PILGRIMAGE
Spiritual Background & Meaning

Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls.
Jeremiah 6: 16

A pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion. A pilgrim is more than a tourist and a pilgrimage is more than a journey. To reach a designated Holy Door, everyone, each according to his or her ability, will have to make a pilgrimage. It is a sign that mercy is also a goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice. By crossing the threshold of a Holy Door, we look to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us. A successful pilgrimage causes a change in the pilgrim—a spiritual transformation according to the openness of the pilgrim to God’s grace.

For those unable to travel due to physical or other constraints, a “spiritual pilgrimage” or “pilgrimage of the heart” is possible. One simply finds a quiet place, makes a conscious effort to disengage from any distractions, and prays to be aware of God’s presence. Then using a mental image of passing through a doorway, the individual prays for the graces of pilgrimage, and for God’s help in moving through the challenges in life. Offering prayers for those who are on pilgrimage is another way of engaging with the spirituality of pilgrimage.

To receive the full benefit of graces available during the Jubilee of Mercy, any individual making a pilgrimage (either physical or spiritual) must turn away from any attraction to sin, receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, attend Mass and receive the Eucharist, and pray for the pope’s intentions in order to receive the full mercy of God’s indulgence.

In the Archdiocese of San Antonio, there are 16 Jubilee Pilgrimage sites with Holy Doors. In this trifold are three suggested pilgrimage routes covering all sites that can be undertaken by individuals or groups. You are encouraged to take advantage of the special opportunity of pilgrimage to one or more of these sites during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which ends on Nov. 20, 2016. In the words of Pope Francis:

“May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us” (MISERICORDIAE VULTUS).

For more information on the Jubilee Pilgrimage sites and the Jubilee Year of Mercy, please visit www.archsa.org/jubilee.
“Go forth in peace, for you have followed the good road. Go forth without fear, for he who created you has made you whole, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother.” — St. Clare of Assisi

“There are three ways of mercy: the merciful word, by forgiving or by comforting; if you can offer no word, then pray—that too is mercy; thirdly, deeds of mercy. On the Last Day, we shall be judged on this, on this basis we shall receive the eternal verdict.” — St. Faustina Kowalska

“In confession there is mercy. Believe it firmly, do not doubt, do not hesitate, never despair of the mercy of God.”
— St. Isidore of Seville