



TRAINING REFLECTION
March - April 2025

Jubilee Year 2025: “Pilgrims of Hope”

Introduction

The Jubilee Year 2025, dedicated to Hope, began on Christmas Eve, December 24th, 2024, when the Holy Father proceeded to open the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican.

In response to Pope Francis’ invitation, we ask the question: how can we, as AIC volunteers and as a Church, be “pilgrims of Hope” among those living in vulnerable situations?

With this reflection we hope to unite the entire AIC network in this challenge of renewal and spiritual deepening, in the joy of the resurrection.

Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.





1. What is a Jubilee?

The word “jubilee” has positive connotations of joy and celebration.¹

In the words of Pope Francis, a Jubilee is “*an event of great spiritual, ecclesial and social significance*” in which “*God’s holy and faithful people [live] this celebration as a special gift of grace, characterized by the forgiveness of sins and in particular by the indulgence, which is a full expression of the mercy of God*”.² It is, therefore, a time of conversion, spiritual renewal and reconciliation that helps us to strengthen our faith and our relationship with God.

It is also called a **Holy Year**, “*because it is a time when we experience God’s holiness transforming us.*”

The Jubilee asks us “*to set out on a journey and to cross boundaries. [...] We do not only change places physically, but we also change ourselves. [...] Pilgrimage is an experience of conversion, of transforming one’s very being to conform it to the holiness of God. During the pilgrimage, one also shares in the experience of those who, for various reasons, are forced to leave their homelands to seek a better life for themselves and their family*”.³

“*A Jubilee year is a sign of reconciliation because it establishes a ‘favorable time’ (cf. 2 Cor 6:2) for conversion*”.⁴

2. Origin of the Jubilees

The word “jubilee” comes from the Jewish tradition and has its origin in the word “yobel”, the ritual horn that was used to begin Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the most important feast of the people of Israel.

The Jubilees or Jubilee years are rooted in **Sacred Scripture**: “*This fiftieth year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when every one of you shall return to his own property, every one to his own family estate*” (Lev 25:10). Thus, for the people of Israel, this time of grace was established every fifty years, to return to its essence everything received from the hand of God, to reestablish the correct relationship with God, among people and with creation, from justice, recreating life from the harmony of paradise. Freedom was returned to slaves, the lands to their original owners, debts were forgiven. It was a new beginning for the community.

In spite of the blessings that the celebration of this Jubilee year implied, in reality it did not take place among the people of Israel as was God’s desire. For this reason, first the prophets and later Jesus himself, reading a text from Isaiah, proclaimed it again: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me. He has sent me to evangelize the poor, to proclaim*

¹ Unfortunately, in the past the Jubilee was perceived as something far removed from life and reserved for a privileged few, who through money acquired “indulgences” to reach heaven.

² Letter of Pope Francis to Monsignor Rino Fisichella for the Jubilee 2025, 11th February 2022:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2022/documents/20220211-fisichella-giubileo2025.html>

³ “Pilgrimage”, Jubilee 2025 website: <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/il-pellegrinaggio.html>

⁴ “Reconciliation”, Jubilee 2025 website: <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/riconciliazione.html>



liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19). The novelty of Jesus is that he brings this year of the Lord’s favor to all, especially to people living in poverty.

The meaning of a Jubilee is to put into practice and make effective this year of the Lord’s grace. In the Church, the first one that was celebrated was convoked in the year 1300, by Boniface VIII, with the desire that the mercy of God would reach everyone. Since then, they have been celebrated regularly every 25 or 50 years (ordinary Jubilees), or on special occasions (extraordinary Jubilees), as decided by the Pope. In the year 2000 we were able to experience the Great Jubilee of St. John Paul II, in which he asked forgiveness for all the sins of the Church. The last Jubilee year celebrated in the Catholic Church was the one called, in an extraordinary way, by Pope Francis in 2016, for the Church to deepen the theme of mercy.

3. How to live a Jubilee year?

- **Prayer**
- **Alms**
- **Fasting**
- **Celebration of the sacraments**, especially the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist
- **Works of mercy**
- **Pilgrimage to a holy place** in which to confess our faith

All of this should lead to personal conversion that will lead us to obtain the indulgence, experiencing God’s love and mercy for each of us. Dioceses around the world have organized numerous activities to help us celebrate the Jubilee.

4. 2025 Jubilee of Hope

In May of last year, Pope Francis officially proclaimed the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025 with the public reading and delivery of the Bull *Spes Non Confundit*, in which he explains the meaning of the theme he has chosen, “**Pilgrims of Hope**”, and how he wants this Jubilee year to unfold.

The title of the Bull is very telling. It is taken from St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, “*hope does not disappoint*” (Rom 5:5) and alludes to the fact that **Christian hope is founded on our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ**, so that even though we experience difficulties, persecutions and suffering, we know that we are saved in hope.

In a world marked by uncertainty, divisions and social and environmental crises, where suffering and injustice afflict many people, leading them to discouragement and disappointment, hope in the resurrection is more necessary than ever, for it offers every human being another perspective from which life takes on its full meaning.



Hope is a central virtue in Christian life, a gift that comes from God, which keeps us firm in faith and encourages us to keep walking, despite the difficulties. For our hope is not based on our strength, but on the promise that God's love is at work in our lives and on the certainty that he is always with us. Hope invites us to look to the future and to trust that God has a perfect plan for each of us, a plan full of mercy, redemption and life in fullness.

“Hope [...] is waiting for something that has already been given to us: salvation in the eternal and infinite love of God [...].

To hope, therefore, is to welcome this gift that God offers us every day.

To hope is to savor the wonder of being loved, sought, and desired by a God who did not hide in his impenetrable skies, but became flesh and blood, history and days, to share our fate.”

Pope Francis, Introduction to Hope is a Light in the Night

The Jubilee is also a **call** to be pilgrims, to **undergo a process of personal and communitarian conversion**. Strengthened in this hope in the eternal and infinite love of God for all his creatures, we are called to walk together, as God's people, **living this hope with joy in order to spread it and make it reach everyone**, especially those who need it most.

5. St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, Pilgrims of Hope⁵

In the context of the Jubilee of Hope, martyrs and saints are exceptional witnesses, since they have given their lives to bring to others the hope born of the Gospel. For AIC, hope refers us to St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, who made their lives a pilgrimage of hope. Indeed, they both engaged in a process of profound spiritual conversion that led them to be missionaries of charity, bringing the consolation and love of God to people living in poverty.

In his spiritual journey, guided by contemplation and total dedication to Jesus Christ, **St. Vincent** was inspired by the Spirit to evangelize disadvantaged people and to encourage others to do the same. Throughout his life, Vincent formed his life in the image of Jesus Christ, constantly seeking, like him, to do the will of the Father and dedicating himself generously to the lowly. He lived as a pilgrim of charity and hope, sowing the seeds of the Kingdom through his closeness and dedication to the most vulnerable people and spreading God's saving love around him, in a constant process of conversion sustained in hope.

For her part, **St. Louise's** life was marked by a generous dedication to the following of Christ in the midst of great personal difficulties that led her to experience moments of despair. In her journey of conversion, she knew how to accept the inspiration of the Spirit who animated her life with the hope that she lacked and who impelled her to place herself at the service of

⁵ Source: Vinícius Augusto Teixeira, CM, *St. Vincent and St. Louise, pilgrims in hope:*
<https://congregatiomissionis.org/en/2024/12/19/san-vincenzo-and-santa-luisa-pellegrini-della-speranza/>



disadvantaged people. There is no one like someone who has lived through despair to be a witness of hope, and that is what Louise did as she ministered on behalf of people living in poverty with tenderness and compassion.

We, members of AIC, following in the footsteps of our patron saints Vincent and Louise, are called to live out our vocation among the most disadvantaged people with this same hope.

Let us celebrate with joy the gift of this Jubilee!

Questions to discuss in your groups

1. Do you know the initiatives of your diocese to live this Jubilee Year?
2. How will your AIC group join in the Jubilee celebration?
3. What concrete testimonies of hope do you offer today as an AIC volunteer?

Reflection compiled by: Milagros Galisteo, January 2025