

## Chapter 1 : Jubilee Year Revelation

*The Great Jubilee in was a major event in the Roman Catholic Church, held from Christmas Eve (December 24), to Epiphany (January 6), Like other previous Jubilee years, it was a celebration of the mercy of God and forgiveness of sins.*

True Jubilee by Reformation Gospel Introduction The high expectations that people have for the year include that some look forward to it as a "year of Jubilee. Others may anticipate social disorder and even disaster because of Y2K, or eschatological troubles because of the supposed significance of the year for the end of the world. Those who see the year as a year of Jubilee expect special blessings of salvation in the coming year. The view of the year as a Jubilee year is that of the Roman Catholic Church. If this is so, one may ask, why is the matter of any concern to Protestants? More especially, why is the matter of concern to Reformed churches and Christians? Jubilee has an ecumenical purpose. In an "Apostolic Letter" that gave instructions concerning the preparation for the Jubilee year, a document titled, "As the Third Millennium Draws Near" "Tertio Millennio Adveniente" , the pope declared the following: Among the most fervent petitions which the Church makes to the Lord during this important time, as the even sic of the new millennium approaches, is that unity among all Christians of the various confessions will increase until they reach full communion. I pray that the Jubilee will be a promising opportunity for fruitful cooperation in the many areas which unite us; these are unquestionably more numerous than those which divide us. It would thus be quite helpful if, with due respect for the programs of the individual Churches and Communities, ecumenical agreements could be reached with regard to the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee. Since this ecumenical cooperation and full communion with Rome is not possible for true Protestants, particularly Reformed churches and people, it is proper, if not a duty, to make clear to ourselves and to Rome why cooperation and communion are impossible. We ought to demonstrate that such cooperation and communion are forbidden by God. We have a controversy with Rome on the eve of the year , and Rome has a controversy with us. This controversy is exactly the controversy that our respective spiritual and ecclesiastical forbears had with each other at the time of the Reformation in the early sixteenth century. This controversy has not been resolved. The controversy is fundamental. The issue is that raised by the apostle in the epistle to the Galatians: So far is it from being the case that the year of Jubilee can bring us together that, in fact, the Roman Catholic Jubilee illustrates, exemplifies, and highlights the basic doctrinal difference between us. There is yet a third reason why Reformed Protestants should comment on the Jubilee year. During this year, we hope to enjoy the blessings of this special time-the blessings of salvation. The question-and the topic of this pamphlet-is not, "A. The Jubilee year runs from Christmas Eve to January 6, This is a tremendously important year for Roman Catholics, one that is observed with a great deal of ceremony and much activity. The year closes with the walling up of the same door on January 6, Many of the Roman Catholic faithful observe the year by going on pilgrimages. The very first of the supposedly spiritual and saving acts by which the Jubilee must be observed, according to the papal bull, is pilgrimages: Recommended also are pilgrimages to important church buildings in Jerusalem. If one cannot leave his own country, he should visit certain church buildings in his own land. All of this ceremony and symbolism and all of these activities have special, saving significance, because the year is a Jubilee year. In the Old Testament, every fiftieth year-the year following seven periods of seven years-was a Jubilee year for Israel. And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you Especially three elements belonged to the proper, prescribed observance of the Old Testament Jubilee. Land that the poor had had to sell returned to its original owner, so that everyone again possessed his inheritance in Israel. Those Israelites who, because of poverty, had sold themselves as slaves were released. And the Israelites might neither sow nor reap. That Old Testament

ordinance and type had a rich significance. As the year of the release of prisoners from the bondage of slavery, it was a year of liberation, a year of freedom. The return of the land to its original owners represented the cancellation of debts. The prohibition of sowing and reaping meant that both the people and the land had rest. But this liberty and rest were a dramatic enjoyment of covenant fellowship with God as the numbers involved made plain. The year of Jubilee was the fiftieth year as the fulfillment of "seven sabbaths of years" The year of Jubilee, then, was based on the atonement and gave Israel in striking ways the benefits of the covering of their guilt in the sight of God. Understandably, that Old Testament year of Jubilee was a year of joy, especially for the poor, the oppressed, the burdened, and laboring in Israel. For good reason, "Jubilee" came to mean "joy"-the great joy of jubilation. So rich a sign was the Old Testament year of Jubilee of the salvation of God that the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming Messiah as bringing about the real Jubilee year. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn. Having read the text, He said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" v. This now is what the year has become by papal decree: For one year, between Christmas Eve and January 6, that Old Testament law is in force again. That Old Testament ceremony returns in a literal way. Jubilee by Indulgences The benefits of the Jubilee are received and enjoyed by Roman Catholics mainly by means of indulgences. The year itself is now special. I quote from the bull, "The Mystery of the Incarnation": I decree that throughout the entire Jubilee all the faithful, properly prepared, be able to make abundant use of the gift of the indulgence. This is punishment that he himself would otherwise have to pay off to God in purgatory. Just as indulgences can be applied to the account of the living, so they can be applied to the account of someone who is already suffering in purgatory, thus saving him from that hellish torment. The section of the bull, "Mystery of the Incarnation," that stipulated the "conditions for gaining the Jubilee indulgences" noted at the outset that "the Jubilee indulgence also can be applied in suffrage to the souls of the deceased. People have to earn these indulgences from the Roman Catholic Church. They earn them by pilgrimages, by prayers, by giving alms, by donating to Roman Catholic charities, and even by not smoking for a day. Most indulgences are partial. They deliver from only a part of the temporal punishment in purgatory. In the year of the "Great Jubilee," complete deliverance from all the pain and punishment of purgatory is available. The bull that proclaimed as "Great Jubilee" stated: No wonder that Roman Catholics are excited about the year as the year of Jubilee. It offers escape from all purgatorial suffering. The way is that of indulgences. Pope Leo X published a bull authorizing the sale of indulgences for the purpose of rebuilding St. Peter's. That brought supersalesman Tetzl into Germany, where he came into contact with Luther. The indulgences that Tetzl was hawking were plenary. The placard over the theses read: By her Jubilee year, Rome opposes her gospel of human will, merit, and work against the Reformation gospel of grace alone. Here are a document and a Jubilee year that are all about indulgences, that are mainly the promotion and practice of indulgences. The Protestant Reformed Churches protest! Although we are no Luther, our protest is not a whit less vehement and determined than was his. The agreements with Rome on the part of the evangelicals in Evangelicals and Catholics Together and on the part of world Lutheranism either mean nothing, or, as is more likely, that the evangelicals and Lutherans are compromising the gospel of grace alone, for the sake of union with the Roman Catholic Church. This repudiation will be accompanied by heartfelt sorrow over that gross sin against grace for so many hundreds of years. Many Protestant churches have evidently accepted the papal decree that is a special year of Jubilee, continuing the Old Testament ceremony. These churches now preach the coming Jubilee year. What it amounts to for these Protestant churches is only that we all put pressure on our government to cancel the monetary debt owed our nation by poor countries in Latin America, South America, Africa, and other places. Never mind that the money loaned is money taken by our government from the hard working taxpayer! Never mind that the reason often for the difficulty of the poor nations to repay what they owe is that the rulers have squandered the money on their own pleasures or deposited it in Swiss banks! Never mind that the cancellation of the debt will encourage future borrowing for profligate spending, with no intention to repay! The only debt these churches know is monetary. The only freedom they can conceive is physical. The only rest of which they are conscious

is earthly. The only joy they celebrate is that of a full belly and bulging bank account. Rome at least recognizes and teaches that the deepest need of man is spiritual. His real debt is punishment owed to God. His real bondage is sin. His unrest, in reality, is fear of a just and terrible God. His joylessness is apprehension at death. Biblical Critique of the Roman Jubilee Despite her denial of it, the Roman Catholic Church with all her doctrines and practices is subject to authoritative examination by the Word of God, Holy Scripture. Legalism is the heresy that humans must save themselves, at least in part, by their own obedience to the law. Such religious observance is "bondage," that is, spiritual slavery.

**Chapter 2 : Jubilee – Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn**

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Contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Church prepares to cross the threshold of the Third Millennium. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will. These words clearly indicate that in Jesus Christ the history of salvation finds its culmination and ultimate meaning. 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: Before him every knee must bend, in the heavens, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim that he is Lord cf. In the encounter with Christ, every man discovers the mystery of his own life. 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. The Great Jubilee of the Year 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. 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. 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. 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. 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 years of preparation for the Jubilee have been placed under the sign of the Most Holy Trinity: 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. It is the Spirit of Christ who is at work in the Church and in history: At this point, the poetic words of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian, come to our aid: *Glory to the Spirit, worthy of praise and all holy. The Trinity is one God who created and filled all things: 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: The challenging call of the Apostle rings out again for us today: To use the words of Saint Irenaeus: 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. How many historic memories the Jubilee evokes! In this long experience there have been abuses and misunderstandings, but the testimonies of true faith and sincere charity have been very much greater. 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. During my Pontificate, I have had the joy of proclaiming in the Extraordinary Jubilee for*

the 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. 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. 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. May Christmas 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. Let all the faithful welcome the invitation of the angels who ceaselessly proclaim: 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. 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. The history of the Church is the living account of an unfinished pilgrimage. Pilgrimages have always been a significant part of the life of the faithful, assuming different cultural forms in different ages. 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 It evokes the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish. 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: To him alone can the words of the Psalmist be applied in full truth: 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. 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. 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. Another distinctive sign, and one familiar to the faithful, is the indulgence, which is one of the constitutive elements of the Jubilee. Having received from Christ the power to forgive in his name cf. 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. 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. 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. His superabundant love saves us all. This is said in the famous passage of the Letter to the Colossians: 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: 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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: 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: 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.

**Chapter 3 : Read the Jubilee Bible Free Online**

*Chapter II, THE JUBILEE OF THE YEAR , explains the origin of a Holy Year and the deep significance of this next one which will mark the end of one millennium and the beginning of another. With the Incarnation, God entered human history, eternity entered time: Christ is the Lord of time.*

Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful. These words ring out for us today, and they invite us to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence: She became more than ever a pilgrim people, led by him who is the "the great shepherd of the sheep" Heb With extraordinary energy, involving so many of her members, the People of God here in Rome, as well as in Jerusalem and in all the individual local churches, went through the "Holy Door" that is Christ. To him who is the goal of history and the one Saviour of the world, the Church and the Spirit cried out: But certainly, "a river of living water", the water that continually flows "from the throne of God and of the Lamb" cf. This is the water of the Spirit which quenches thirst and brings new life cf. This is the merciful love of the Father which has once again been made known and given to us in Christ. At the end of this year we can repeat with renewed jubilation the ancient words of thanksgiving: For all this, I feel the need to write to you, dearly beloved, to share this song of praise with you. From the beginning of my Pontificate, my thoughts had been on this Holy Year as an important appointment. I thought of its celebration as a providential opportunity during which the Church, thirty-five years after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, would examine how far she had renewed herself, in order to be able to take up her evangelizing mission with fresh enthusiasm. Has the Jubilee succeeded in this aim? But we cannot fail to give thanks for the "marvels" the Lord has worked for us: At the same time, what we have observed demands to be reconsidered, and in a sense "deciphered", in order to hear what the Spirit has been saying to the Church cf. Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is especially necessary for us to direct our thoughts to the future which lies before us. Often during these months we have looked towards the new millennium which is beginning, as we lived this Jubilee not only as a remembrance of the past, but also as a prophecy of the future. We now need to profit from the grace received, by putting it into practice in resolutions and guidelines for action. This is a task I wish to invite all the local churches to undertake. In each of them, gathered around their Bishop, as they listen to the word and "break bread" in brotherhood cf. In the final analysis, this rooting of the Church in time and space mirrors the movement of the Incarnation itself. Now is the time for each local Church to assess its fervor and find fresh enthusiasm for its spiritual and pastoral responsibilities, by reflecting on what the Spirit has been saying to the People of God in this special year of grace, and indeed in the longer span of time from the Second Vatican Council to the Great Jubilee. It is with this purpose in mind that I wish to offer in this Letter, at the conclusion of the Jubilee Year, the contribution of my Petrine ministry, so that the Church may shine ever more brightly in the variety of her gifts and in her unity as she journeys on. In the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee I expressed the hope that the bimillennial celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation would be lived as "one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity"[2] and also "as a journey of reconciliation and a sign of true hope for all who look to Christ and to his Church". My thoughts turn first to the duty of praise. This is the point of departure for every genuine response of faith to the revelation of God in Christ. Christianity is grace, it is the wonder of a God who is not satisfied with creating the world and man, but puts himself on the same level as the creature he has made and, after speaking on various occasions and in different ways through his prophets, "in these last days Yes, the Jubilee has made us realize that two thousand years of history have passed without diminishing the freshness of that "today", when the angels proclaimed to the shepherds the marvelous event of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem: The fullness of time 5. The coincidence of this Jubilee with the opening of a new millennium has certainly helped people to become more aware of the mystery of Christ within the great horizon of the history of salvation, without any concession to millenarian fantasies. Christianity is a religion rooted in history! It was in the soil of history that God chose to establish a covenant with Israel and so prepare the birth of the Son from the womb of Mary "in the fullness of time" Gal 4: Understood in his divine and human mystery, Christ is the foundation and centre of history, he is its meaning and ultimate goal. It is in fact through him, the Word and

image of the Father, that "all things were made" Jn 1: His incarnation, culminating in the Paschal Mystery and the gift of the Spirit, is the pulsating heart of time, the mysterious hour in which the Kingdom of God came to us cf. With this song repeated thousands of times, we have contemplated Christ this year as he is presented in the Book of Revelation: And contemplating Christ, we have also adored the Father and the Spirit, the one and undivided Trinity, the ineffable mystery in which everything has its origin and its fulfilment. The purification of memory 6. To purify our vision for the contemplation of the mystery, this Jubilee Year has been strongly marked by the request for forgiveness. This is true not only for individuals, who have examined their own lives in order to ask for mercy and gain the special gift of the indulgence, but for the entire Church, which has decided to recall the infidelities of so many of her children in the course of history, infidelities which have cast a shadow over her countenance as the Bride of Christ. For a long time we had been preparing ourselves for this examination of conscience, aware that the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, "is at once holy and always in need of being purified". This "purification of memory" has strengthened our steps for the journey towards the future and has made us more humble and vigilant in our acceptance of the Gospel. Witnesses to the faith 7. This lively sense of repentance, however, has not prevented us from giving glory to the Lord for what he has done in every century, and in particular during the century which we have just left behind, by granting his Church a great host of saints and martyrs. For some of them the Jubilee year has been the year of their beatification or canonization. Holiness, whether ascribed to Popes well-known to history or to humble lay and religious figures, from one continent to another of the globe, has emerged more clearly as the dimension which expresses best the mystery of the Church. Holiness, a message that convinces without the need for words, is the living reflection of the face of Christ. On the occasion of the Holy Year much has also been done to gather together the precious memories of the witnesses to the faith in the twentieth century. Together with the representatives of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, we commemorated them on 7 May in the evocative setting of the Coliseum, the symbol of the ancient persecutions. This is a heritage which must not be lost; we should always be thankful for it and we should renew our resolve to imitate it. A pilgrim Church 8. As if following in the footsteps of the Saints, countless sons and daughters of the Church have come in successive waves to Rome, to the Tombs of the Apostles, wanting to profess their faith, confess their sins and receive the mercy that saves. I have often stopped to look at the long queues of pilgrims waiting patiently to go through the Holy Door. In each of them I tried to imagine the story of a life, made up of joys, worries, sufferings; the story of someone whom Christ had met and who, in dialogue with him, was setting out again on a journey of hope. As I observed the continuous flow of pilgrims, I saw them as a kind of concrete image of the pilgrim Church, the Church placed, as Saint Augustine says, "amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God". Who can measure the marvels of grace wrought in human hearts? It is better to be silent and to adore, trusting humbly in the mysterious workings of God and singing his love without end: In this Letter I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone. But apart from the numbers, what has moved me so often was to note the intensity of prayer, reflection and spirit of communion which these meetings have generally showed. And how could we fail to recall especially the joyful and inspiring gathering of young people? If there is an image of the Jubilee of the Year that more than any other will live on in memory, it is surely the streams of young people with whom I was able to engage in a sort of very special dialogue, filled with mutual affection and deep understanding. Then I saw them swarming through the city, happy as young people should be, but also thoughtful, eager to pray, seeking "meaning" and true friendship. Neither for them nor for those who saw them will it be easy to forget that week, during which Rome became "young with the young". It will not be possible to forget the Mass at Tor Vergata. Yet again, the young have shown themselves to be for Rome and for the Church a special gift of the Spirit of God. Sometimes when we look at the young, with the problems and weaknesses that characterize them in contemporary society, we tend to be pessimistic. The Jubilee of Young People however changed that, telling us that young people, whatever their possible ambiguities, have a profound longing for those genuine values which find their fullness in Christ. Is not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the

Cross. For this reason, in response to their enthusiasm, I did not hesitate to ask them to make a radical choice of faith and life and present them with a stupendous task: The variety of the pilgrims Obviously I cannot go into detail about each individual Jubilee event. Each one of them had its own character and has left its message, not only for those who took part directly but also for those who heard about them or took part from afar through the media. But how can we forget the mood of celebration of the first great gathering dedicated to children? Perhaps even more it meant doing what he did when he placed a child in the midst of the disciples and made it the very symbol of the attitude which we should have if we wish to enter the Kingdom of God cf. Thus, in a sense, it was in the footsteps of children that all the different groups of adults came seeking the Jubilee grace: One of the most notable events was the gathering of workers on 1 May, the day traditionally dedicated to the world of work. I asked them to live a spirituality of work in imitation of Saint Joseph and of Jesus himself. That Jubilee gathering also gave me the opportunity to voice a strong call to correct the economic and social imbalances present in the world of work and to make decisive efforts to ensure that the processes of economic globalization give due attention to solidarity and the respect owed to every human person. Children, with their irrepressible sense of celebration, were again present for the Jubilee of Families, when I held them up to the world as the "springtime of the family and of society". For me one of the more moving meetings was the one with the prisoners at Regina Caeli. In their eyes I saw suffering, but also repentance and hope. For them in a special way the Jubilee was a "year of mercy". Finally, in the last days of the year, an enjoyable occasion was the meeting with the world of entertainment, which exercises such a powerful influence on people. I was able to remind all involved of their great responsibility to use entertainment to offer a positive message, one that is morally healthy and able to communicate confidence and love. The International Eucharistic Congress In the spirit of this Jubilee Year the International Eucharistic Congress was intended to have special significance. Since the Eucharist is the sacrifice of Christ made present among us, how could his real presence not be at the centre of the Holy Year dedicated to the Incarnation of the Word? The year was intended, precisely for this reason, to be "intensely Eucharistic",<sup>[6]</sup> and that is how we tried to live it. At the same time, along with the memory of the birth of the Son, how could the memory of the Mother be missing? Mary was present in the Jubilee celebration not only as a theme of high-level academic gatherings, but above all in the great Act of Entrustment with which, in the presence of a large part of the world episcopate, I entrusted to her maternal care the lives of the men and women of the new millennium. The ecumenical dimension You will understand that I speak more readily of the Jubilee as seen from the See of Peter. However I am not forgetting that I myself wanted the Jubilee to be celebrated also in the particular churches, and it is there that the majority of the faithful were able to gain its special graces, and particularly the indulgence connected with the Jubilee Year. Nevertheless it is significant that many Dioceses wanted to be present, with large groups of the faithful, here in Rome too. The Eternal City has thus once again shown its providential role as the place where the resources and gifts of each individual church, and indeed of each individual nation and culture, find their "catholic" harmony, so that the one Church of Christ can show ever more clearly her mystery as the "sacrament of unity". What occasion could be more suitable for encouraging progress on the path towards full communion than the shared celebration of the birth of Christ? There were also other important meetings with Orthodox Patriarchs and the heads of other Christian denominations.

**Chapter 4 : Papal Commissions For The Jubilee Year**

*incarnationis mysterium. bull of indiction of the great jubilee of the year john paul bishop servant of the servants of god to all the faithful.*

Jubilee biblical In Jewish tradition, the year of Jubilee was a time of joy, the year of remission or universal pardon. The number 50 was specially associated in the early 13th century with the idea of remission. The translation of the body of Thomas Becket took place in the year , 50 years after his martyrdom. The sermon on that occasion was preached by Cardinal Stephen Lantron, who told his hearers that this coincidence was meant by Providence to recall "the mystical virtue of the number fifty, which, as every reader of the sacred page is aware, is the number of remission. It is a year of reconciliation between adversaries, of conversion and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, " History[ edit ] First Christian jubilee[ edit ] In the face of great suffering, caused by wars and diseases such as the plague thousands of pilgrims came to Rome at Christmas in Cardinal Giacomo Gaetani Stefaneschi , the contemporary and counsellor of Pope Boniface VIII , and author of a treatise on the first Jubilee, noted that the proclamation of the Jubilee owed its origin to the statements of certain aged pilgrims who persuaded Boniface that great indulgences had been granted to all pilgrims in Rome about a hundred years before. These are, first, that being truly penitent they confess their sins, and secondly, that they visit the basilicas of St. Paul in Rome , at least once a day for a specified time€”in the case of the inhabitants of the city for thirty days, in the case of strangers for fifteen. The word "jubilee" does not occur in the bull. The pope speaks rather of a celebration which is to occur every years, but writers both Roman and foreign described this year as annus jubileus, and the name "jubilee" though others, such as the "holy year" or "the golden year", have been used, as well has been applied to such celebrations ever since. Jubilee of [ edit ] Boniface VIII had intended that the Jubilee should be celebrated only once in a hundred years. Before the middle of the 14th century, Bridget of Sweden and the poet Petrarch among others urged Pope Clement VI , [3] then residing at Avignon , to change this. In , Clement VI assented, and set the time frame for every 50 years. In , a Jubilee was held, and although the pope did not return to Rome, Cardinal Gaetani Ceccano was dispatched to represent him. On this occasion, daily visits to the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran were enjoined, besides those to the basilicas of St. Paul outside the Walls. The visit to these four churches has remained as one of the conditions for gaining the Roman Jubilee indulgence. Jubilees of and [ edit ] The celebration next following was held in , and in virtue of an ordinance of Pope Urban VI , it was proposed to hold a Jubilee every 33 years as representing the period of the sojourn of Christ upon earth and also the average span of human life. Another Jubilee was proclaimed by Pope Martin V in 33 years after the last proclaimed Jubilee in , but Pope Nicholas V , in , reverted to the quinquagesimal period, while in Pope Paul II decreed that the Jubilee should be celebrated every 25 years, [3] and this has been the normal rule ever since. Paul also permitted foreigners to visit some specified church in their own country, and contribute towards the expense of the Holy Wars, as a substitute for the pilgrimage to Rome. Even this disaster, though, had its good effects in the pains taken afterwards to widen the thoroughfares and to provide for the entertainment and comfort of the pilgrims by numerous charitable organizations, of which the Archconfraternity of the Holy Trinity, founded by St. Philip Neri , was the most famous. The celebrations around this were "founded on ancient rites and full of symbolic meaning" and the total number attending the initial Jubilee events was, according to Johann Burchard , an estimated , people. However, the number of pilgrims was lower than expected due to the wars in northern Italy, so the Pope suspended the declaration of indulgences outside Rome in an attempt to lure the faithful to the city. He then went on to declare a universal or extraordinary jubilee in to pray for peace. This was repeated the next year in , and brought undoubted material benefits to the city. Papal States, Clement X r. Holy Year issue, mint of Rome. Pope Clement X presided over that of The difficult situation in which the Church found herself during the hegemonic rule of Napoleon prevented Pope Pius VII from proclaiming the Jubilee of More than a half a million pilgrims made the journey to Rome for the Jubilee of However, he was able to announce a Jubilee for , but it was celebrated without any external solemnity, with only the clergy present for the inauguration. The holy doors were not opened, and the pilgrims

who came were generally in Rome to do homage to the pope, who had not accepted the Italian annexation of Rome by the troops of Victor Emmanuel II of Italy, rather than to obtain an indulgence. The Jubilee of 1850, though shorn of much of its splendor by the self-confinement of the pope within the limits of the Vatican, was, nevertheless, carried out by Pope Pius IX with all the solemnity that was possible. With the encyclical *Fulgens corona*, he declared the first Marian year or "Little Holy Year" for Christ Yesterday, Today, Forever. In this writing, he called for a three-year preparation period leading up to the opening of the Great Jubilee in 1853. The first year, 1850, was to be dedicated to meditation on Jesus, the second to the Holy Spirit, and the third to God the Father. This Jubilee was especially marked by a simplification of the rites and the requirements for achieving the indulgence, as well as a huge effort to involve more Christians in the celebration. Protestants and the Eastern Orthodox Church were invited to celebrate the Jubilee together with the Catholics as a sign of ecumenism. Furthermore, special Jubilees were invoked for various groups within the Church, such as children, athletes, politicians, and actors. World Youth Day, celebrated in Rome in August, brought over two million young people together. The Jubilee was closed by the pope on January 6, 1853, by the closing of the holy door of St. Peter's Basilica. [ edit ] Main article: Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy On March 13, 2013, Pope Francis announced a special jubilee on the theme of mercy to be held from December 8, 2013, until November 20, 2014, [7] and formally convoked the holy year through the papal bull of indiction, *Misericordiae Vultus* The Face of Mercy, on 11 April. The doors are opened by the pope at the beginning of the Jubilee and then sealed up again afterwards. Previously, the rite included the use of a silver hammer for removing the concrete at the opening and a silver trowel for sealing it again after the Jubilee. The pope would pound on the wall, which would then be set to collapse. This ritual caused injury of bystanders, so for the Great Jubilee of 2000, Pope John Paul II simplified the rite considerably, opening and closing the doors with his hands. Traditionally, the pope himself opens and closes the doors of St. Peter's Basilica, and St. Mary Major, and St. John Lateran. In the Great Jubilee, the pope chose to open all the doors personally, while designating cardinals to close all the doors except that of St. Peter's Basilica. Catholic parishes all over the world share a similar rite dedicating a door for the purposes of the Jubilee Year to accommodate its parishioners who do not intend to visit Rome for the occasion. Miscellaneous Jubilee events [ edit ] Inspired popes can include whatever seems fitting, such as Jubilee pilgrimages - thus the ever world-travelling Pope John Paul II named some of his voyages Jubilee pilgrimages: Jubilee indulgence [ edit ] This is a plenary indulgence which, as stated by Pope Boniface VIII in *consistorio*, it is the intention of the Holy See to grant in the most ample manner possible. Of course, when first conceded, such an indulgence, and also the privilege annexed of choosing a confessor who had power to absolve from reserved cases, was a much rarer spiritual boon than it has since become. So preeminent was the favor then regarded that the custom arose of suspending all other indulgences during the Jubilee year, a practice which, with certain modifications, still exists to the present day. The precise conditions for gaining each Jubilee indulgence are determined by the Roman pontiff, and they are usually announced in a special Bull, distinct from that which it is customary to issue on the preceding feast of the Ascension giving notice of the forthcoming celebration. The main conditions, however, which do not usually vary, are five: The first four are common to all plenary indulgences. The statement made by some, that the Jubilee indulgence, being a *culpa et a paena*, did not of old presuppose either confession or repentance, is absolutely without foundation, and is contradicted by every extant official document of the Roman Catholic Church. Besides the ordinary Jubilee indulgence, to be gained only by pilgrims who pay a visit to Rome, or through special concession by certain cloistered religious confined within their monasteries, it has long been customary to extend this indulgence the following year to the faithful throughout the world, though in 1850, the indulgence was extended to the whole world during the Jubilee year itself. For this, fresh conditions are appointed, usually including a certain number of visits to local churches and sometimes fasting or other works of charity. Further, the popes have constantly exercised their prerogative of conceding to all the faithful indulgences *ad instar jubilaei* after the model of a Jubilee which are commonly known as "extraordinary Jubilees". On these occasions, as at the Jubilee itself, special facilities are usually accorded for absolution from reserved cases, though on the other hand, the great indulgence is only to be gained by the performance of conditions much more onerous than those required for an ordinary plenary indulgence. Such extraordinary Jubilees are commonly granted by a

newly elected pontiff at his accession or on occasions of some unexpected celebration, as was done, for example, at the convening of the First Vatican Council , or again at times of great calamity. In , he greatly liberalized the conditions for gaining the Jubilee indulgence. A visit to only one of the four patriarchal basilicas in Rome was necessary entering through the holy door. To the four basilicas were added the Sanctuary of Divine Love in Rome, and each diocese was permitted to name a location within the diocese where the indulgence could be gained. For instance, the diocese of Rome added the chapel in the airport at Fiumicino as a possible pilgrimage site. Most dioceses simply named the local cathedral as the pilgrimage site. Multiple visits were not required. On the last full day of the Jubilee, pilgrims were permitted to enter the holy door at St. The requirements of confession, communion, prayer for the pope, and freedom from all attachment to sin remained in place, as for all plenary indulgences. List of Jubilee years[ edit ].

## Chapter 5 : The Great Jubilee of the Year

*In Jewish tradition, the year of Jubilee was a time of joy, the year of remission or universal pardon. Leviticus reads, "Thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year, and shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of thy land: for it is the year of jubilee."*

They were years of restoration to grace, restoration to their homes, restoration to their people, and restoration to their God. This is to be a jubilee for you; each of you will return to his ancestral home, each to his own clan. This fiftieth year is to be a jubilee year for you: The jubilee is to be a holy thing to you, you will eat what comes from the fields. In this year of jubilee each of you is to return to his ancestral home. Going back home to God and going back home to the family in which one finds God was the central grace in such years, years of redemption, years of recovery of innocence. Could we not, as Catholics, do that in celebration of the Jubilee Year of 2, A. Could we not sound the Shofar and call all of our alienated brothers and sisters back home? Would that not be a sweet sound in their ears, a call reaching into their hearts and souls to return to that place, the Catholic Church, in which they were raised in order to be restored to our family of faith? For that to happen, for the scales to fall from their eyes, for the chains imprisoning their souls to be cut, and for their hearts to have the courage to return they would need to be relieved of the burdens of guilt that imprison them and weigh them down. Their bonds would have to be cut away. Could we not, in order to celebrate such a Jubilee Year, the 2,th year in the life of our Church, absolve them from their sins, recognize and bless their bad marriages, and celebrate the Messianic Banquet with them? I dream of a Jubilee Year, the year 2, A. I dream of gigantic Reconciliation Services in various civic centers filled with thousands of returning Catholics seeking to have their sins forgiven in Jubilee celebrations of General Absolution. I dream of these people being thereupon restored to our Holy Communion, a communion of faith in which our Redeeming Lord Jesus is truly present to bless, heal, forgive, redeem and sanctify them. There are ways, relatively simple ways, of recognizing and sanctifying their present marriages, of forgiving them their many sins, and of restoring them to their rightful places in our Family of Faith. I dream of a Jubilee Year of full, genuine and joyful restoration of thousands upon thousands of prodigal sons and daughters who, with hearts overwhelmed by our love, enter the year of our Lord, 2,, forgiven, restored and graced, who thereupon enter the next millennium with confidence, hope, and renewed faith, empowered by the Risen Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who raised Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ of Glory, victorious over sin, alienation and death. I am asking all of you parents and grandparents of children who have left the Church, all of you who have friends alienated from our Household of Faith to pray for such an event. I am asking all of you godparents of the baptized and sponsors of the confirmed to join in a great Crusade of Prayer, praying that our Holy Father and our bishops will assent to such a celebration, and not only assent to it but enthusiastically and joyfully support and promote such a Jubilee Year. For the work of Jesus Christ is the ministry of reconciliation. Jesus opened His public ministry by going back to His own home town of Nazareth, entering the synagogue where He opened the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and read: We could make history with such an event. This entry was posted in Essays by Charles Irvin. About Charles Irvin Fr. Charlie was ordained a priest June 3, and has served as pastor of St. Francis of Assisi parish in Ann Arbor and was pastor of St.

*The Jubilee, or Holy Year is a period of conversion and grace to be kept every 25 years. The name comes from the Hebrew word yobhel, or ram's horn, that was blown to announce the beginning of the Holy Year.*

The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy is a remarkable occasion during which the entire Catholic Church, under the humble leadership of Pope Francis, opens wide the doors to the saving mercy of Christ. Drawing from early Christian and Jewish traditions and understandings of Jubilee, the Jubilee was celebrated as a special time of joy and pardon. It is a year that emphasizes the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a sacrament vital for the forgiveness of sins. The special graces that we can receive this Jubilee are the same ones the faithful could receive over years ago. Read more about the history of a Holy Year. Jubilee years have traditionally been called every 25 to 50 years. The most recent one was called by Pope St. John Paul II in the year 2000. Throughout Church history there have been 26 ordinary Jubilees and only 3 extraordinary Jubilees. Although past Jubilees have not been designated as the Year of Mercy, all Jubilees place emphasis on pardoning and forgiving others—an important facet of mercy. Like all past Jubilees in the Church, the Year of Mercy features a very special plenary indulgence—the complete remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. In celebration of this Extraordinary Jubilee, Pope Francis is making the indulgence as widely available as possible. Read more about the conditions for the gaining of an indulgence. Go to Confession regularly — monthly or even weekly. Forgive those who are in need of your mercy. Fulfill the conditions for plenary indulgences and consider offering those indulgences for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Go on a pilgrimage. Practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy every day. Place the Divine Mercy Image in a prominent place in your home and venerate it daily. [Click here to get an image for your home.](#) Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy daily, imploring mercy "on us, and on the whole world."

**Chapter 7 : A.D. Year of Jubilee - by Papal Indulgence or by Reformation Gospel?**

*This will be the much desired fruit of the Jubilee of the Year , the Jubilee which has vividly set before our eyes once more the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Redeemer of man.*

Ephrem, Harp of the Spirit. To commemorate this historic three year period of spiritual preparation for the new Millennium and the new springtime of Christianity in the Jubilee Year , Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi has commissioned a new icon based on this ancient title of Jesus Christ. This beautiful rendering, which reveals the unconditional love of God for His creation, was unveiled at the 35th National Apostolate of Maronites NAM Convention, which was held July 15th - 19th in Pittsburgh, PA, with a new special liturgy composed and published for this momentous occasion to honor Jesus, the Lover of Humanity. His standing in a dynamic position signifies His ongoing and sacramental presence to the Church by the Holy Spirit. In keeping with the Syriac art tradition of the monk Rubbula from A. The Rubbula cross, a cross within a circle symbolizes 1 that all life comes from and returns to God; and 2 that our earthly existence is divinized by Jesus, the Savior of the world. The left panel represents Christ healing the paralytic man and restoring him to wholeness and health of body and spirit. Prayer to Jesus, Lover of Humanity Jesus, Lover of humankind, whose divinity is veiled by your humanity, we approach you with awe and wonder. You are the High Priest who empathizes with our weakness; the Divine Physician who heals our wounds; the Good Shepherd who looks for the lost sheep and rejoices in finding the one. O Compassionate One who wept with Martha and Mary, You are the Merciful One who forgives and forgets; the Suffering Servant who tends to the needs of your people and all creation. O Door of Salvation, by your wounded side you restored Adam, and invited the human family to enter Paradise. From You flowed streams of living water - manifested as the mysteries. You love us so much that you gifted us your words, your food and your Mother at the foot of the Cross. Medicine of life you taught us you are humble of heart, and that your burden is light. Supreme Good Samaritan, you call us saying: You made us children of the Father, and sisters and brothers in you. You transformed the shane of the cross to the tree of life. You gifted us with the power and presence of your Spirit who remains with us through the centuries. Your Church offers you glory during this millennium preparation and for ever. Pilgrimage To generate a spirit of solidarity among the churches, missions, monasteries and convents of the Eparchy and to deepen our awareness of the jubilee preparation program, the Icon of the Lover of Humanity made a one year pilgrimage, from region to region, beginning with the Designated Holy Year Door Churches and then to all the churches and monasteries of the eparchy following the NAM Convention.

**Chapter 8 : Jubilee (Christianity) - Wikipedia**

*Papal Commissions For The Jubilee Year ED note: The information in this file is crucial to understanding of the agenda for the celebration of Jubilee in the year Below are the Papal Commissions for to implement preparation for the Year Jubilee.*

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright holder. It is authorized for publication as a statement of the Administrative Board of the United States Catholic Conference by the undersigned. The Church in her pastoral concern cannot ignore this difficult situation, since it touches the life of so many people. I too have frequently expressed my concern about this situation, which in some cases has become unbearable. In light of the imminent Great Jubilee of the Year , and recalling the social significance that Jubilees had in the Old Testament, I wrote: What servicing this debt means for Zambians [is] lack of education opportunities, inadequate health care facilities, poor housing, water and sanitation structures, insufficient productive investments for promoting jobs, etc. These are the serious wounds that Zambians experience because of debt and the demand for debt servicing. The debt problem is not simply an economic issue. It is fundamentally an ethical issue because it is radically a human problem, affecting the well-being of families, the survival of the poor, the bonds of community, and the security of the future. First, the burden of the external debt of the poorest countries is crushing the lives and dignity of vulnerable children, women, and men. In most cases, those who bear the burden of repaying the debt had no voice in the decision to borrow and did not benefit from it; in some cases, the borrowed funds were wasted, used for extravagant activities, or even stolen by unprincipled officials. Second, debt is symptomatic of a larger unfinished agenda of this century: Third, the coming of the Great Jubilee in offers us a time to make new beginnings and to right old wrongs. Pope John Paul II has called repeatedly for forgiving international debt as a sign of true solidarity. In this statement, we join our voice to his to inform the public about the moral urgency of the debt question and to offer some considerations about responding to it. The need for debt relief remains as great today as it was in when we issued *Relieving Third World Debt*: Since then, the bishops of Africa have called upon us and our fellow bishops in Europe to forgive their debts. Focusing attention on international debt is especially appropriate as we prepare to celebrate the Great Jubilee Year In the Hebrew Scriptures, the jubilee was to be a time to free slaves, to return land to its rightful owners, and to forgive debts. The jubilee was to be both a time of repentance when injustices were put right and the symbolic beginning of a new era. Jubilee called for a fresh start for the poor, an opportunity to reestablish justice and equity. These same themes challenge us today. The jubilee year was meant to restore equality among all the children of Israel, offering new possibilities to families which had lost their property and even their personal freedom. The riches of creation were to be considered as a common good of the whole of humanity. The jubilee year was meant to restore this social justice. If we recall that Jesus came to "preach the good news to the poor" Mt In the spirit of the book of Leviticus, Christians will have to raise their voice on behalf of all the poor of the world, proposing the Jubilee as an appropriate time to give thought, among other things, to reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations. Our work on debt and this statement have been greatly informed and enriched by that dialogue. We hope that further dialogue on this urgent question will contribute to building a consensus for decisive action to relieve the burden of debt. The Context of International Debt The Jubilee Year can be a time for a new beginning for impoverished nations and an opportunity to reestablish relations of justice by finding a solution to the problem of international debt. Yet it is not only the approach of the third Christian millennium that makes this a time ripe for change. The end of the Cold War has enabled the world to escape the destructive and paralyzing polarization between East and West. The emergence of new communications technology and a truly global economy have contributed to a growing interdependence among nations. Yet despite the weakening of old animosities and the creation of new alliances, the divide between the wealthy and poor nations is deepening. This divide is based less on conflicting ideologies than on radically different living

standards that threaten to relegate the most impoverished nations to a permanent underclass status. These widely different levels of development reflect in part an increasingly volatile global economy as well as failed or inadequate development policies of the past. Fluctuations in the world prices of commodities can destroy the economy of a country that depends largely on a few products, such as coffee and copper, for its income. The volatility of international capital flows contributes to instability in foreign exchange markets and can leave a country financially devastated. Misguided or inadequate development programs have left many countries impoverished and saddled with a heavy burden of debt. Furthermore, such financial instability can wreak havoc on the political stability of fragile democracies, particularly those emerging from years of civil conflict. The most impoverished nations are extremely vulnerable to changes in the global marketplace and are likely to be marginal players in the global economy. In many cases, the poorest countries cannot even pay the interest on their debts, let alone the principal, without an unacceptable cost to human development. Although sub-Saharan African countries owe less than 10 percent of the total debt of all developing countries—a relatively small amount—the cost of repaying their debt comes at the expense of investments in health, food, education, and other basic needs. For example, Ethiopia spends four times more on debt service repayments than on health care, yet , children die each year from easily preventable diseases. In a country still emerging from a sixteen-year civil war, half the rural population does not have access to safe drinking water; , children die annually from preventable diseases such as malaria, measles, and respiratory infections; two-thirds of adults are illiterate; and most children do not go to primary school. In Africa as a whole, one out of two children does not go to school, yet governments transfer four times more to foreign creditors in debt payments than they spend on the health and education of their citizens. Mismanagement and corruption on the part of debtor countries; irresponsible or unwise lending by banks, governments, and international institutions; and complex and often unanticipated changes in the global economy have all contributed to the current debt crisis. In the past decade, commercial banks, governments, and international financial institutions have sought to address the problem by rescheduling loans and in some cases by providing limited debt relief. Overcoming poverty and inequitable development will take more than debt relief. It will require private and public investment, foreign assistance, fair trade, better-monitored and regulated flows of capital, economic policies that favor growth, government decision making that is accountable and open, and the growth of a vibrant civil society in developing countries. Nevertheless, debt relief is often a prerequisite for long-term, sustainable development of the poorest countries. The United States has a special responsibility to help find a solution to the debt problem and to promote human development in countries that cannot meet their basic needs or that risk being left in the margins of the global economy. In some cases, U. As a major creditor, the United States has the resources and the leadership in international lending institutions that can make a difference. Through debt relief, the United States can directly contribute to overcoming poverty and inequitable development to help achieve justice in the international economic system. Catholic Social Teaching and the Debt Crisis The Catholic social tradition provides a set of principles and perspectives that offer a framework for considering the moral dimensions of the debt problem. The fact of interdependence is clear—the debt burden of poor countries is affected not only by domestic policies and practices but also by global economic factors, such as exchange and interest rates, terms of trade, and the general health of the global economy. The moral risks of interdependence in this case are also clear: A more detailed moral assessment of the debt crisis involves several concepts and principles of Catholic social teaching. Respect for the Life and Dignity of the Human Person The foundation of our moral concern lies in a fundamental respect for the life and dignity of every person. Each individual is created in the image of God. All persons are precious, no matter how young or old, how rich or poor, no matter what their gender, religion, race, or nationality. Ultimately, debt policies and the international economic factors that shape them must be measured by how well they protect human life and respect human dignity and human rights. The Common Good The common good is the sum total of those conditions in society that make it possible for all persons to achieve their full potential. This broad concept suggests the need to consider a wide range of factors in assessing the moral adequacy of debt policies. Ultimately, debt policies must take into account the good of the whole society, not just segments of it, and the global common good, not just that of individual nations. A moral assessment of debt policies, therefore, must

include the extent to which the debt burden undermines the ability of governments to fulfill their obligation to promote the common good, forcing them to spend their scarce resources on debt service rather than on critical investments in health, education, or clean water. Debt policies cannot be judged solely in terms of their impact on individual countries or institutions but must take into account the interests and needs of all those affected by debt, at home and abroad. From this broader perspective, the debilitating debt of poor countries far removed from our own is a problem because it erodes the global common good.

**Subsidiarity** The principle of subsidiarity helps define the different responsibilities for promoting the common good of individuals, private groups, governments, and international authorities. Subsidiarity has a two-fold significance for international debt. First, individuals, the family, and voluntary associations are the building blocks of society. Ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable are met in a particular country or region requires the participation of civil society—individuals and non-governmental organizations who stand with and serve the poor—in decision-making processes around the debt issue. Second, nothing should be done by a higher or larger entity that can be done as well by a lower or smaller one; conversely, problems that cannot be solved by individuals, civil society, or even individual nation states must be addressed by international structures. In the case of debt, international institutions and movements have a critical role to play in fostering authentic development in countries unable to do so themselves. In some areas, this will require the establishment of new international norms and structures that can better address the global economic factors that have contributed to the debt crisis. At the same time, international institutions and creditor countries must be careful not to impose solutions on debtor nations without respecting the legitimate role of local governments and civil society in shaping their future.

**Solidarity** Concern for basic human dignity and the global common good must be shaped by the virtue of solidarity. Pope John Paul II described solidarity as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all" *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 38. In the case of debt, solidarity is the virtue that motivates people around the world to work toward alleviating the debt burden in order to give new hope to the poorest of the poor. Solidarity also calls for co-responsibility on the part of debtors and creditors in finding fair and workable solutions to this crisis, as part of a broader commitment to protect human life and respect human dignity. They are co-responsible not because they share the blame for the debt crisis, though that is often the case, but because solidarity demands that those who have a capacity to resolve the crisis work together to find a just and effective solution. The failure to do so is not only a technical or political mistake, but also a failure of solidarity. The Option for the Poor Scripture tells us that one way to judge the moral character of society is to look at how widows and orphans are treated. The preferential option for the poor incorporates this scriptural theme into Catholic ethical reflection. The option for the poor calls us to give a priority concern, arising out of considerations of charity and justice, to the needs of the most vulnerable—widows, orphans, the poor—in economic, political, and social decisions. Today, poor children in Africa are the orphans of the debt crisis; their mothers are the widows. Their poverty and hopelessness are an indictment of the national and international institutions that have caused—or failed to address—the suffering brought on by onerous debt. The option for the poor calls attention to the condition of those in debtor nations who had no voice in contracting the debts and who by and large derived no benefit from them but whose lives are often negatively affected by the choices made in resolving the debt problem. By assisting those who are most vulnerable, those animated by an option for the poor strengthen the entire community, becoming a true expression of solidarity.

**Justice** In Catholic teaching, lending money is a legitimate moral enterprise if conditions of basic fairness are met on the part of the lender and borrower. Such contractual obligations are governed by commutative justice, which calls for fundamental fairness in agreements and relationships between individuals and groups. The moral presumption arising from commutative justice is that debts should be paid. This presumption may be overridden, however, for a variety of reasons. While debt agreements, like other contracts, should not be easily invalidated, the conditions under which some debt was incurred should at least temper judgments about what and how much debt should be paid. Commutative justice demands, among other things, an awareness of global economic change, the legitimacy of debtor governments, and whether those suffering from the burden of debt had any say in incurring it. Concerns of commutative justice must be located within the broader

context of distributive justice and social justice. Distributive justice requires that the allocation of income, wealth, and power in society be evaluated in light of its effect on persons whose basic material needs are unmet. A debt burden that undermines the ability of people to meet their basic needs raises basic questions of distributive justice.

## Chapter 9 : Incarnationis Mysterium

*In Lev. 25, especially verses , Pope John Paul II has found a major source of information and inspiration for his letter on the Church's preparation for what he calls the Great Jubilee*

For most people this celebration occurred only once in their life time, and for some not even that, as it occurred only once every 50 years. At this year of Jubilee all Israelites who had sold themselves into slavery were set free, and all land that had been sold reverted to its original owners. This meant that no Israelite could ever be in permanent slavery; nor could any Israelite permanently lose his inheritance. For some reason the translators did not translate the word yobel into English, but instead created the word Jubilee, an anglicised version of yobel. So Jubilee has now passed into the English language and we have the Year of Jubilee, rather than the Year of Trumpets. The word Jubilee should not be confused with the word jubilation which comes from a Latin word meaning to rejoice. The year of Jubilee was no doubt a time of great jubilation, but the similarities of these two words are at least humanly speaking a coincidence. To understand the year of Jubilee more clearly we must first review the concept of the Sabbath. Normally we think of the Sabbath as a day of the week, but its meaning in scripture is much wider. Such is its importance that, unlike any other part of the ceremonial law, its keeping is even one of the 10 commandments. The words of the fourth commandment are: On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. On that day they strictly refrained from all work. This was a sign and covenant between them and Yahweh their God, which separated them from the tribes who surrounded them. Anyone who works on the Sabbath day must be put to death. They found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath and brought him to Moses. God told Moses that he should be put to death, and they stoned him. Num God said that the Sabbath was to be a holy day. This simply means a day that is set apart or different from other days. It was set apart as a day of rest. Why do we find this ceremonial commandment to keep the Sabbath numbered among the 10 commandments? I suggest three reasons: The Sabbath embodies the gospel. Central to the whole gospel message is the fact that God gave. Man did not earn. We have earned or deserved nothing. God freely gave his only son to save us from our sin. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. Slaves are not given days off! The whole idea was absolutely new and revolutionary. The Sabbath, as we will now see, is the foundation of all other Hebrew festivals. I have written a separate article on the Sabbath. Annual Festivals The idea of a Sabbath rest is the foundation of all the other celebrations of the old covenant. When we look at the festivals we find that no unnecessary work must be done on any of them. This is how it is described in Lev Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. The Sabbath is a special day. That is what the word holy means - set apart or special. The seventh Sabbath is a special day among special days. For comparison, what do we mean by the King of kings? A king is a unique and special person, above all his subjects. The King of kings is a unique and special person among kings. He is so special that before him even kings are as ordinary people and bow before him. What do we mean by the holy of holies? The holy place is a place that is set apart and special and different from ordinary places. The holy of holies is special and set apart even when compared with the holy place. So also then a Sabbath of Sabbaths is special and set apart even when compared with the Sabbath. Pentecost or shavuot was a Sabbath of Sabbaths, special and holy even among Sabbaths. The seventh day of the week or Sabbath was a special day, and we also find that the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar was a special month. In it there were three festivals and 4 extra Sabbath days. The first day of the seventh month was the Festival of Trumpets. This was also a Sabbath. Likewise the tenth day of the seventh month was a Sabbath. This was the great Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur was followed on the fifteenth day of the seventh month by the 8 day Festival of Booths or Tabernacles. The first and last days of this festival were also Sabbaths. We see then that not only was the seventh day of the week a special day, but also that the seventh month was a special month containing 3 festivals and 4 extra Sabbath days. I have written a separate article on the The Festivals of Israel Sabbatical Years The seventh day was special and the seventh

month was special, and so also was the seventh year. It was a sabbatical year. For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. The seventh year was a time of rest for the land. Why does the human body need about 8 hours sleep in every 24? What happens during those 8 hours? Scientists still cannot answer these questions. We understand the need for food, but why should we need sleep? God has so designed creation that everything needs rest. He could have designed it a different way, but he chose to build the need for rest into the very fabric of creation. He did this to teach and illustrate a vital spiritual lesson. Jubilees This brings us to the main subject of this writing. Verses 8 to 55 of Leviticus 25 describe the year of Jubilee. The first few verses are as follows: Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. It is a special year among special years. Its climax was the great Day of Atonement. What happened then on this momentous once-in-a-lifetime occasion? Trumpets were sounded throughout the land of Israel, and two amazing things took place. All Hebrews slaves were set free. We cannot understand the full impact of this without knowing its historical background. For more than 80 years before the Exodus, the Israelites had been slaves in the land of Egypt, without freedom and without possessions. When they reached the land of Canaan, Joshua divided the land among their tribes and their families, so that each had his own inheritance. Every adult male among them became a land owner. This land was a permanent possession that could never depart from his family. If a man became poor he could sell part or all of his land, but only temporarily. It would always revert to him or his descendants at the year of Jubilee. If he became even poorer and was unable to pay his debts, he could sell himself into slavery, and work to pay off his debts. Again that slavery could only ever be temporary. When the great Day of Atonement in the year of Jubilee came he became a free man once again and repossessed his inheritance. What a marvellous provision this was! How many landless slaves in the poorer countries of the world today would wish they lived under such laws! These then were the laws of the Sabbath, the festivals, sabbatical years and Jubilees that God gave to ancient Israel through his servant Moses, and it is not difficult to read and study them. But we must do more than that. We must ask what significance these Jubilees have had throughout history, and what meaning they have for us years or so after they were first decreed. Whether and how long the Israelites observed Jubilees after the time of Moses is not recorded as far as I know in history. There is no further explicit mention of Jubilees after the book of Numbers. I have explained the calculation of time periods in the Bible in my writing on Bible Chronology and so will not repeat those explanations here.