

Around the Archdiocese

Archbishop: Year of Mercy ends, but God's grace continues



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The Year of Mercy was a time of extraordinary grace, conversion and spiritual renewal that caught the hearts of the faithful.

So said Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila at a mid-day Mass Nov. 20, the feast of Christ the King, to mark the end of the special year and to close the Holy Door at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

His actions echoed those of Pope Francis, who inaugurated and ended the Jubilee Year, which started last December, with the opening and closing of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The Holy Door symbolizes Christ, who called himself "the door" and said that the only way to salvation is through him (Jn 10:9).

In a first, Pope Francis let bishops around the world designate Holy Doors in their dioceses so more people would have the chance to gain the indulgence—the remission of temporal punishment (purgatory) for forgiven sins—available to those who made a pilgrimage to one. To earn the indulgence, one also had to go to confession, receive Eucharist and say the required prayers.

"[The Year of Mercy] was a call to encounter Jesus Christ in a personal way—a call to conversion and a change of heart," Archbishop Aquila told the congregation.

The faithful responded to the call dramatically: the Vatican estimated a billion Catholics passed through Holy Doors around the world.

Pope Francis had also urged individuals to practice works of mercy during the Jubilee Year and for dioceses to offer



a special 24-hour shift of adoration and confession, which in the Archdiocese of Denver took place at the Cathedral Basilica and another parish.

"Even at 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the morning, people were waiting in line [for confession] at the cathedral," Archbishop Aquila recalled of the March 4-5 event. He said that in addition to returning to confession, many faithful told him they also resumed doing spiritual and corporal works of mercy they had forgotten Catholics are encouraged to do.

In his homily, the archbishop said the day's Gospel of the Good Thief illustrated what the faithful were exhorted to do during the Year of Mercy and are called to do regularly. He noted that the Good Thief practiced a work of mercy in admonishing the sinner—the bad thief who taunted Christ—converted and



made a profession of faith as he begged, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

"Today," emphasized Archbishop Aquila as he repeated Christ's response, "you will be with me in paradise."

"It is a wondrous promise and a tremendous sign of hope given to us," the archbishop said.

"Hopefully, in this Year of Mercy we have experienced a deepening of faith, trust and confidence in Jesus Christ," he said, adding that although the Jubilee Year of Mercy may be over, God's mercy continues in his sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist.

"Lift up your hearts in gratitude when you receive the Eucharist," he counseled. "Remember the cost of that salvation."

"Live the Year of Mercy every day," he urged.

Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila closed the Holy Door at the Cathedral Nov. 20, bringing the Jubilee Year of Mercy to a close.

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ANDREW
WRIGHT

Parish group makes pilgrimage to all five Holy Doors

A group of almost 50 parishioners from the north-eastern plains parishes of St. Mary, St. John and St. Joseph journeyed to all five Holy Doors in the Archdiocese of Denver over the course of five months. Led by pastor Father Marek Ciesla, the journey began in June, when the group took a bus to Mother Cabrini Shrine, the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe. In August, they travelled to St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Sterling, and finally, on Nov. 11, they made the long trek to St. Stephen's Parish in Glenwood Springs and passed through the last of the Holy Doors.