



Favour

Friday 31st January



Photo by Jan Tinneberg on Unsplash

Scripture: Psalm 37.1-7, 24-25

Do not fret because of the wicked;
do not be envious of wrongdoers,
for they will soon fade like the grass,
and wither like the green herb.

Trust in the Lord, and do good;
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.
Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him;
do not fret over those who prosper in their way,
over those who carry out evil devices.

Our steps are made firm by the Lord,
when he delights in our way;
though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong,
for the Lord holds us by the hand.

I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.
They are ever giving liberally and lending,
and their children become a blessing.

To reflect

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus read the prophecy from Isaiah that includes the words "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

But what is a year of the Lord's favour? It's also known as "the acceptable year of the Lord" (*King James Version*) and "the year of jubilee" (Leviticus 25.13). The fiftieth year was to be sanctified and to be a time (where amongst other things) Israelites were released from debt slavery. There would be loud trumpets sounded across the land, marking the time of celebration. The campaign against debt for developing countries at the turn of the millennium was called 'Jubilee 2000' because of the term and meaning behind it.

The Roman Catholic church maintains years of Jubilee every 25 years (Pope Paul II changed it from every 50 years in 1470). In the Catholic Church, a Jubilee or Holy Year is a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which people are invited to come back into right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. The theme for the Jubilee Year of 2025 is Pilgrims of Hope, Pope Francis has invited Catholics to renew their hope and discover a vision that can "restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone". In a Jubilee Year Holy Doors are opened in major Basilicas in Rome, that are only opened in Jubilee years, such as one at St Peter's that marks the start of the Jubilee Year on Christmas Eve.

What do the terms 'year of the Lord's favour' and Jubilee year make you think about, what do they make you reflect upon in your Christian life?

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.
May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.
May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen.

Official prayer from Pope Francis for the Jubilee year 2025, "Pilgrims of hope"

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.