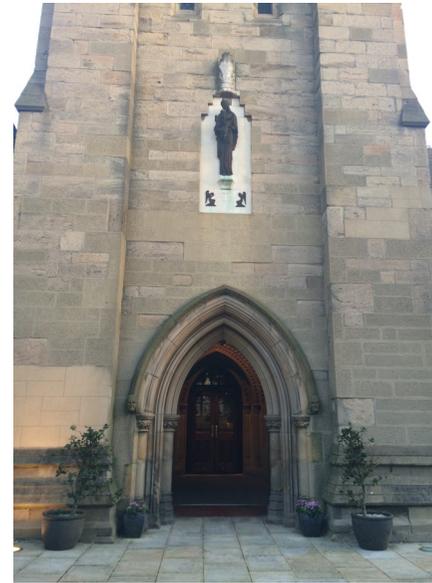


The time has come to leave the cathedral and go back to the routines and tasks of the day.

Before you cross the threshold of the Door of Mercy pause to think about:

- ❖ What have you gained during your time in this holy place? What would you like to take away with you?
- ❖ What would you like to leave behind—and how might you symbolise doing that?

The Door of Mercy



To come in through the Door of Mercy, you will need to go back into the glass corridor out and go through the door into the courtyard.

Spend a few moments looking at the Door—there is a bench if you want to sit and spend more time on this.

Look above the Door. Here is a statue of Mary and Jesus. The Cathedral is dedicated to Mary who is sometimes known as the Mother of Mercy. We will meet her again inside.

As you prepare to go through the Door, ask yourself:

- ❖ What would I like to find in this church?
- ❖ What bothers me about going inside?

(Note: There are no right and wrong answers to this—only your answers!)

The Gospels tell us that Jesus often looked on people with love and compassion—especially those who were ill—or suffering—or simply carrying the burdens of daily life. Here are some of his words—imagine him saying them to you personally as you go into the Cathedral.

**'Come to me, all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.'**

(Matthew 11: 28-30)

A Haven for Ordinary People



As you enter the cathedral, spend a moment or two getting your bearings..

This is a place where thousands of people have come for over 150 years.

They came with great happiness—for weddings and baptisms and to celebrate great events.

They came with great sorrow—for funerals and services honouring disasters or suffering.

They came with fear—in wartime or personal trials.

They came with despair and worries in times of unemployment and hunger.

Ordinary people came to this place just as they were—and found something that helped them to go back and to carry on living.

Turn to your right and look at the Wakenshaw Memorial and the Industrial Heritage windows. Think about who these people were and the realities of their daily lives..

Pope Francis wrote:

Jesus, seeing the crowds of people who followed him, realized that they were tired and exhausted, lost and without a guide, and he felt deep compassion for them....What moved Jesus in all of these situations was nothing other than mercy, with which he read the hearts of those he encountered and responded to their deepest need.

- ✧ What do you think the deepest needs and concerns of the people in stained glass windows were?
- ✧ What are your own deepest concerns or needs today?

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Retrace your steps back to the Blessed Sacrament chapel.

The red sanctuary lamp burning above your head is a sign of our faith that Christ is present in the tabernacle—the veiled container on the altar. You may like to end your pilgrimage around the cathedral here in a time of quiet.



Look back through the booklet and some of the thoughts and insights that have emerged.

Picture Jesus here with you in whatever way feels helpful. Share those reflections with him and open yourself to the possibility of Jesus speaking to you. He may not use words—you may be aware of particular feelings—or images—or symbols. Be open to receive whatever seems to come.

Here is a prayer that you might like to use:

**Lord Jesus,
thank-you for the ways in which I have met your mercy.
Help me to receive it deeply
so that whatever needs healing in me
can be touched by your love.
And as I receive this love and mercy,
may I be willing to take it out with me
so that you can change the lives of others through me.
I ask this in your name.
Amen**

The Pieta

At the back of the cathedral is a statue of Mary and Jesus. This is not another image of Mary and her baby son—this is a poignant depiction of Mary holding the dead body of her son.



St John, who was an eye-witness describes the scene at the foot of the cross. He is likely even to have been the disciple he describes.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

In this gesture, Jesus seemed also to place the world under her care. For generations, Mary has had a special place in the hearts of people who have been suffering or in trouble. Like her son, she understands pain and sorrow—but also knows that God is greater and works all things to good—even when we cannot see how this can ever happen.

Many people light candles by this statue. Each one represents a prayer—a concern—a need. You might like to add your own and spend a few minutes contemplating both the image and the prayers that people have placed before it.

A Wellspring of Life

The font is where the Christian journey starts.

In baptism, we die to sin and are reborn to eternal life.

We are freed from the power of sin and become new creations.

We become the beloved sons and daughters of God.

We do not become perfect—but we begin a journey.



Sitting by a well in a region called Samaria, Jesus has a conversation with a woman who has come to draw water. Here is part of the conversation:

Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

The woman is clearly thinking of ordinary water—but Jesus leads her to understand that he is offering something much deeper—a spiritual wellspring inside her that will never run dry. His words change her life.

✧ Where does your life feel drained or dry and in need of this living water?

Spend a few moments asking Jesus to refresh your life. Use your own words or simply say under your breath:

Jesus, fount of living water, quench my thirst for meaning and for life—fill me with the water you promise that never runs dry.

The Good Samaritan Banner

This image was created for the Year of Mercy. It is based on a story Jesus told to answer a question from a lawyer when told he must love his neighbour. He asks, 'Who is my neighbour?'

Here is the story—identify the characters as you go along.

'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan (*whom Jews of the time despised*) came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

At the end of the banner, Jesus turns to us and seems to ask a similar question—"Who is YOUR neighbour?"

- ✧ Who has treated you as a neighbour in your own need?
- ✧ Who might you need to be a better neighbour to?

of the Cross

being nailed to the cross— dying—being laid in his tomb.

Two of the Stations—or stopping points—show us that Jesus himself sometimes needed mercy—and was able to accept it from other people.

At the sixth station, we recall a woman who was moved by pity and came to help Jesus.

Saint Luke tells us
A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'

It is a tradition that one of the women, Veronica, stepped out from the crowd to wipe the face of Jesus. Unlike Simon, she did this voluntarily.

Try to imagine the scene as it really happened—far away from the peace of this Cathedral, on a hot, noisy road near Jerusalem.

- ✧ What do you think motivated Veronica to step out from the crowd and help Jesus?

Here is another prayer you might use:

Lord Jesus, give me the courage that Veronica showed to reach out and help others in need especially when it means standing out from a crowd—and risking hostility.



The Stations

Around the cathedral, there are panels which depict Jesus' final journey on earth. The Stations take us from his condemnation by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate—through his agonising walk under the weight of his cross—



At the fifth station we recall someone who is pulled out of the crowd to help Jesus to carry his cross.

This is how Saint Matthew describes what has happened after the initial torture of Jesus

**After mocking Jesus,
the soldiers led him away to crucify him.
As they went out, they came upon a man
from Cyrene named Simon;
they compelled this man
to carry his cross.**

- ✧ How do you think Simon felt about being forced to help a convicted criminal on his journey to crucifixion?

Look at the figures in the carvings and try to identify what each one might be feeling at this point.

Here is a prayer that you might use:

**Lord Jesus, in your weakness, you accepted Simon's strength.
In my weakness, help me to accept the love and strength of others.
And in their weakness, make me generous in my support of others,
Amen**

Mary—Mother of Mercy

Mary is greatly honoured by Catholics as the mother of Jesus—and, so, the Mother of God.

But her life was not an easy one. When she agreed to be Jesus' mother she was not married and, at first, brought shame to her family and to her future husband, Joseph.

Joseph received a message from an angel himself and took Mary into his home and brought Jesus up as his own son.

They ended up on a long journey to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Shortly after, they had to flee persecution and found refuge in Egypt.

As you look at this peaceful and beautiful image of a young woman with her baby, remember the difficult things she had to face.

This makes Mary someone who knows what life can be like—its joys and its sorrows. For almost 2000 years, millions of people have turned to her as someone who understands their needs. They have found that her prayers on their behalf to her beloved son have been very effective in helping them to endure what is happening to them.

You might like to light a candle and pray quietly for some of the difficult things in your own life. This is a traditional Catholic prayer that you could use.

**Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death. Amen.**



The Altar and Sanctuary Steps

Moving to the middle of the church, we come to the sanctuary. Sanctuary means safety for many people—and for centuries churches were places where those accused of crimes could come and be given time and space to sort out their affairs.



The words on the steps mean Lord have mercy—Christ have mercy—Lord have mercy.

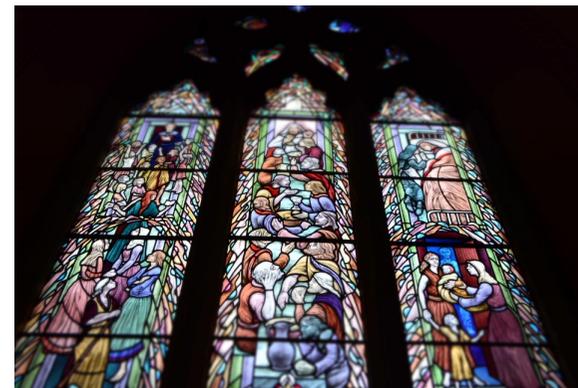
It is a prayer that ask God to look on us with kindness and compassion. God does—but these kinds of prayer help us to refocus on our need of it. Here are other words that remind us of God’s love towards human beings. They are taken from a psalm—a prayer that people have been praying for thousands of years but which still says things close to the human heart:

**The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
God will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.
God does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion for his children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.
For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.**

The Sisters of Mercy Window

Go into the small chapel a little further on. This is called the Blessed Sacrament chapel and you may choose to end your pilgrimage around the Cathedral here. At this point, though, find the window pictured below.

It is the Sisters of Mercy Window which was given by a congregation of women who have dedicated their lives to works of mercy around Tyneside for over a hundred years.



The window’s centre panel is of Jesus’ last supper with his friends. During the meal, Jesus shocked his disciples by acting in a way he they could not have expected. Saint John—who was there—tells us:

**Jesus got up from the table, took off his outer robe,
and tied a towel around himself.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples’ feet
and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.**

Jesus is their Lord but shows them how much he loves and respects them. His mercy in doing this extends to people who, in a few hours, will abandon him. His mercy is unconditional.

The window’s other panels show the principal ways in which the Sisters of Mercy have followed Jesus’ example of loving service.

- ◇ Where do people serve in the ways shown in the windows?
- ◇ How do you serve other people—in these ways or others?