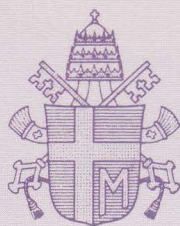


教宗若望保祿二世頒布



兩千年大禧年詔令——「降生奧蹟」

天主教中國主教團秘書處 編譯

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兩千年大禧年詔令——「降生奧蹟」

若望保祿主教，天主眾僕之僕

向所有走向第三個千年的信友們祝禱健康，並給予宗座降福。

王愈榮 譯

1. 教會準備跨越第三個千年的門檻，瞻仰天主子降生的奧蹟。此時此刻我們更感到需要以保祿的讚美及感恩詩歌，作為我們自己的詩歌：「願我們的主耶穌基督的天主和父受讚美！祂在天上，在基督內，以各種屬神的祝福，祝福了我們，因為祂於創世之前，在基督內已揀選了我們，為使我們在祂面前，成為聖潔而無瑕疵的。又由於愛，按照自己旨意的決定，預定了我們藉著耶穌基督獲得義子的名分：；祂在

我們身上，賜與我們各種智慧和明達，為使我們知道，祂旨意的奧秘，是全照祂在愛子內所定的計畫：就是依照祂的措施，當時期一滿，就使天上和地上的萬有，總歸於基督元首」（弗一3—5，9—10）這幾句話清楚地指出，在耶穌基督身上，救恩史達到它的顛峰和最終的意義。在祂內，我們大家領受了「恩寵上加恩寵」（若一16），與聖父和好了（參羅五10；格後五18）。耶穌在伯利恆的誕生，不僅是一件可以記述的過去事件，事實上整個人類的歷史都與祂有關：我們的時代和世界的未來，都為祂的臨在而閃耀。祂是「生活的一位」（默一18），「祂是今在、昔在及將來永在者」（默一4）。在祂跟前，上天、地上和地下的一切，都要屈膝叩拜，而一切唇舌要宣告祂是主（參斐二10—11）。在與基督相遇中，每個人發現他自己生命的奧蹟①。耶穌是超過一切人類希望的、純正的「新」，祂世世代代永遠常新。天主聖子的降生，以及因祂的死亡和復活所完成的救恩，是評估一切現代發生的事和使生活更合人性所努力的真正標準。

2. 兩千年大禧年快到了。從我的第一封「人類救主」通諭起，我就面向公元兩

千年，唯一的目標是準備每一個人委順於聖神的工作②。大禧年將在羅馬及世界所有個別教會中同步進行慶祝，同時將有兩個中心：一個是上智所選擇作為伯鐸繼承人聖座的都市，另一個是天主子降生成人，從名為瑪利亞的貞女取得肉軀（參路一27）的地方——聖地。因此，大禧年不但要在羅馬，也要在稱為「聖地」的地方，以同樣的尊敬和意義來慶祝，因為聖地是耶穌誕生和死亡的地方。第一個基督徒團體在此出現的聖地，是天主將自己啟示給人類的地方，那是猶太民族的歷史特別標示的「福地」（許諾之地），同時也為伊斯蘭教徒所崇敬。希望大禧年有助於推進彼此的對話，直到有一天，我們大家——猶太人、基督徒及穆斯林（回教）——能在耶路撒冷互祝平安③。

大禧年時期將強有力的措辭灌輸給我們，救恩的天主神聖教育法慣於以此語言引人悔改和補贖。這悔改和補贖是人治癒的開始和途徑，以及人發現靠自己的力量無法達到的必然條件：主的友誼和恩寵，只有此超性生命能使人心的深切期望達到滿足。

第三個千年的來臨，促使基督徒團體舉起他們信仰的眼目，對宣報天主的國懷有新的願景。因此，在此特別時刻，我們必須更忠信地回到梵二大公會議的訓導，它對今日福傳的要求，在教會傳教工作上放射出新的光芒。在大公會議中，教會更深深地意識到她本身的奧蹟，以及主託付給她的使徒使命。這種覺悟使信者團體，生活在此世知道他們應該成為「人類社會的酵母和靈魂，使社會在基督內革新並改變為天主的家庭」④。為有效達成此任務，教會應該保持合一並在共融的生活中成長⑤。大禧年的即將來臨，提供這方面有力的激勵。

信友走向第三個千年的旅程，不應該被兩千年歷史負擔所可能帶來的困乏所壓倒；反之，基督徒由於知道他們帶給世界真正的光明——主基督，而感到更有活力。教會在宣報納匝肋的耶穌，真天主又是完全的人時，向所有的人展示人「天主化」以及更合乎人性的希望⑥。這是一條能引領世界發現它自己的崇高召叫，以及在天主所完成的救恩中圓滿完成的道路。

3. 為回應我的「第三個千年將臨之際」文告⑦，個別教會在這幾年準備千禧年

中間，藉祈禱、教理講授及各類牧靈行動，準備好了這導引整個教會進入恩寵及使命的新時代的慶祝。大禧年的臨近，也在那些追尋有力標記，以幫助他們分辨天主臨在我們時代之跡象的人中，引起極大的興趣。

大禧年的準備期，曾托付在至聖聖三的標記下：經由基督——在聖神內——到天主父那裏。在聖三的奧蹟中，信仰的旅程有其根源和終極目標，最後我們的眼目將永遠瞻仰天主的慈顏。在慶祝天主的降生時，我們凝視聖三的奧蹟。啟示父的納匝肋的耶穌，已滿足了隱藏在每個人心中要認識天主的願望。凡天主創造之手所密封保留的造物，以及古代先知所宣告的許諾，在基督的啟示裡都予公開^⑧。

耶穌啟示天主父「憐憫和慈愛」（雅五11）的面容，藉派遣聖神，祂使愛的奧蹟，即聖三奧蹟讓人知道。是基督的聖神在教會和歷史中行動；我們應該聽從祂，為能認出新時代的記號，並使光榮的主再臨的期待，在信友的心中更有活力。因此聖年該是不斷地對至高天主聖三的讚美詩。對這一點，神學家聖國瑞·納祥的詩句對我們有幫助：

「光榮歸於天主父及子，宇宙的君王。光榮歸於聖神，應受讚頌的至聖。聖三是唯一天主，祂創造並佈滿萬物；天空充滿天體，地上都是世間的造物，海洋、河川和泉源，富有各種水族；藉著聖神賦予萬物生命，一切造物應該歌頌祂賢明的造主，祂獨自給予生命並維持一切生命活躍。最重要的是，讓有理性的受造常讚美欽崇祂為偉大的君王和仁慈的父親」⑨。

4. 願所有領過洗並對主耶穌有同一信仰的人，同聲吟頌這首為聖子降生而對聖三發出的讚美詩。願大禧年的合一特色，成為不同的教會和教團的信友，特別在最近數十年中，所走過的旅程的具體記號。只有經由聆聽聖神，我們才能把自洗禮成為天主義子的恩寵，有形地顯示出完全的共融：我們都是唯一天父的子女。聖保祿宗徒挑戰性的召回，今日再次為我們響起：「因為只有一個身體和一個聖神，正如你們蒙召，同有一個希望一樣。只有一個主，一個信德，一個洗禮，只有一個天主和眾人之父，祂超越眾人，貫通眾人，且在眾人之內」（弗四4—6）。應用聖依仁的話來說：在接受了如天降雨露的天主聖言後，我們不可讓自己呈現給世

界一副乾枯的面目；我們也無法強調是一個麵餅，假如我們不讓分散的麵粉，經由灑在我們身上的水，凝聚成一個^⑩。

每一次大禧年都像一個婚禮的邀約。來自世界各地的教會和教團，讓我們急速奔赴已準備好的婚禮；我們要帶著已使我們合一的一切，唯獨注視著基督，讓我們在合一中成長，這是聖神的果實。身為伯鐸的繼承人，羅馬主教現在的任務是，非常堅定地邀請大家來慶祝大禧年，為使基督信仰的中心奧蹟的第兩千年，可以成為和好旅程的經驗，並為所有指望基督和其教會的人成為真正希望的標記，是「與天主親密結合以及全人類團結」^⑪的聖事。

5. 「大禧年喚起許多歷史性的記憶！我們可以回想一三〇〇年，當時為了回應羅馬人民的願望，教宗伯尼法八世隆重地揭開了歷史上第一個大禧年。重拾古老的傳統，提供給到永城聖伯鐸大殿朝聖的人「豐富的罪赦和寬宥」，教宗願意在這機會上，給予「不僅是更豐沛的罪赦，而是完全的赦免」^⑫。從那時起，教會常慶祝大禧年，這是教會走向基督圓滿的旅程中的重要步伐。

歷史證明天主子民如何興奮地進入聖年，視之為更深切感受耶穌邀請他們悔改的時刻。在這長久的經歷中，也有過浮濫及誤解，但是真實的信德及誠懇的愛德的見證更是突出。聖斐理伯耐里對一五五〇年大禧年所設立的「羅馬愛德站」是項典型的見證，它成為接待朝聖者的實在標記。有關大禧年的經驗，以及因寬恕的恩寵在許多信友身上所產生的皈依成果，可以寫成長篇的聖德史。

6. 在我擔任教宗職期間，我高興在一九八三年宣佈特殊禧年，因為人類的救贖已有一九五〇年。救贖奧蹟在耶穌死亡和復活中完成，此奧蹟是天主子降生時所開始的事件的完成。因此即將來臨的禧年可以視為「大」禧年，而教會表示非常希望擁抱所有的信友，為能提供他們和好的喜樂。從整個教會將向聖父獻上讚頌和感恩的歌曲，祂因無比的愛，在基督內賜給我們成為「聖徒的同胞及天主的家人」（弗二19）。在此大慶節中，我們熱誠邀請其他宗教的信徒分享我們的喜樂，對距天主的信仰很遙遠的人也是如此。身為一個人類大家庭的兄弟和姊妹，願我們能一起跨越新千禧年的門檻，這要求大家的努力和負責。

為我們信友來說，禧年將強調基督因祂的死亡和復活所完成的救贖。在此死亡後，任何人不能與天主的愛相隔絕（參羅人21—39），除非是由於他自己的錯。

慈悲的恩寵給了每個人，使所有已經和好的人，也「因著祂的生命而得救」（羅五10）。因此，我命令公元兩千年的大禧年從一九九九年聖誕夜開始，在梵蒂岡聖伯鐸大殿開啟聖門，計劃在耶路撒冷和伯利恆所舉行的開幕禮，以及在羅馬其他可敬大殿聖門開啟之前數小時舉行。在聖保祿大殿，聖門將在一月十八日星期二，為基督徒合一祈禱週開始時開啟，為凸顯此禧年的合一特點。

我也命令在個別教會中，禧年要在主耶穌誕生的至聖之日開幕，由教區主教在主教座堂主持隆重的感恩祭禮，也可在共同座堂（Co-Cathedral）由主教指派一位主持此禮儀。因為開啟聖門的禮節，是梵蒂岡聖殿及其他可敬大殿所特有，在個別的教區所作的禧年開幕禮，可以先在一個聖堂作為遊行起站（Statio），然後遊行至主教座堂，在起站根據「在個別教會舉行大禧年禮書」，舉行敬禮福音經書並誦讀本詔令的一部分。

希望一九九九年聖誕節，為每個人是一個充滿光明的節日，深切經驗恩寵和天主慈悲的前奏，直到二〇〇一年元月六日我主耶穌基督的主顯節禧年閉幕為止。望所有的信友回應天使的邀請，他們不斷地宣報「天主在天受光榮，主愛的人在世享平安」（路二14）。因此聖誕期將是聖年跳動的心臟，為教會生活，貫注為新福傳所需的聖神的豐沛恩惠。

7. 在歷史的過程中，禧年的制定豐富地顯示出基督徒的宣信和促進他們熱心的標記。其中，首先是「朝聖」的觀念，它和人的情況相連，描述出人生猶如旅程。從出生到死亡，每個人的條件是「行者」（Homo Viator）的條件。聖經方面時常宣示出發走向聖地的特別意義。以前有一種傳統，以色列人朝聖到保留約櫃的城市，或是去貝特耳聖殿朝拜（參民廿18），或去史羅，撒慕爾的母親亞納在那邊的祈禱獲得垂聽（參撒上一3）。誠心服從法律，耶穌也同聖母和若瑟一起去聖城耶路撒冷朝聖（參路二41）。教會的歷史是未完成的朝聖之旅的活報導。旅行到聖伯鐸及聖保祿的城市，到聖地，到奉獻給童貞瑪利亞及諸聖的古老和新的聖

地：這是無數信友的目標，這樣他們找到虔誠的滋養。

朝聖一直是信友生活的主要部分，在不同時代採用不同的文化模式。朝聖提醒信友個人步武救主芳蹤的旅程：那是實行克苦、痛悔人性軟弱、不斷警覺自身的脆弱、準備內心的改變。藉守夜、守齋和祈禱，朝聖者在基督徒的成全的道路上邁進，因天主聖寵的支持，努力「成為成年人，達到基督圓滿年齡的程度」（弗四13）。

8. 朝聖之外，有「聖門」的標記，第一次開啟聖門是一四二三年禧年在拉特郎至聖救主大殿。聖門提醒每個基督徒被召要達成從罪惡到恩寵的過程。耶穌說過：「我是門」（若十7），為了讓人明瞭，除非經由祂，誰也不能來到父那裡。耶穌用在祂自己身上的這種稱呼，證明只有祂是父所派遣的救主的事實。只有一條路通往與天主共融生活的入口：就是耶穌，得救的唯一和絕對的道路。聖詠作者的話只能實在地應用在祂一人身上：「這是上主的門，只有義人才能進入」（詠一一八20）。

把焦點放在門上，是為提示每個信友跨越門檻的責任。跨越此門是指要宣認耶穌基督是主；加強信耶穌，為了能度祂給予我們的新生命。作此決定，先要有選擇的自由以及放棄某些事物的勇氣，知道所得到的是天主性生命（參瑪十三44—46）。是以這種精神，教宗在一九九九年十二月廿四日和廿五日之間，第一個經過聖門。在跨越門檻時，教宗要向教會和世界展示福音聖書，它是未來第三個千年的生命和希望的泉源。經過聖門，此聖門在千年末象徵性地更是寬敞^⑬，基督要帶領我們更深入教會——祂的身體和淨配，這樣我們看到伯鐸宗徒的話如何富有意義，他寫說我們與基督結合後，我們猶如活石也被建立起來，「建成一座屬神的殿宇，成為一班聖潔的司祭，以奉獻中悅天主的屬神的祭品」（伯前二5）。

9. 另外一個特殊的，信友們熟悉的標記是「大赦」，它是禧年的組成成分之一。大赦揭示聖父慈悲的圓滿，祂給予每個人祂的愛，優先表達在罪惡的寬恕上。平常，天主教經由懺悔及和好聖事賜予祂的寬赦^⑭。事實上，自由而意識地向重罪投誠，使信友脫離和天主的恩寵生活，並使信友自外於成聖，他本被召成聖。教

會從基督領受了因祂的名赦罪的權力，在世界上成為天主之愛的話的臨在，祂俯視每個人性的弱點，為接受它入祂慈悲的懷抱。正是藉教會的職務，天主在世界傾注慈悲，運用自非常古老的時代就叫做「大赦」的珍貴恩惠。

懺悔聖事提供罪人「悔改和恢復成義恩寵的新可能性」^⑮是因基督的犧牲而獲得。罪人因而重新進入天主的生命並圓滿分享教會的生活。信友因告明他自己的罪，真正接受寬恕並能再次領受聖體，表示他又得到與聖父及其教會的共融。自初世紀起，教會一直深信，天主自由地賜予的寬恕，包含生活的真實改變，逐步消除內心的惡，我們生活方式的革新。聖事行動要和存在行為結合，真正滌除過失，這就是真正的懺悔。寬恕並不表示使這種存在進程成為多餘的，而是有它的意義，是被接受和歡迎。

與天主和好並不意味就沒有罪的持久後果，我們應該予以淨化。真是因為如此，大赦才是重要的，因為它是「天主慈悲的全部贈予」^⑯的表示。由於大赦，悔改的罪人得到暫罰的赦免，罪依過失來說已得寬免，但應得暫罰。

10. 因為罪冒犯天主的聖善和正義，並輕蔑天主本人和人的友情，罪有雙重的後果。首先，假如是重罪，它牽涉到與天主共融的剝奪，以及結果是排除在得永生之外。不過，對悔改的罪人，天主由於慈悲賜予重罪的寬恕，並赦免可能帶來的「永罰」。

其次，「所有的罪，即使是小罪，都促使人對受造物形成不健康的依戀，這種依戀不論在現世，抑或在死後，在稱為煉獄的狀態中，都必須予以淨化。這種煉淨解除罪的『暫罰』^{①⑦}」，而這種補贖消除任何與天主圓滿共融，以及與個人的兄弟姊妹共融的阻礙。

啟示也教導我們，基督徒在悔改的路上不是單獨的。在基督內並藉著基督，他的生命與其他基督徒的生命，在奧體的超性結合中，由於奧妙的連繫而連在一起。這在信友之間建立起屬靈恩惠的美妙交換，因此一個人的聖德有益於他人，遠超過一個人的罪傷害到別人。有些人留下豐盛的愛，接受痛苦，充滿純潔和真理，這都與別人有關也支持他人。這是「替代」的事實，整個基督的奧蹟基於此。

祂飽和的愛救我們大家。另外基督之愛的偉大是不讓我們被動地接受，而是吸引我們分擔祂救援的工作，尤其是祂的苦難。這是致哥羅森人書中有名的那一段所說：「在我的肉身上，為基督的身體——教會，補充基督的苦難所欠缺的」（一24）。

這端深刻的真理，在默示錄的一段文字中也絕妙地描述出，其中把教會描寫成穿著簡樸的白色細麻衣，華麗而潔白的精細麻衣的新娘。聖若望說：「這細麻衣就是聖徒的義行」（默十九8）。的確，在聖徒的生活中，華麗的細麻衣要編織成為永生的長袍。

一切都來自基督，可是由於我們屬於祂，我們的一切也成了祂的，並且獲得治癒的德能。這就是所謂的「教會的寶庫」，那是聖徒們的善行。為得大赦所做的祈禱：是指進入此屬靈的共融，而使自己完全向別人開放。在屬靈的領域，人也不是單為自己生活。健全關心一個人靈魂的得救，是只有在關心別人的得救時，才能免除恐懼和自私。這是諸聖相通共融的事實，「替代生活」和祈禱的奧秘，也是與基督和祂的諸聖結合的方法。祂帶領我們，使我們可以和祂一起編織新人

類的潔白長袍，那穿在基督的新娘身上的華麗細麻衣。

這端有關大赦的道理「首先教導離開天主是何等憂苦（參耶二一九）。當信友們求得大赦時，了解靠他們自己的力量，無法使惡成為善，由於犯罪他們對自己和整個團體做了惡事，因此他們努力做得救的謙遜事功」¹⁸。此外，有關係信友和基督以及與別人結合的諸聖相通功的真理上啟示我們每個人如何能幫助別人——生者或死者——與天上的父更親密地相結合。

闡明了這些教理並詮釋了教會慈母般的結構，我命令在整個禧年期間，所有的信友，在適當地準備後，依照本詔令附件所有指示，可以豐富地應用大赦的恩典。

11. 這些標記一直都是禧年的傳統慶祝中的一部分。當然天主子民不要忽視天主的慈悲在禧年中，可能有的其他標記。在我的《第三個千年將臨之際》的宗座文告中，我提出幾樣可以幫助大家更熱心善度禧年特殊恩寵的事¹⁹。我簡短地在此提出。

首先，「淨化記憶」的標記，它要求每個人勇敢而謙遜地，承認以基督徒名義曾經做過或在做的錯誤事情。

聖年依其本質是要我們悔改的時刻。這是耶穌宣道的第一句話，與準備相信連在一起是相當有意義的：「你們悔改並信從福音吧」（谷一15）。基督所提出的命令，源自「時期已滿」（谷一15）的事實。天主的時刻的圓滿，成了悔改的召喚，悔改主要是恩寵的效果。是聖神驅使我們「回頭」並看到回歸父家的需要（參路十五17—20）。因此省察良心是生命中最決定性的時刻。它使每個人面對個人真實的生活。如此他發現他所做的，與他所定的理想有差距。

教會的歷史是成聖的歷史。新約強調這是受洗過的人的標記：他們是「聖者」，他們與世界分離，因為世界屬於惡勢力，他們奉獻自己崇敬唯一真天主。事實上，這種聖德不但在教會所認可的許多聖人和真福的生活上很明顯，也在眾多無名男士和女士的生活中彰顯，他們的人數無法估計（參默七9）。他們的一生為福音的真理作証，並提供世界完美是可能的有形記號。不過得承認歷史也記錄對基督

宗教構成反見證的事件。由於使我們彼此結合成奧體的關係，我們眾人，雖然本人沒有責任也不侵犯天主的判斷——只有祂知道每人的心——，我們都擔負先人的錯誤及過失。同時我們，教會的子女，我們也犯了罪，並且阻止了基督的新娘閃耀她的美麗光彩。我們的罪曾阻礙了聖神在許多人心工作。我們貧乏的信德，是表示許多人曾陷於冷漠，並且遠離了與基督真正的會晤。

身為伯鐸的繼承人，我要求教會在此慈悲之年，堅持自己從主所領受的聖德，跪在天主台前，並為祂的子女過去和現在的罪祈求寬恕。人人都犯了罪，沒有人能在天主前聲言是正直的（參列上八46）。讓我們沒有怕懼地再次說：「我們犯了罪」（耶三25），但是我們要繼續地肯定「罪惡在那裡越多，恩寵在那裡也越格外豐富」（羅五20）。

聖父為到祂跟前懺悔的罪人所保留的擁抱，將是我們謙卑承認自己的罪和別人的過錯的合理報酬，這種認錯是基於意識到結合基督奧體所有成員的深切關係。基督徒被邀在天主和因他們的行為而被得罪的人面前，承認他們所犯的錯。他們

要「不求任何回報地去做，但只是為「傾注在我們心中的天主的愛」（羅五5）所強化。同時，也有不少公正的人確認過去及現在的歷史，也記錄許多對教會的子女排斥、不公和迫害的事件。」

在此禧年，不要讓任何一個人被排斥在聖父的擁抱之外。不要讓任何一個人像福音比喻中的兄長，他拒絕回家慶祝（參路十五25—30）。希望寬恕的喜樂比任何怨恨更強更大。如此，新娘（教會）將在世界眼前，閃耀她來自天主恩寵的美麗和聖德。兩千年來，教會曾經是搖籃，聖母把耶穌放在其中間，並讓所有人民朝拜和瞻仰。希望新娘的謙遜，使她更顯耀感恩聖事的光榮和德能，這是在教會內舉行並珍藏的聖事。在祝聖過的麵餅和葡萄酒的標記下，已復活並受光榮的耶穌基督，萬邦的光明（參路三32），啟示祂降生成人的恆久事實。祂繼續生活並實在我們中間，為了以祂的身體和血滋養信友們。

為此讓我們展望未來。慈悲的聖父不再計較我們真正痛悔的罪（參依三八17）。祂現在做一些新的事，並因祂寬恕的愛，祂提前使新天新地到來。因此，為使在

未來的千禧年的世界中，能重新致力於基督徒的見證，我們要使信德充電，望德增進，愛德更發揮力量。

12 天主慈悲在今日特別需要的標記，是「愛德」的標記，它使我們對窮人和被排斥的人的需要睜開眼睛。這種情況影響到社會的廣大領域，並將死亡的陰影投射在整個人民身上。人類面對新的奴役，比過去的奴役更陰險；而為那麼多人來說，自由只是一個毫無意義的名詞。某些國家，特別是較貧窮的國家，為外債所壓迫，外債如此龐大，實際無法償還。因此，明顯的是不同語言、種族、國籍及宗教的人民之間的有效合作，不會有實在的進步。必須終止統治別人的權力的濫用：此類濫用是有罪的是不公義的。任何只關心在今世積聚財寶的人（參瑪六19）——在天主前是不富裕的」（路十二21）。

另外還需要創造國際間彼此承擔及合作的新文化，使大家，尤其是富裕的國家和私人機構，負責建立一種為大家都有利的經濟模式。不得再拖延了，使窮人拉匝祿能與富人坐在一起，分享同一酒席，不再被迫吃餐桌上掉下的殘物（參路

十六 19—31)。極度貧困是暴力、悲情和舞弊的來源；要拔除它，必須行正義，也是和平的工作。

禧年是呼籲人們經由生活的改變而心靈皈依。是要大家記得不要把世物視為絕對的重要，因為它們不是天主，也不要過於重視人的統治或是主張統治，因為大地屬於天主，只屬於祂：「大地是我的，你們為我是旅客及寄居者」（肋廿五 23）。希望此恩慈之年感動那些手上握有世界人民命運者的心！

13 基督徒之愛的真理的標記是「殉道者的紀念」，它永恆不滅，尤其在今天特別強而有力。殉道者的見證不應被遺忘，他們是為了愛以犧牲自己的生命來宣講福音。殉道的人，尤其在我們今天，是偉大的愛的標記，它總括其他的一切價值。殉道者的生命反映基督在十字架所吐露的不尋常的話：「父啊，寬赦他們罷！因為他們不知道他們做的是什麼」（路廿三 34）。凡嚴正地考量自己基督徒聖召的信徒，包括默示錄所說可能的殉道，不能將此排斥於個人生活的願景之外。基督降生以來兩千年，都為一直有的殉道者的見證所凸顯。

在這即將結束的這一世紀見到了很多殉道者，特別是由於納粹主義、共產主義，以及種族或族群的衝突。社會各階層的人，為了他們的信仰而受苦，為了忠於基督和教會付出了他們的血，或是勇敢地面對終年的坐牢和各種的匱乏，因為他們拒絕成為無情獨裁政權的意識型態屈服。從心理觀點來看，殉道是對信仰的真理最有力的見證，因為信仰能給予最殘暴的死亡一種人性的外貌，而且在最殘酷的迫害中顯示它的美。

在即將來臨的禧年，我們充滿了恩寵，可以帶著新的力量，向聖父高唱感恩詩說：「眾殉道者都為祢作證」。是的，這是那些「曾在羔羊的血中洗淨了自己的衣裳，使衣裳雪白者」（默七14）的隊伍。為了這個理由，教會在世界各個角落，應該停泊在殉道者的見證上，並小心謹慎地保存他們的紀念。願天主子民，由於每個時代、語言和國家的這些真正的鬥士的榜樣，能在信德上站穩後，完全有信心地跨越第三個千年的門檻。在信友們的心中，希望對他們殉道的讚賞，靠天主的聖寵如果環境要求的話，轉為追隨他們榜樣的願望。

14. 禧年的喜樂無法圓滿，假如我們不將目光轉向那位聖母，她為了完全服從父，誕生了為我們而成肉身的天主子。為瑪利亞來說，「分娩的時刻」發生在伯利恆（路二6），並且她充滿聖神產生了新造物的首生者。瑪利亞被召做天主之母，從貞女懷孕起，度過她母性的完美生活，在加爾瓦略山的十字架旁圓滿成功。因此，由於基督的絕妙恩惠，她也成了教會的母親，而且她把導向聖子的道路指引給每個人。

童貞瑪利亞、靜默的女子、喜愛聆聽者，委順於聖父之手者，她世世代代被稱為「有福」，因為她確認聖神在她身上所完成的奇事。天下萬國絕對不會厭倦於呼求慈悲的聖母，而一直會在她的庇蔭下找到保護。願曾與其聖子耶穌和其淨配若瑟赴天主聖殿朝聖的聖母，保護所有在此禧年朝聖者的腳步。並在未來的歲月中她樂於為基督徒強烈地轉禱，使他們得到豐富的恩寵和慈悲，當他們因救主誕生兩千年而感到高興之時。

願教會的讚頌，在聖神內，因主基督的救恩，升到天主父的臺前，於今世也直到永遠。

教宗若望保祿二世

天主降生一九九八年——在職廿一年——十一月廿九日將臨期
第一主日發自羅馬聖伯鐸大殿。

註

- ① 參梵二《現代》憲章22。
- ② 參《人類救主》1：宗座公報71（一九七九），258頁。
- ③ 參若望保祿二世《救贖年》牧函（一九八四年四月廿日）：宗座公報76（一九八四），627頁。
- ④ 梵二《現代》40。
- ⑤ 參若望保祿二世《第三個千年將臨之際》（一九九四年十一月十日），36：宗座公報87（一九九五），28頁。
- ⑥ 參梵二《現代》41。

- ⑦同⑤39，54。
- ⑧參梵二《啟示》2及4。
- ⑨信理詩詞卅一，Hymnus Alias：希臘教父37，510—511。
- ⑩參《反異端人》三：希臘教父7，930。
- ⑪梵二《教會》憲章1。
- ⑫《Antiquorum Habet》詔令（一三〇〇年二月二十二日）：羅馬詔令集三之2，94頁。
- ⑬參《第三個千年》牧函33。
- ⑭參若望保祿二世《和好與懺悔》勸諭（一九八四年十二月二日），28—34：宗座公報77（一九八五）250—273頁。
- ⑮《天主教要理》一四四六號。
- ⑯若望保祿二世《打開大門歡迎救主》詔令（一九八三年一月六日）8：宗座公報75（一九八三）98頁。
- ⑰《天主教要理》一四七二號。
- ⑱保祿六世《大赦教義》憲令（一九六七年一月一日），9：宗座公報59。
- ⑲參《第三個千年》牧函33、37、51號。

為得禧年大赦的條件

藉此法令，宗座聖赦院，為實施教宗在兩千年大禧年詔令中所表達的意願，並依教宗所給予的行使權，界定為得禧年大赦該遵守的規律。

所有信友，適當地準備妥當，在禧年內，符合以下規則，得圓滿享受大赦的恩惠。

由於一般的或是特殊的覆文而獲得的大赦在大禧年仍然有效，應該注意禧年大赦也可用以幫助亡者之靈魂：此類奉獻構成超性愛德的傑出行為，由於在基督的奧體內，連結世上旅途中的信友和已結束世間旅程的信友的關係。同時，一天只能得一次全大赦的規定，在整個禧年中仍然有效^①。

禧年的重點是經由臨在於教會，特別是在聖事中的救主基督，而與天主教會面。為此，整個為朝聖而準備的禧年過程，其出發點和結論是舉行懺悔聖事和聖

體聖事，基督的逾越奧蹟，我們的平安與和好；這是使我們打開心門為我們和他人迎接大赦恩惠的改變自己的會晤。

在妥當告解後——依教會法典第九六〇條及東方禮教會法七二〇條一款的規定告解該是個別的和完整的——每個信友在滿了所要求的條件後，可以領受或運用全大赦的恩惠；在相當的時期內，甚至每天，可得全大赦而不需再告解。不過信友最好是時常領受懺悔聖事的恩寵，為在悔改和心靈淨化上得以成長②。為得大赦所要求的參與感恩聖祭，應該在履行所規定的神工的同一天妥當地完成③。

這兩個頂峰時刻應該由幾項事功相陪伴，首先是與教會共融的見證，這表示在為羅馬教宗的意向祈禱，以及藉愛德和補贖的行為上，依照下列的指示：這些行為是表示在聖事中與基督共融所引起的真正的心靈的皈依。基督真正是我們的寬恕及我們罪過的補贖（參若壹二2）。基督藉由把「一切罪過的赦免」④的聖神傾注信友心中，引領每一個人與慈悲的聖父有父子般的及信賴的會晤。從此會晤產生悔改及革新的承諾，教會的共融及對我們兄弟姊妹的愛德。

同樣為即將來臨的禧年確認一項規則，即聽告解司鐸，為那些合法受阻的人，得「改換」為得大赦所規定的工作和所要求的條件⑤。隱修院的修士及修女，有病的以及為了某種理由無法離開他們自己的家的人，可以在他們的會院或家中的小聖堂朝拜，以代替去某一個聖堂朝聖。假如連這個也做不到，他們可以與那些依常規做規定的神工的人以心神連結一起，並向天主獻上他們的祈禱、痛苦和不適，也可得大赦。信友得禧年大赦的條件是：

(1) 在羅馬，假如他們到可敬聖殿之一朝聖，即梵蒂岡聖伯鐸大殿、拉特郎的至聖救主大殿、聖母大殿及在奧斯底亞路上的聖保祿大殿，在大殿熱心參與彌撒聖祭，或其他禮儀慶典，如晨禱或晚禱，或是熱心神工（如拜苦路、念玫瑰經、光榮天主之母誦念 AKATHISTOS 聖母讚）；此外，假如他們以團隊或單獨在四大殿之一朝聖，並在殿內花一點時間朝拜聖體並默想片刻，最後念「天主經」、信經和聖母經。除了四大聖殿外，在大禧年的特殊機會上，在下列幾個地方，在同樣的條件下也可得大赦：聖十字架大殿，聖勞倫佐大殿，天主之愛聖母朝聖地

及基督徒陵墓（CATACOMBS）⑥。

(2) 在聖地，依同樣的條件，假如信友在耶路撒冷的聖墓大殿，或在白冷的聖誕大殿，或在納匝肋的聖母領報大殿朝聖者。

(3) 在其他教會的地區，假如信友在主教座堂，或其他由教區主教所指定的聖堂或聖地朝聖，同時他們熱心參與禮儀慶典或其他熱心神操，如以上為羅馬城市所指；此外假如他們集體或是個別在主教座堂或是在主教所指定的朝聖地朝聖，並花一點時間熱心默想，結束時念「天主經」，信經及聖母經。

(4) 在任何地方，信友們適時訪視有需要的或有困難的兄弟姊妹（如病人、受刑人、獨居老人、殘障人士等），猶如向在他們身上臨在的基督作朝聖一般（參瑪廿五 34 - 36），同時滿足通常屬靈的及聖事的條件並念通常的經文。信友們一定願意在聖年內常做此類的訪問，因為每次他們可以得全大赦，顯然一天只能得一次。

禧年的全大赦也可藉以實際和慷慨的方式，表達懺悔精神的行為而獲得，因

為懺悔是禧年的核心。這包括至少一整天不取用不必要的東西（如抽煙或喝酒，守大齋或小齋，依照教會及主教團所定的規則），或是捐一些錢給窮人；資助一項宗教的或是社會的事業（特別是為棄嬰的福利，困難中的青年，有需要的老人，在不同國家尋求更好的生活條件的外國人）；空出個人自由時間的適當部分，做有益於團體的活動，或其他類似的個人犧牲。

院長 巴 翁樞機

執行長 戴馬琪特里總主教

一九九八年十一月廿九日將臨期第一主日發自羅馬宗座聖赦院。

註

- ①參閱《大赦手冊》梵蒂岡出版（一九八六年）規則21條第一款。
- ②參閱同上規則23條第1—2款。
- ③參閱同上規則23條第3款
- ④「你藉聖神消除人間的一切罪惡」感恩祭典(一)復活期第七週星期六獻禮經。
- ⑤參閱《大赦手冊》規則第27條。
- ⑥參閱《大赦手冊》許可第14。

Incarnationis Mysterium

BULL OF INDICTION OF THE GREAT JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2000

JOHN PAUL BISHOP
SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD
TO ALL THE FAITHFUL
JOURNEYING TOWARDS
THE THIRD MILLENNIUM
HEALTH AND THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING

1. Contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Church prepares to cross the threshold of the Third Millennium. Never more than at this time do we feel the need to make our own the Apostle's hymn of praise and thanksgiving: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will... For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (*Eph 1:3-5, 9-10*).

These words clearly indicate that in Jesus Christ the history of salvation finds its culmination and ultimate meaning. In him, we have all received "grace upon grace" (*Jn 1:16*), having been reconciled with the Father (cf. *Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18*).

The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is not an event which can be consigned to the past. The whole of human history in fact stands in reference to him: our own time and the future of the world are illumined by his presence. He is “the Living One” (*Rev* 1:18), “who is, who was and who is to come” (*Rev* 1:4). Before him every knee must bend, in the heavens, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim that he is Lord (cf. *Phil* 2:10-11). In the encounter with Christ, every man discovers the mystery of his own life.(1)

Jesus is the genuine newness which surpasses all human expectations and such he remains for ever, from age to age. The Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation which he has accomplished by his Death and Resurrection are therefore the true criterion for evaluating all that happens in time and every effort to make life more human.

2. The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 is almost upon us. Ever since my first Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, I have looked towards this occasion with the sole purpose of preparing everyone to be docile to the working of the Spirit.(2) The event will be celebrated simultaneously in Rome and in all the particular Churches around the world, and it will have, as it were, two centres: on the one hand, the City where Providence chose to place the See of the Successor of Peter, and on the other hand, the Holy Land, where the Son of God was born as man, taking our flesh from a Virgin whose name was Mary (cf. *Lk* 1:27). With equal dignity and significance, therefore, the Jubilee will be celebrated not only in Rome but also in the Land which is rightly called “Holy” because it was there that Jesus was born and died. That Land, in which the first Christian community appeared, is the place where God revealed himself to humanity. It is the Promised Land which has so marked the history of the Jewish People, and is revered by the followers of Islam as well. May the Jubilee serve to advance mutual dialogue until the day when all of us together —

Jews, Christians and Moslems — will exchange the greeting of peace in Jerusalem.(3)

The period of the Jubilee introduces us to the vigorous language which the divine pedagogy of salvation uses to lead man to conversion and penance. These are the beginning and the path of man's healing, and the necessary condition for him to recover what he could never attain by his own strength: God's friendship and grace, the supernatural life which alone can bring fulfilment to the deepest aspirations of the human heart.

The coming of the Third Millennium prompts the Christian community to lift its eyes of faith to embrace new horizons in proclaiming the Kingdom of God. It is imperative therefore at this special time to return more faithfully than ever to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which shed new light upon *the missionary task of the Church* in view of the demands of evangelization today. At the Council, the Church became more deeply conscious both of the mystery which she herself is and of the apostolic mission entrusted to her by the Lord. This awareness commits the community of believers to live in the world knowing that they must be “the leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society, destined to be renewed in Christ and transformed into the family of God”.(4) In order to meet this commitment effectively, the Church must persevere in unity and grow in the life of communion.(5) The imminent approach of the Jubilee offers a powerful stimulus in this direction.

The journey of believers towards the Third Millennium is in no way weighed down by the weariness which the burden of two thousand years of history could bring with it. Rather, Christians feel invigorated, in the knowledge that they bring to the world the true light, Christ the Lord. Proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth, true God and perfect Man, the Church opens to all people the prospect of being “divinized” and thus of becoming more human.(6) This is

the one path which can lead the world to discover its lofty calling and to achieve it fully in the salvation wrought by God.

3. Responding to my Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*,⁽⁷⁾ the particular Churches during these years of immediate preparation for the Jubilee are getting ready, through prayer, catechesis and pastoral action of different kinds, for this celebration which is leading the whole Church into a new time of grace and mission. The approach of the Jubilee is also evoking growing interest among those who are searching for a favourable sign to help them discern the traces of God's presence in our time.

The years of preparation for the Jubilee have been placed under the sign of the Most Holy Trinity: through Christ — in the Holy Spirit — to God the Father. In the mystery of the Trinity, the journey of faith has its origin and its final goal, when at last our eyes will contemplate the face of God for ever. In celebrating the Incarnation, we fix our gaze upon the mystery of the Trinity. Jesus of Nazareth, who reveals the Father, has fulfilled the desire hidden in every human heart to know God. What creation preserved as a seal etched in it by the creative hand of God and what the ancient Prophets had announced as a promise is disclosed in the revelation of Christ.⁽⁸⁾

Jesus reveals the face of God the Father “compassionate and merciful” (*Jas* 5:11), and with the sending of the Holy Spirit he makes known the mystery of love which is the Trinity. It is the Spirit of Christ who is at work in the Church and in history: we must listen to him in order to recognize the signs of the new times and to make the expectation of the glorified Lord's return ever more vibrant in the hearts of the faithful. The Holy Year must therefore be one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity, the Most High God. At this point, the poetic words of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian, come to our aid:

“Glory to God the Father
and to the Son, King of the universe.
Glory to the Spirit,
worthy of praise and all holy.
The Trinity is one God
who created and filled all things:
the heavens with heavenly beings,
the earth with creatures of earth,
the sea, the rivers and springs
with creatures of the waters,
giving life to all things by his Spirit,
that all creatures
might sing the praises of their wise Creator,
who alone gives life and sustains
all life in being.
Above all others, let the creature who reasons
celebrate him always
as the great King and good Father”.(9)

4. May this hymn to the Trinity for the Incarnation of the Son rise with one voice from all who have been baptized and share the same faith in the Lord Jesus. May the ecumenical character of the Jubilee be a concrete sign of the journey which, especially in recent decades, the faithful of the different Churches and Ecclesial Communities have been making. It is only by listening to the Spirit that we shall be able to show forth visibly in full communion the grace of divine adoption which springs from Baptism: all of us children of the one Father. The challenging call of the Apostle rings out again for us today: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (*Eph 4:4-6*). To use the words of Saint Irenaeus: after receiving the Word of God as rain falling from heaven we cannot allow ourselves to present to the world an image of dry earth; nor can we ever claim to be

one bread if we prevent the scattered flour from becoming one through the action of the water which has been poured on us.(10)

Every Jubilee Year is like an invitation to a wedding feast. From the different Churches and Ecclesial Communities throughout the world, let us all hasten to the feast now being prepared; let us bring with us everything that already unites us and, by fixing our gaze on Christ alone, let us grow in the unity which is the fruit of the Spirit. The present task of the Bishop of Rome, as the Successor of Peter, is to make the invitation to the Jubilee celebration all the more insistent, in order that the two thousandth anniversary of the central mystery of the Christian faith may be experienced as a journey of reconciliation and a sign of true hope for all who look to Christ and to his Church, the sacrament “of intimate union with God and the unity of the entire human race”.(11)

5. How many historic memories the Jubilee evokes! We can recall the year 1300 when, responding to the wish of the people of Rome, Pope Boniface VIII solemnly inaugurated the first Jubilee in history. Resuming an ancient tradition which offered “abundant remission and pardon of sins” to those who visited Saint Peter's Basilica in the Eternal City, he wished on that occasion to grant “a pardon of sins which would be not only more abundant, but complete”.(12) From that time onwards, the Church has always celebrated Jubilees as significant steps on her journey towards the fulness of Christ.

History shows how enthusiastically the People of God have entered into the Holy Years, seeing them as a time when Jesus' invitation to conversion makes itself more deeply felt. In this long experience there have been abuses and misunderstandings, but the testimonies of true faith and sincere charity have been very much greater. An exemplary witness to this is Saint Philip Neri who, for the Jubilee of 1550, established the “Roman charity” as a tangible

sign of welcome to pilgrims. A long story of holiness could be told on the basis of the Jubilee experience and the fruits of conversion which the grace of pardon has produced in so many believers.

6. During my Pontificate, I have had the joy of proclaiming in 1983 the Extraordinary Jubilee for the 1950 years since the Redemption of the human race. Accomplished in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, this mystery is the consummation of an event which has its beginning in the Incarnation of the Son of God. The coming Jubilee, therefore, can well be considered “Great”, and the Church declares her fervent desire to embrace all believers in order to offer them the joy of reconciliation. From the whole Church there will rise the hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Father, who in his incomparable love has granted us in Christ to be “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (*Eph 2:19*). On the occasion of this great feast, a warm invitation to share our joy goes out to the followers of other religions, as it does to those who are far from faith in God. As brothers and sisters in the one human family, may we cross together the threshold of a new millennium that will demand effort and responsibility on the part of all.

For us believers, the Jubilee Year will highlight the Redemption accomplished by Christ in his Death and Resurrection. After this Death, no one can be separated from the love of God (cf. *Rm 8:21-39*), except through their own fault. The grace of mercy is offered to everyone, so that all who have been reconciled may also be “saved by his life” (*Rm 5:10*).

I therefore decree that *the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 will begin on Christmas Eve 1999*, with the opening of the holy door in Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, a few hours before the inaugural celebration planned for Jerusalem and Bethlehem and the opening of the holy door in each of the other Patriarchal

Basilicas of Rome. At Saint Paul's Basilica, the holy door will be opened on Tuesday, 18 January, when the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins, as a way of emphasizing the distinctive ecumenical character of this Jubilee.

I also decree that in the particular Churches the Jubilee will begin on the most holy day of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus, with a solemn Eucharistic Liturgy presided over by the diocesan Bishop in the Cathedral, as also in the Co-Cathedral where the Bishop may delegate someone else to preside at the celebration. Since the rite of the opening of the holy door is proper to the Vatican Basilica and the other Patriarchal Basilicas, it would be appropriate that the opening of the Jubilee in the individual Dioceses be done by having the *statio* in one church and a procession from there to the Cathedral, by liturgical reverencing of the Book of the Gospels and a reading of parts of this Bull, in accordance with the directives of the "Ritual for the Celebration of the Great Jubilee in Particular Churches".

May Christmas 1999 be for everyone a feast filled with light, the prelude to an especially deep experience of grace and divine mercy, which will continue until *the closing of the Jubilee Year on the day of the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 6 January 2001*. Let all the faithful welcome the invitation of the angels who ceaselessly proclaim: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased" (*Lk 2:14*). Thus the Christmas season will be the pulsing heart of the Holy Year, bringing to the life of the Church an infusion of the copious gifts of the Spirit for a new evangelization.

7. In the course of its history, the institution of the Jubilee has been enriched by signs which attest to the faith and foster the devotion of the Christian people. Among these, the first is the notion of *pilgrimage*, which is linked to the situation of man who readily describes his life as a journey. From birth to death, the

condition of each individual is that of the *homo viator*. Sacred Scripture, for its part, often attests to the special significance of setting out to go to sacred places. There was a tradition that the Israelite go on pilgrimage to the city where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, or visit the shrine at Bethel (cf *Jg* 20:18), or the one at Shiloh where the prayer of Samuel's mother, Hannah, was heard (cf *1 Sam* 1:3). Willingly subjecting himself to the Law, Jesus too went with Mary and Joseph as a pilgrim to the Holy City of Jerusalem (cf. *Lk* 2:41). The history of the Church is the living account of an unfinished pilgrimage. To journey to the city of Saints Peter and Paul, to the Holy Land, or to the old and new shrines dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the Saints: this is the goal of countless members of the faithful who find nourishment for their devotion in this way.

Pilgrimages have always been a significant part of the life of the faithful, assuming different cultural forms in different ages. A pilgrimage evokes the believer's personal journey in the footsteps of the Redeemer: it is an exercise of practical asceticism, of repentance for human weaknesses, of constant vigilance over one's own frailty, of interior preparation for a change of heart. Through vigils, fasting and prayer, the pilgrim progresses along the path of Christian perfection, striving to attain, with the support of God's grace, "the state of the perfect man, to the measure of the full maturity of Christ" (*Eph* 4:13).

8. In addition to pilgrimage, there is the sign of the *holy door*, opened for the first time in the Basilica of the Most Holy Saviour at the Lateran during the Jubilee of 1423. It evokes the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish. Jesus said: "I am the door" (*Jn* 10:7), in order to make it clear that no one can come to the Father except through him. This designation which Jesus applies to himself testifies to the fact that he alone is the Saviour sent by the Father. There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God:

this is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation. To him alone can the words of the Psalmist be applied in full truth: "This is the door of the Lord where the just may enter" (*Ps* 118:20).

To focus upon the door is to recall the responsibility of every believer to cross its threshold. To pass through that door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; it is to strengthen faith in him in order to live the new life which he has given us. It is a decision which presumes freedom to choose and also the courage to leave something behind, in the knowledge that what is gained is divine life (cf. *Mt* 13:44-46). It is in this spirit that the Pope will be the first to pass through the holy door on the night between 24 and 25 December 1999. Crossing its threshold, he will show to the Church and to the world the Holy Gospel, the wellspring of life and hope for the coming Third Millennium. Through the holy door, symbolically more spacious at the end of a millennium,(13) Christ will lead us more deeply into the Church, his Body and his Bride. In this way we see how rich in meaning are the words of the Apostle Peter when he writes that, united to Christ, we too are built, like living stones, "into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" (*1 Pt* 2:5).

9. Another distinctive sign, and one familiar to the faithful, is *the indulgence*, which is one of the constitutive elements of the Jubilee. The indulgence discloses the fulness of the Father's mercy, who offers everyone his love, expressed primarily in the forgiveness of sins. Normally, God the Father grants his pardon through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.(14) Free and conscious surrender to grave sin, in fact, separates the believer from the life of grace with God and therefore excludes the believer from the holiness to which he is called. Having received from Christ the power to forgive in his name (cf. *Mt* 16:19; *Jn* 20:23), the Church is in the world as the living presence of the love of God who leans down to every human weakness in order to

gather it into the embrace of his mercy. It is precisely through the ministry of the Church that God diffuses his mercy in the world, by means of that precious gift which from very ancient times has been called “indulgence”.

The Sacrament of Penance offers the sinner “a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification”(15) won by the sacrifice of Christ. The sinner thus enters the life of God anew and shares fully in the life of the Church. Confessing his own sins, the believer truly receives pardon and can once more take part in the Eucharist as the sign that he has again found communion with the Father and with his Church. From the first centuries, however, the Church has always been profoundly convinced that pardon, freely granted by God, implies in consequence a real change of life, the gradual elimination of evil within, a renewal in our way of living. The sacramental action had to be combined with an existential act, with a real cleansing from fault, precisely what is called penance. Pardon does not imply that this existential process becomes superfluous, but rather that it acquires a meaning, that it is accepted and welcomed.

Reconciliation with God does not mean that there are no enduring consequences of sin from which we must be purified. It is precisely in this context that the indulgence becomes important, since it is an expression of the “total gift of the mercy of God”.(16) With the indulgence, the repentant sinner receives a remission of the temporal punishment due for the sins already forgiven as regards the fault.

10. Because it offends the holiness and justice of God and scorns God's personal friendship with man, sin has a twofold consequence. In the first place, if it is grave, it involves deprivation of communion with God and, in consequence, exclusion from a share in eternal life. To the repentant sinner,

however, God in his mercy grants pardon of grave sin and remission of the “eternal punishment” which it would bring.

In the second place, “every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the “temporal punishment” of sin”,(17) and this expiation removes whatever impedes full communion with God and with one's brothers and sisters.

Revelation also teaches that the Christian is not alone on the path of conversion. In Christ and through Christ, his life is linked by a mysterious bond to the lives of all other Christians in the supernatural union of the Mystical Body. This establishes among the faithful a marvellous exchange of spiritual gifts, in virtue of which the holiness of one benefits others in a way far exceeding the harm which the sin of one has inflicted upon others. There are people who leave in their wake a surfeit of love, of suffering borne well, of purity and truth, which involves and sustains others. This is the reality of “vicariousness”, upon which the entire mystery of Christ is founded. His superabundant love saves us all. Yet it is part of the grandeur of Christ's love not to leave us in the condition of passive recipients, but to draw us into his saving work and, in particular, into his Passion. This is said in the famous passage of the Letter to the Colossians: “In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church” (1:24).

This profound truth is also wonderfully expressed in a passage of the Book of Revelation, where the Church is described as a bride dressed in a simple robe of white linen, the finest linen, bright and pure. And Saint John says: “The fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints” (*Rev* 19:8). In fact, in the lives of the saints the bright linen is woven to become the robe of eternal life.

Everything comes from Christ, but since we belong to him, whatever is ours also becomes his and acquires a healing power. This is what is meant by “the treasures of the Church”, which are the good works of the saints. To pray in order to gain the indulgence means to enter into this spiritual communion and therefore to open oneself totally to others. In the spiritual realm, too, no one lives for himself alone. And salutary concern for the salvation of one's own soul is freed from fear and selfishness only when it becomes concern for the salvation of others as well. This is the reality of the communion of saints, the mystery of “vicarious life”, of prayer as the means of union with Christ and his saints. He takes us with him in order that we may weave with him the white robe of the new humanity, the robe of bright linen which clothes the Bride of Christ.

This doctrine on indulgences therefore “teaches firstly how sad and bitter it is to have abandoned the Lord God (cf. *Jer* 2:19). When they gain indulgences, the faithful understand that by their own strength they would not be able to make good the evil which by sinning they have done to themselves and to the entire community, and therefore they are stirred to saving deeds of humility”.(18) Furthermore, the truth about the communion of saints which unites believers to Christ and to one another, reveals how much each of us can help others — living or dead — to become ever more intimately united with the Father in heaven.

Drawing on these doctrinal reasons and interpreting the motherly intuition of the Church, I decree that throughout the entire Jubilee all the faithful, properly prepared, be able to make abundant use of the gift of the indulgence, according to the directives which accompany this Bull (cf. attached decree).

11. These signs have long been part of the traditional celebration of Jubilees. Nor will the People of God fail to recognize other possible signs of the mercy of God at work in the Jubilee. In my

Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, I suggested some which may help people to live the exceptional grace of the Jubilee with greater fervour.(19) I recall them briefly here.

First of all, the sign of *the purification of memory*; this calls everyone to make an act of courage and humility in recognizing the wrongs done by those who have borne or bear the name of Christian.

By its nature, the Holy Year is a time when we are called to conversion. This is the first word of the preaching of Jesus, which significantly enough is linked with readiness to believe: “Repent and believe the Good News” (*Mk* 1:15). The imperative put by Christ flows from realization of the fact that “the time is fulfilled” (*Mk* 1:15). The fulfilment of God's time becomes a summons to conversion, which is in the first place an effect of grace. It is the Spirit who impels each of us to “return into ourselves” and to see the need to go back to the Father's house (cf. *Lk* 15:17-20). Examination of conscience is therefore one of the most decisive moments of life. It places each individual before the truth of his own life. Thus he discovers the distance which separates his deeds from the ideal which he had set himself.

The history of the Church is a history of holiness. The New Testament strongly states this mark of the baptized: they are “saints” to the extent that, being separate from the world insofar as the latter is subject to the Evil One, they consecrate themselves to worshipping the one true God. In fact, this holiness is evident not only in the lives of the many Saints and Beati recognized by the Church, but also in the lives of the immense host of unknown men and women whose number it is impossible to calculate (cf. *Rev* 7:9). Their lives attest to the truth of the Gospel and offer the world a visible sign that perfection is possible. Yet it must be acknowledged that history also records events which constitute a counter-testimony to Christianity. Because of the bond which

unites us to one another in the Mystical Body, all of us, though not personally responsible and without encroaching on the judgement of God who alone knows every heart, bear the burden of the errors and faults of those who have gone before us. Yet we too, sons and daughters of the Church, have sinned and have hindered the Bride of Christ from shining forth in all her beauty. Our sin has impeded the Spirit's working in the hearts of many people. Our meagre faith has meant that many have lapsed into apathy and been driven away from a true encounter with Christ.

As the Successor of Peter, I ask that in this year of mercy the Church, strong in the holiness which she receives from her Lord, should kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters. All have sinned and none can claim righteousness before God (cf. *1 Kgs 8:46*). Let it be said once more without fear: "We have sinned" (*Jer 3:25*), but let us keep alive the certainty that "where sin increased, grace abounded even more" (*Rom 5:20*).

The embrace which the Father reserves for repentant sinners who go to him will be our just reward for the humble recognition of our own faults and the faults of others, a recognition based upon awareness of the profound bond which unites all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Christians are invited to acknowledge, before God and before those offended by their actions, the faults which they have committed. Let them do so without seeking anything in return, but strengthened only by "the love of God which has been poured into our hearts" (*Rom 5:5*). At the same time, there will be no lack of fair-minded people able to recognize that past and present history also records incidents of exclusion, injustice and persecution directed against the sons and daughters of the Church.

Let no one in this Jubilee year wish to exclude himself from the Father's embrace. Let no one behave like the elder brother in the

Gospel parable who refuses to enter the house to celebrate (cf. *Lk* 15:25-30). May the joy of forgiveness be stronger and greater than any resentment. Thus the Bride will shine before the eyes of the world with the beauty and holiness which come from the Lord's grace. For two thousand years, the Church has been the cradle in which Mary places Jesus and entrusts him to the adoration and contemplation of all peoples. May the humility of the Bride cause to shine forth still more brightly the glory and power of the Eucharist, which she celebrates and treasures in her heart. In the sign of the consecrated Bread and Wine, Christ Jesus risen and glorified, the light of the nations (cf. *Lk* 2:32), reveals the enduring reality of his Incarnation. He remains living and real in our midst in order to nourish the faithful with his Body and Blood.

Let us therefore look to the future. The merciful Father takes no account of the sins for which we are truly sorry (cf. *Is* 38:17). He is now doing something new, and in the love which forgives he anticipates the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore, so that there may be a renewed commitment to Christian witness in the world of the next millennium, let faith be refreshed, let hope increase and let charity exert itself still more.

12. One sign of the mercy of God which is especially necessary today is the sign of *charity*, which opens our eyes to the needs of those who are poor and excluded. Such is the situation affecting vast sectors of society and casting its shadow of death upon whole peoples. The human race is facing forms of slavery which are new and more subtle than those of the past; and for too many people freedom remains a word without meaning. Some nations, especially the poorer ones, are oppressed by a debt so huge that repayment is practically impossible. It is clear, therefore, that there can be no real progress without effective cooperation between the peoples of every language, race, nationality and religion. The abuses of power which result in some dominating others must stop: such abuses are sinful and unjust. Whoever is concerned to

accumulate treasure only on earth (cf. *Mt* 6:19) “is not rich in the sight of God” (*Lk* 12:21).

There is also a need to create a new culture of international solidarity and cooperation, where all — particularly the wealthy nations and the private sector — accept responsibility for an economic model which serves everyone. There should be no more postponement of the time when the poor Lazarus can sit beside the rich man to share the same banquet and be forced no more to feed on the scraps that fall from the table (cf. *Lk* 16:19-31). Extreme poverty is a source of violence, bitterness and scandal; and to eradicate it is to do the work of justice and therefore the work of peace.

The Jubilee is a further summons to conversion of heart through a change of life. It is a reminder to all that they should give absolute importance neither to the goods of the earth, since these are not God, nor to man's domination or claim to domination, since the earth belongs to God and to him alone: “the earth is mine and you are strangers and sojourners with me” (*Lev* 25:23). May this year of grace touch the hearts of those who hold in their hands the fate of the world's peoples!

13. A sign of the truth of Christian love, ageless but especially powerful today, is *the memory of the martyrs*. Their witness must not be forgotten. They are the ones who have proclaimed the Gospel by giving their lives for love. The martyr, especially in our own days, is a sign of that greater love which sums up all other values. The martyr's life reflects the extraordinary words uttered by Christ on the Cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (*Lk* 23:34). The believer who has seriously pondered his Christian vocation, including what Revelation has to say about the possibility of martyrdom, cannot exclude it from his own life's horizon. The two thousand years since the birth of Christ are marked by the ever-present witness of the martyrs.

This century now drawing to a close has known very many martyrs, especially because of Nazism, Communism, and racial or tribal conflicts. People from every sector of society have suffered for their faith, paying with their blood for their fidelity to Christ and the Church, or courageously facing interminable years of imprisonment and privations of every kind because they refused to yield to an ideology which had become a pitiless dictatorial regime. From the psychological point of view, martyrdom is the most eloquent proof of the truth of the faith, for faith can give a human face even to the most violent of deaths and show its beauty even in the midst of the most atrocious persecutions.

Filled with grace during the coming Jubilee year, we shall be able with new strength to raise the hymn of thanksgiving to the Father, singing: *Te martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus*. Yes, this is the host of those who “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (*Rev 7:14*). For this reason the Church in every corner of the earth must remain anchored in the testimony of the martyrs and jealously guard their memory. May the People of God, confirmed in faith by the example of these true champions of every age, language and nation, cross with full confidence the threshold of the Third Millennium. In the hearts of the faithful, may admiration for their martyrdom be matched by the desire to follow their example, with God's grace, should circumstances require it.

14. The joy of the Jubilee would not be complete if our gaze did not turn to her who in full obedience to the Father gave birth to the Son of God in the flesh for our sake. For Mary “the time to give birth” came to pass in Bethlehem (*Lk 2:6*), and filled with the Spirit she brought forth the First-Born of the new creation. Called to be the Mother of God, from the day of the virginal conception Mary lived the fulness of her motherhood, crowning it on Calvary at the foot of the Cross. There, by the wondrous gift of Christ, she

also became the Mother of the Church, and showed to everyone the way that leads to the Son.

Woman of silence, given to listening, docile in the hands of the Father, the Virgin Mary is invoked as “blessed” by all generations, for she recognized the marvels accomplished in her by the Holy Spirit. The nations will never grow weary of invoking the Mother of mercy and will always find refuge under her protection. May she who with Jesus her son and Joseph her spouse went on pilgrimage to the holy Temple of God, guard the steps of all those who will be pilgrims in this Jubilee Year. And through the coming months may she deign to intercede intensely for the Christian people, so that abundant grace and mercy may be theirs, as they rejoice at the two thousand years since the birth of their Saviour.

Let the praise of the Church rise to God the Father in the Holy Spirit for the gift of salvation in Christ the Lord, both now and for evermore.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 29 November, the First Sunday of Advent, in the year of our Lord 1998, the twenty-first of my Pontificate.

Joannes Paulus II

CONDITIONS FOR GAINING THE JUBILEE INDULGENCE

By the present decree, which implements the will of the Holy Father expressed in the Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, and by virtue of faculties granted by the same Supreme Pontiff, the Apostolic Penitentiary defines the discipline to be observed for gaining the Jubilee indulgence.

All the faithful, properly prepared, can fully enjoy, throughout the Jubilee, the gift of the indulgence, in accordance with the following norms.

While indulgences granted either generally or by special rescript remain in force during the Great Jubilee, it should be noted that the Jubilee indulgence also can be applied in suffrage to the souls of the deceased: such an offering constitutes an outstanding act of supernatural charity, in virtue of the bond which, in the Mystical Body of Christ, unites the faithful still on pilgrimage here below and those who have already ended their earthly journey. Then too, the rule that a plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day remains in force during the entire Jubilee year.(20)

The high point of the Jubilee is the encounter with God the Father, through Christ the Saviour present in his Church and in a special way in the Sacraments. For this reason, the whole Jubilee journey, prepared for by pilgrimage, has as its starting point and its conclusion the celebration of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Eucharist, the paschal mystery of Christ, our peace and our reconciliation: this is the transforming encounter which opens us to the gift of the indulgence for ourselves and for others.

After worthily celebrating sacramental confession, which ordinarily, according to the norm of Canon 960 of the Code of

Canon Law and of Canon 720 § 1 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, must be individual and complete, each member of the faithful, having fulfilled the required conditions, can receive or apply the gift of the plenary indulgence during a suitable period of time, even daily, without needing to go to confession again. It is fitting however that the faithful should frequently receive the grace of the Sacrament of Penance, in order to grow in conversion and in purity of heart.(21) Participation in the Eucharist, which is required for all indulgences, should properly take place on the same day as the prescribed works are performed.(22)

These two culminating moments must be accompanied, first of all, by the witness of communion with the Church, manifested by prayer for the intentions of the Roman Pontiff, and also by acts of charity and penance, following the indications given below: these acts are meant to express the true conversion of heart to which communion with Christ in the Sacraments leads. Christ is truly our forgiveness and the expiation of our sins (cf. *1 Jn 2:2*). By pouring into the hearts of the faithful the Holy Spirit who is the “remission of all sins”,(23) he guides each individual towards a filial and trusting encounter with the Father of mercies. From this encounter springs a commitment to conversion and renewal, to ecclesial communion and to charity towards our brothers and sisters.

Likewise confirmed for the coming Jubilee is the norm whereby confessors can commute, on behalf of those legitimately impeded, both the work prescribed and the conditions required.(24) Cloistered men and women religious, the infirm and all those who for whatever reason are not able to leave their own house, can carry out, in lieu of a visit to a certain Church, a visit to the chapel of their house; should even this be impossible for them, they can gain the indulgence by spiritually uniting themselves with those carrying out the prescribed work in the ordinary manner and by offering to God their prayers, sufferings and discomforts. With

regard to the required conditions, the faithful can gain the Jubilee indulgence:

1) *In Rome*, if they make a pious pilgrimage to one of the Patriarchal Basilicas, namely, the Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican, the Archbasilica of the Most Holy Saviour at the Lateran, the Basilica of Saint Mary Major and the Basilica of Saint Paul on the Ostian Way, and there take part devoutly in Holy Mass or another liturgical celebration such as Lauds or Vespers, or some pious exercise (e.g., the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, the recitation of the *Akathistos* Hymn in honour of the Mother of God); furthermore, if they visit, as a group or individually, one of the four Patriarchal Basilicas and there spend some time in Eucharistic adoration and pious meditations, ending with the “Our Father”, the profession of faith in any approved form, and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. To the four Patriarchal Basilicas are added, on this special occasion of the Great Jubilee, the following further places, under the same conditions: the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, the Basilica of Saint Lawrence in Campo Verano, the Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love, and the Christian Catacombs.(25)

2) *In the Holy Land*, if, keeping the same conditions, they visit the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, or the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem or the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

3) *In other ecclesiastical territories*, if they make a sacred pilgrimage to the Cathedral Church or to other Churches or places designated by the Ordinary, and there assist devoutly at a liturgical celebration or other pious exercise, such as those mentioned above for the City of Rome; in addition, if they visit, in a group or individually, the Cathedral Church or a Shrine designated by the Ordinary, and there spend some time in pious meditation, ending

with the “Our Father”, the profession of faith in any approved form, and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

4) *In any place*, if they visit for a suitable time their brothers and sisters in need or in difficulty (the sick, the imprisoned, the elderly living alone, the handicapped, etc.), as if making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. *Mt* 25:34-36), and fulfilling the usual spiritual and sacramental conditions and saying the usual prayers. The faithful will certainly wish to repeat these visits throughout the Holy Year, since on each occasion they can gain the plenary indulgence, although obviously not more than once a day.

The plenary indulgence of the Jubilee can also be gained through actions which express in a practical and generous way the penitential spirit which is, as it were, the heart of the Jubilee. This would include abstaining for at least one whole day from unnecessary consumption (e.g., from smoking or alcohol, or fasting or practising abstinence according to the general rules of the Church and the norms laid down by the Bishops' Conferences) and donating a proportionate sum of money to the poor; supporting by a significant contribution works of a religious or social nature (especially for the benefit of abandoned children, young people in trouble, the elderly in need, foreigners in various countries seeking better living conditions); devoting a suitable portion of personal free time to activities benefitting the community, or other similar forms of personal sacrifice.

Given in Rome, at the Apostolic Penitentiary, on 29 November 1998, the First Sunday of Advent.

William Wakefield Card. Baum

Major Penitentiary

Luigi De Magistris

Regent

(1) (1)Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution

- on the Church in the Mod World *Gaudium et spes*, 22.
- (2) Cf. No. 1: *AAS* 71 (1979), 258.
 - (3) Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Epistle *Redemptionis anno* (20 April 1984): *AAS* 76 (1984), 627.
 - (4) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 40.
 - (5) Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* (10 November 1994), 36: *AAS* 87 (1995), 28.
 - (6) Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 41.
 - (7) Cf. Nos. 39-54: *AAS* 87 (1995), 31-37.
 - (8) Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 2 and 4.
 - (9) *Dogmatic Poems, XXXI, Hymnus alias: PG* 37, 510-511.
 - (10) Cf. *Adversus Haereses*, III, 17: *PG* 7, 930.
 - (11) Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, 1.
 - (12) Bull *Antiquorum habet* (22 February 1300): *Bullarium Romanum* III/2, p. 94.
 - (13) Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* (10 November 1994), 33: *AAS* 87 (1995), 25.
 - (14) Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* (2 December 1984), 28-34: *AAS* 77 (1985), 250-273.
 - (15) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1446.
 - (16) John Paul II, Bull *Aperite portas Redemptori* (6 January 1983), 8: *AAS* 75 (1983), 98.
 - (17) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1472.
 - (18) Paolo VI, Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum doctrina* (1 January 1967), 9: *AAS* 59 (1967), 18.
 - (19) Cf. Nos. 33.37.51: *AAS* 87 (1995), 25-26; 29-30; 36.
 - (20) Cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1986, Norm. 21, § 1.
 - (21) Cf. *ibid.*, Norm. 23, §§ 1-2.
 - (22) Cf. *ibid.*, Norm. 23, § 3.
 - (23) « Quia ipse est remissio omnium peccatorum »: *Missale Romanum*, Super oblata, Sabbato post Dominicam VII Paschae.
 - (24) Cf. *Ench. indulg.*, Norm. 27.
 - (25) Cf. *Ench. indulg.*, Grant 14.

