



Rome – 18 November 2023

ON THE WAY TOWARDS THE JUBILEE

- **Rev. Don Francesco Scalzotto – Dicastery for Evangelization**

Good morning everyone. I am very pleased to be here with you today and thus to share the work done so far by the Dicastery for Evangelization regarding the next Jubilee and the main future steps.

First of all, I bring you greetings from HE Monsignor Fisichella, Pro-Prefect of the Section of the Dicastery dedicated to Fundamental Issues for Evangelization in the world.

I am Francesco Scalzotto, official of the Dicastery, I am a priest of the Diocese of Bologna and I am responsible for coordinating some aspects of the Jubilee in the Dicastery.

I thought I'd divide our meeting into two parts. In the first, we offer you the lines of the main contents, such as the horizon, in which our work has been moving for a year and a half. Then I would move on to the more practical and technical part about the concrete tools for the Jubilee.

Jubilee: a popular event and a time of hope

The Jubilee is an event of the people, and it is an event of faith, since the first Jubilee of 1300. In fact, that first Holy Year was born by will of the People of God. In a climate of change of century, in a climate of the end of world, with the charm also of the dates that mark a transition - from 1299 to 1300, the people of Rome flock to Pope Boniface VIII to ask for the gift of indulgence. The Pope responded to that insistent request by granting "an indulgence of all sins, not only full and more abundant, but very full", as stated in the Bull of Indiction, *Antiquorum habet*. «Very full»!

It was February 22, 1300 and Boniface VIII wrote that the indulgence was retroactive: it also applied to those who had already made the pilgrimage since the previous Christmas. A curious fact, which however tells us about the insistence of the People of God in wanting to experience the forgiveness of sins.

The Jubilee, therefore, did not arise as an intuition of the Popes, or of the pastors, or even of theologians. It is the fruit of the faith of the People of God. Therefore it seems to me that we can say that the Jubilee is the most popular event in the life of the Church. Even in its celebratory forms it is very clear. It certainly has had its evolution over time - at the beginning it was not every 25 years, like today, but only since 1475 - and yet, however, we know what must be done: it is the time of the pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles, it is the The experience of crossing the Holy Door is the time of conversion, of a particular immersion in the sacraments, of reconciliation, etc...

This aspect seems to me to be a first important characteristic and as a Dicastery we are trying to always keep it in mind in the preparation. The Jubilee must be for the people, it must express the spirituality of the whole Church, of the People of God, those of today, those of every age, those of every continent.

The Jubilee , then, is made of concrete gestures. The most emblematic and evocative is the opening of the Holy Door. It is a very specific, very concrete gesture. In the past, it was even more physical, material. You know well how the Pope symbolically used a hammer, while the masons actually removed the bricks from the Holy Door which was finally opened.

Then there is the concrete experience of passing through this Door, which pilgrims kiss and touch; they kneel on the threshold. Not infrequently tears fall, there are songs etc... it is the expression of the joy of faith, of those who arrive at their destination after a long external journey, but which very often is a sign of the internal one.

There is the concreteness of the journey on foot. The pilgrim struggles, walks, sweats, meets fellow travelers. There is the concreteness of the sacraments: confession, the Eucharist. There is the concreteness of the works of penance, fasting, almsgiving... It is the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus that opens up our concrete history and shows his presence among his people. It is a hope that can be touched.

Precisely because of this concreteness, the Church fits into the path of history of all the men and women of their time. The Jubilee does not shy away from this dimension and in the peculiar historical moment characterized by the typical tensions of the cultural change underway, as well as by serious war situations that pervade various geographical areas, it forcefully proposes the theme of *hope* .

We know well how Christian hope is not an escape from the present with its problems, but is the foundation that gives security to the existence of those who entrust themselves to God. It is dynamic and illuminates the pilgrimage of life, showing the faces of companions in I walk. It is not a solitary wandering, but a journey of people, confident and happy, moving towards a new destination. Hope reaches out to everyone and rejects no one. His is a dynamic movement not a static persistence. We must be able to announce our faith and bear witness to charity through the language and signs of hope. On the other hand, the image of C. Peguy when he described faith and charity as the two older sisters holding the hand of the younger one, hope, which no one seems to listen to, but which in fact is the one that attracts, still possesses the traits of profound truth today.

This is the horizon of meaning embodied by the next Jubilee which "could greatly favor the recomposition of a climate of hope and trust, as a sign of a renewed rebirth of which we all feel the urgency" (Letter from Pope Francis, 11 February 2022). The spiritual dimension of the Jubilee, which invites conversion, is combined with the fundamental aspects of social life, to constitute a coherent unity.

In particular, thinking of you Catholic teachers, there is the great theme of the education of children and young people. It is precisely education that envisages a future of hope. It is precisely education that offers the tools capable of meeting hope and becoming protagonist builders of it. I believe that the Jubilee with its load of journey (*pilgrims*) and hope (*of hope*) can infuse new perspectives and energy into the great task of teaching and education.

All these themes that are on the horizon find a particular synthesis in the motto chosen by the Holy Father: *pilgrims of hope* , *Peregrinantes in Spem* . *Pellegrini* carries within himself the meaning of the journey of the People of God, the journey of life in the light of faith in Jesus Christ. And then *hope* . The prophet Isaiah on several occasions sees the human family, returning from the dispersion,

gathered in the light of the Word of God: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9.1). The light is that of the Son made Man, Jesus, who with his own Word gathers every people and nation. It is the living flame of Jesus, who came to proclaim the year of grace of the Lord (see Luke 4:19), which moves the pilgrims' steps: "Arise, clothed in light," says the prophet again, " for the your light, the glory of the Lord shines upon you" (Isaiah, 60,1).

Tools and future steps

What I have just described to you is the horizon (at least part of it) in which we have been working for a year and a half now. We are trying to mediate these perspectives with tools, with aids, with practices, with a preparation process and with concrete proposals.

First of all, the Logo and the Hymn of the Jubilee, which in addition to the motto, identify the Holy Year both in terms of membership and celebration. Both bring with them part of the contents that I previously presented to you and above all they have the aim of starting to warm up the engines, visually and musically accompanying the entire Holy Year. There is a need for these tools of belonging and identification, as well as celebration.

As for the logo, it represents four stylized figures to indicate humanity coming from the four corners of the earth. They are embracing each other, to indicate the solidarity and brotherhood that must unite people. You will notice that the row opener is holding on to the cross. It is the sign not only of the faith that embraces, but of the hope that can never be abandoned because we always need it and above all in moments of greatest need. It is useful to observe the waves that are below and that are choppy to indicate that the pilgrimage of life does not always move in calm waters. Personal affairs and world events often impose a call to hope with greater intensity. This is why we must underline the lower part of the Cross which extends and transforms into an anchor, which imposes itself on the wave motion. As we know, the anchor has often been used as a metaphor for hope.

An international competition was announced to set the anthem to music, the text of which was written by Pierangelo Sequeri; 270 people from 38 different countries participated. In April 2023 an International Commission of musicians chose the music of Francesco Meneghello (Master of the Mantua Choir). We currently have the anthem in Italian translated into English and French and soon into the other main languages, which you can find online, downloadable for free both in terms of the audio version and the scores. Finally, in September, the Jubilee Prayer composed by the Holy Father was published in twelve languages.

Coming to the Site. The Jubilee website was inaugurated on May 9th: www.iubilaeum2025.va. This web page is the official reference of the Jubilee, and the updates and news that are added day by day will be presented there. It is a page in 9 languages, which also offers parts of content, which illustrate with texts and short videos what the Jubilee is, what its history etc... this also at the service of a catechesis that can no longer be taken for granted. The Jubilee is an unknown in its history and value. It needs to be rediscovered at all ages and in this sense it nourishes pastoral action, catechesis and training courses. What you find is a first part of material that we will enrich.

From 31 October it is possible to download the new Jubilee 2025 App, *iubilaeum2025*. From the application, downloadable for iOS and Android, you can access all the news already on the website, but the app interface will make registering for jubilee events easier and quicker, with the

possibility of receiving personalized information. The user will be able to save the events they are interested in, access their personalized area more quickly, and have the QR code for the times of the pilgrimage to the Holy Door. The app, essentially, will allow the pilgrim to more quickly acquire information on the Jubilee, will facilitate the registration process and will speed up the organization of pilgrimages within the city, as well as allowing direct communication between the pilgrim and the Dicastery .

Upon registration, the pilgrim, after entering the required data, will receive the "Pilgrim Card", in digital version, with a personal QR code necessary to have access to the Jubilee events and to organize the pilgrimage to the Holy Door . The use will be intended not only for individuals, but also for those who organize pilgrimages in parish, diocesan or other groups. This registration is obviously free, but will be required to access the Holy Door and Jubilee events or celebrations. This is for reasons of safety and the best possible organization. In fact, we want the passage of the Holy Door to be a moment of faith, and not characterized by a rapid and hasty style, without even realizing what is being done... for this reason we need to limit the flows and registration allows us to do this. Anyone who has not registered will still be able to make the pilgrimage to the Holy Door, since the Pilgrim Reception Center is located in Via della Conciliazione which will manage this entire flow.

I now come to the Calendar, which was made public on May 9th. You will only find the main events, those that we imagine will bring thousands of pilgrims to Rome... obviously you will not find the pilgrimages of the Dioceses or of smaller categories in numbers. Everything will come together as we receive registrations. The calendar aims to give substance to that broad perspective of the people that I spoke to you about previously. In fact, jubilees are called for families, young people, workers, movements, priests, bishops, consecrated life, etc...

I particularly emphasize what I imagine interests you most: the Jubilee of the World of Education which will be held in Rome from 30 October to 2 November 2025. They will be days dedicated to the world of teachers, professors, professional educators, administrative and those involved in various capacities with education. Together we will experience the jubilee celebrations with the rite of pilgrimage, of crossing the Holy Door, of the Eucharist with the Holy Father, of the profession of faith at the tomb of the apostles and the possibility of the sacrament of reconciliation. There will also be opportunities for meeting and reflection on the theme of hope and education, in a sort of "dialogue with the city".

It is already possible to register for these days via the App, although the specific program has not yet been disclosed as it is still being developed.

Well, I would stop here. As you can see, things are many and can only increase, so the invitation is to follow the work of the Dicastery and the preparation for the Jubilee. For the moment, I thank you for your kind attention. Thank you.