

Charismatic Family of St. Ann

WITH ST. ANN AND ST. JOACHIM



WE ARE PILGRIMS OF HOPE!!!

July 2024

OUTLINE

- **Intention**

- **Reflection:** Pope Francis, «*Spes non confundit*», «*hope does not disappoint*» (Rm 5:5). *Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the year 2025.*

- **Everyday Prayer:**

St. Ann and St. Joachim, most worthy parents of the Heavenly Mother, come to our aid with your powerful protection, help us in our material and spiritual needs, console us in our sorrows and guide us along the paths of life towards the heavenly homeland. We want their names to be our comfort and our hope.

We thank God who has given us such effective protectors and, not content with invoking them, we want everyone to know them and invoke them, we want everyone to repeat with us: "*St Joachim, St Ann and Most Holy Mary, listen to us, bless us and intercede for us*"

- **Hymn to St. Ann**

- **St. Ann, my dear Mother...** (for the Sisters)

JULY 1

◆ *Intention*

Through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, let us pray for all of us, so that the coming Jubilee 2025 may be a moment of lively and personal encounter with the Lord Jesus.

◆ *Reflection*

SPES NON CONFUNDIT. ““Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5). In the spirit of hope, the Apostle Paul addressed these words of encouragement to the Christian community of Rome. Hope is also the central message of the coming Jubilee that, in accordance with an ancient tradition, the Pope proclaims every twenty-five years. My thoughts turn to all those pilgrims of hope who will travel to Rome in order to experience the Holy Year and to all those others who, though unable to visit the City of the Apostles Peter and Paul, will celebrate it in their local Churches. For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the “door” (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as “our hope” (1 Tim 1:1). (N. 1)

JULY 2

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, that virtue of patience may be cultivated in families and time is dedicated to meeting one another and conversing in serenity.

◆ *Reflection*

A renewed appreciation of the value of patience could only prove beneficial for ourselves and for others. Saint Paul often speaks of patience in the context of our need for perseverance and confident trust in God’s promises. Yet, before all else, he testifies to God’s own **patience**, as “the God of all patience and encouragement” (Rom 15:5).

Patience, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, sustains our hope and strengthens it as a virtue and a way of life. (n. 4)

JULY 3

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for all of us, young people and seniors citizens. May we approach the Sacraments with regularity and trust.

◆ *Reflection*

The Jubilee Churches along the pilgrimage routes and in the city of Rome can serve as oases of spirituality and places of rest on the pilgrimage of faith, where we can drink from the wellsprings of hope, above all by approaching the sacrament of Reconciliation, the essential starting-point of any true journey of conversion. In the particular Churches, special care should be taken to prepare priests and the faithful to celebrate the sacrament of Confession and to make it readily available in its individual form. (n. 5)

JULY 4

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for our Orthodox brothers and sisters, so that they may experience the love of the Church in every situation with concrete deeds of solidarity.

◆ *Reflection*

The Catholic Church, enriched by their ancient liturgies and the theology and spirituality of their Fathers, monks and theologians, wants to give symbolic expression to its embrace of them and their Orthodox brothers and sisters in these times when they endure their own Way of the Cross, often forced by violence and instability to leave their

homelands, their holy lands, for safer places. For them, the hope born of the knowledge that they are loved by the Church, which does not abandon them but follows them wherever they go, will make the symbolism of the Jubilee all the more powerful. (n. 5)

JULY 5

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Saints Ann and Joachim, for Pope Francis, bishops and priests so that, together with the lay faithful, they will be able to read the signs of the times and grasp the hope present in them.

◆ *Reflection*

In addition to finding hope in God's grace, we are also called to discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us. As the Second Vatican Council observed: "In every age, the Church has the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. In this way, in language adapted to every generation, she can respond to people's persistent questions about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other". We need to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence. The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God's saving presence, ought to become signs of hope. (n. 7)

JULY 6

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for all governments, so that they may find and implement concrete projects of peace.

◆ *Reflection*

The first sign of hope should be the desire for peace in our world, which once more finds itself immersed in the tragedy of war. Heedless of the horrors of the past, humanity is confronting yet another ordeal, as many peoples are prey to brutality and violence. What does the future hold for those peoples, who have already endured so much? How is it possible that their desperate plea for help is not motivating world leaders to resolve the numerous regional conflicts in view of their possible consequences at the global level? Is it too much to dream that arms can fall silent and cease to rain down destruction and death? May the Jubilee remind us that those who are peacemakers will be called “children of God” (Mt 5:9). The need for peace challenges us all, and demands that concrete steps be taken. May diplomacy be tireless in its commitment to seek, with courage and creativity, every opportunity to undertake negotiations aimed at a lasting peace. (n. 8)

JULY 7

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for all young couples, so that they may open themselves to the transmission of life and never give in to the temptation of abortion.

◆ *Riflection*

Looking to the future with hope also entails having enthusiasm for life and a readiness to share it. Sadly, in many situations this is lacking. A first effect of this is the loss of the desire to transmit life. A number of countries are experiencing an alarming decline in the birthrate as a result of today’s frenetic pace, fears about the future, the lack of job security and adequate social policies, and social models whose agenda is dictated by the quest for profit rather than concern for relationships. In certain quarters, the tendency “to blame population growth, instead

of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the [real] issues". (n. 9)

JULY 8

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for the holy Church, so that it may bear witness to the Gospel of joy to every man and woman, announcing the Lord who comes every day to restore hope to humanity which is lost, tired and cynical.

◆ *Reflection*

Consequently, the Christian community should be at the forefront in pointing out the need for a social covenant to support and foster hope, one that is inclusive and not ideological, working for a future filled with the laughter of babies and children, in order to fill the empty cradles in so many parts of our world. All of us, however, need to recover the joy of living, since men and women, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), cannot rest content with getting along one day at a time, settling for the here and now and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone.

This leads to a narrow individualism and the loss of hope; it gives rise to a sadness that lodges in the heart and brings forth fruits of discontent and intolerance. (n. 9)

JULY 9

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for the judicial authorities and for those who deal with prisoners in various ways, in judicial processes, in prison custody and in the process of reintegration into society, that they may help prisoners to regain self-confidence in themselves and in society.

◆ *Reflection*

During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind. I think of prisoners who, deprived of their freedom, daily feel the harshness of detention and its restrictions, lack of affection and, in more than a few cases, lack of respect for their persons. I propose that in this Jubilee Year governments undertake initiatives aimed at restoring hope; forms of amnesty or pardon meant to help individuals regain confidence in themselves and in society; and programmes of reintegration in the community, including a concrete commitment to respect for law. (n. 10)

JULY 10

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for all believers, that they may have the courage to ask for respect for the dignity of those who are imprisoned and for the abolition of the death penalty in every part of the world.

◆ *Reflection*

In every part of the world, believers, and their Pastors in particular, should be one in demanding dignified conditions for those in prison, respect for their human rights and above all the abolition of the death penalty, a provision at odds with Christian faith and one that eliminates all hope of forgiveness and rehabilitation. In order to offer prisoners a concrete sign of closeness, I would myself like to open a Holy Door in a prison, as a sign inviting prisoners to look to the future with hope and a renewed sense of confidence. (n. 10)

JULY 11

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for the sick, in particular for those who are suffering from serious pathologies and disabilities, so that they may find relief in their suffering through the closeness of persons who love them and in the health workers who promptly take care of them.

◆ *Reflection*

Signs of hope should also be shown to the sick, at home or in hospital. Their sufferings can be allayed by the closeness and affection of those who visit them. Works of mercy are also works of hope that give rise to immense gratitude. Gratitude should likewise be shown to all those healthcare workers who, often in precarious conditions, carry out their mission with constant care and concern for the sick and for those who are most vulnerable.

Inclusive attention should also be given to all those in particularly difficult situations, who experience their own weaknesses and limitations, especially those affected by illnesses or disabilities that severely restrict their personal independence and freedom. Care given to them is a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope that calls for the choral participation of society as a whole. (n. 11)

JULY 12

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for all the young people of the world, that they may courageously take charge of their lives, aim at the most beautiful and profound things and always maintain a free heart. For all parents and educators to take care of them with renewed passion.

◆ *Reflection*

Signs of hope are also needed by those who are the very embodiment of hope, namely, the young. Sadly, they often see their dreams and aspirations frustrated. We must not disappoint them, for the future depends on their enthusiasm. It is gratifying to see the energy they demonstrate, for example, by rolling up their sleeves and volunteering to help when disasters strike and people are in need. Yet it is sad to see young people who are without hope, who face an uncertain and unpromising future, who lack employment or job security, or realistic prospects after finishing school. Without the hope that their dreams can come true, they will inevitably grow discouraged and listless. Escaping into drugs, risk-taking and the pursuit of momentary pleasure does greater harm to them in particular, since it closes them to life's beauty and richness, and can lead to depression and even self-destructive actions. For this reason, the Jubilee should inspire the Church to make greater efforts to reach out to them. With renewed passion, let us demonstrate care and concern for adolescents, students and young couples, the rising generation. Let us draw close to the young, for they are the joy and hope of the Church and of the world! (n. 12)

JULY 13

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for the migrants, so that they may find among us a place of human coexistence and collaborate in building the civilization of peace together.

◆ *Reflection*

Signs of hope should also be present for migrants who leave their homelands behind in search of a better life for themselves and for their families. Their expectations must not be frustrated by prejudice and rejection. A spirit of welcome, which embraces everyone with respect

for his or her dignity, should be accompanied by a sense of responsibility, lest anyone be denied the right to a dignified existence. (n. 13)

JULY 14

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, that the Nations open their doors to exiles, displaced persons and refugees, and that ecclesial communities give testimony of welcoming and solidarity.

◆ *Reflection*

Exiles, displaced persons and refugees, whom international tensions force to emigrate in order to avoid war, violence and discrimination, ought to be guaranteed security and access to employment and education, the means they need to find their place in a new social context.

May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of those who are most vulnerable, opening wide its doors to welcome them, lest anyone ever be robbed of the hope of a better future. May the Lord's words in the great parable of the Last Judgment always find an echo in our hearts: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" for "just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me" (Mt 25:35.40). (n. 13)

JULY 15

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, that we may learn to look with a merciful gaze upon those who suffer from poverty, bringing them the consolation of the Lord through our effective and affective closeness.

◆ *Reflection*

I ask with all my heart that hope be granted to the billions of the poor, who often lack the essentials of life. Before the constant tide of new forms of impoverishment, we can easily grow inured and resigned. Yet we must not close our eyes to the dramatic situations that we now encounter all around us, not only in certain parts of the world. Each day we meet people who are poor or impoverished; they may even be our next-door neighbours. Often they are homeless or lack sufficient food for the day. They suffer from exclusion and indifference on the part of many. It is scandalous that in a world possessed of immense resources, destined largely to producing weapons, the poor continue to be “the majority of the planet’s population, billions of people. These days they are mentioned in international political and economic discussions, but one often has the impression that their problems are brought up as an afterthought, a question which gets added almost out of duty or in a tangential way, if not treated merely as collateral damage. Indeed, when all is said and done, they frequently remain at the bottom of the pile”. Let us not forget: the poor are almost always the victims, not the ones to blame. (n. 15)

JULY 16

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for those who have government responsibilities. May they know how to promote a just and equitable distribution of goods and resources. In this Jubilee Year, may they establish a Global Fund to eliminate hunger and for the development of the poorest countries.

◆ *Reflection*

Echoing the age-old message of the prophets, the Jubilee reminds us that the goods of the earth are not destined for a privileged few, but for everyone. The rich must be generous and not avert their eyes from the faces of their brothers and sisters in need. Here I think especially of

those who lack water and food: hunger is a scandal, an open wound on the body of our humanity, and it summons all of us to a serious examination of conscience. I renew my appeal that “with the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries, so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory situations, or have to leave their countries in order to seek a more dignified life”. (n. 16)

JULY 17

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for those who suffer due to the consequences of the loss of biodiversity and extreme natural disasters, so that the leaders of the Nations may commit themselves to deal with the remote causes of this "ecological debt".

◆ *Reflection*

Another heartfelt appeal that I would make in light of the coming Jubilee is directed to the more affluent nations. I ask that they acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice. It is made all the more serious today by a new form of injustice which we increasingly recognize, namely, that “a true ‘ecological debt’ exists, particularly between the global North and South, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time”. As sacred Scripture teaches, the earth is the Lord’s and all of us dwell in it as “aliens and tenants” (Lev 25:23). If we really wish to prepare a path to peace in our world, let us commit ourselves to

remedying the remote causes of injustice, settling unjust and unpayable debts, and feeding the hungry. (n. 16)

JULY 18

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, that in the Christian community, may the unity of the People of God and the faithful proclamation of the Gospel be safeguarded through synodal means.

◆ *Reflection*

The coming Jubilee Year will also coincide with a significant date for all Christians, namely, the 1700th anniversary of the celebration of the first great Ecumenical Council, that of Nicaea. It is worth noting that, from apostolic times, bishops have gathered on various occasions in order to discuss doctrinal questions and disciplinary matters. In the first centuries of Christianity, synods frequently took place in both East and West, showing the importance of ensuring the unity of God's People and the faithful proclamation of the Gospel. The Jubilee can serve as an important occasion for giving concrete expression to this form of synodality, which the Christian community today considers increasingly necessary for responding to the urgent need for evangelization. All the baptized, with their respective charisms and ministries, are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God's presence in the world. (n. 17)

JULY 19

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for each of us, so that, through simple and concrete gestures, we may become instruments of hope in the world.

◆ *Reflection*

Hope, together with faith and charity, makes up the triptych of the “theological virtues” that express the heart of the Christian life (cf. 1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:3). In their inseparable unity, hope is the virtue that, so to speak, gives inward direction and purpose to the life of believers. For this reason, the Apostle Paul encourages us to “rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer” (Rom 12:12). Surely we need to “abound in hope” (cf. Rom 15:13), so that we may bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts; that our faith may be joyful and our charity enthusiastic; and that each of us may be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the Spirit of Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope. Yet what is the basis of our hope? To understand this, let us stop and reflect on “the reasons for our hope” (cf. 1 Pet 3:15). (n. 18)

JULY 20

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for all of us and for all Christians. May our faith-filled life in God enable us to overcome difficult moments and make us rich in generosity towards everyone, in the hope of living forever in Him .

◆ *Reflection*

“I believe in life everlasting”. So our faith professes. Christian hope finds in these words an essential foundation. For hope is “that theological virtue by which we desire... eternal life as our happiness”. The Second Vatican Council says of hope that, “when people are deprived of this divine support, and lack hope in eternal life, their dignity is deeply impaired, as may so often be seen today. The problems of life and death, of guilt and suffering, remain unsolved, so that people

are frequently thrown into despair”. We, however, by virtue of the hope in which we were saved, can view the passage of time with the certainty that the history of humanity and our own individual history are not doomed to a dead end or a dark abyss, but directed to an encounter with the Lord of glory. As a result, we live our lives in expectation of his return and in the hope of living forever in him. In this spirit, we make our own the heartfelt prayer of the first Christians with which sacred Scripture ends: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20). (n. 19)

JULY 21

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for our dear departed brothers and sisters, that our God of life may keep them in His eternal abode.

◆ *Reflection*

The reality of death, as a painful separation from those dearest to us, cannot be mitigated by empty rhetoric. The Jubilee, however, offers us the opportunity to appreciate anew, and with immense gratitude, the gift of the new life that we have received in Baptism, a life capable of transfiguring death’s drama. It is worth reflecting, in the context of the Jubilee, on how that mystery has been understood from the earliest centuries of the Church’s life. An example would be the tradition of building baptismal fonts in the shape of an octagon, as seen in many ancient baptisteries, like that of Saint John Lateran in Rome. This was intended to symbolize that Baptism is the dawn of the “eighth day”, the day of the resurrection, a day that transcends the normal, weekly passage of time, opening it to the dimension of eternity and to life everlasting: the goal to which we tend on our earthly pilgrimage (cf. Rom 6:22). (n. 20)

JULY 22

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for the unity of Christians, so that on the path of ecumenism the presence of the Risen Lord may remain alive.

◆ *Reflection*

The most convincing testimony to this hope is provided by the martyrs. Steadfast in their faith in the risen Christ, they renounced life itself here below, rather than betray their Lord. Martyrs, as confessors of the life that knows no end, are present and numerous in every age, and perhaps even more so in our own day. We need to treasure their testimony, in order to confirm our hope and allow it to bear good fruit.

The martyrs, coming as they do from different Christian traditions, are also seeds of unity, expressions of the ecumenism of blood. I greatly hope that the Jubilee will also include ecumenical celebrations as a way of highlighting the richness of the testimony of these martyrs. (n. 20)

JULY 23

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann. and Joachim, that every family may live their vocation in joy and in love through their everyday living. May God safeguard the vocations of the Church to live in faithfulness and creativity.

◆ *Reflection*

What, then, will become of us after death? With Jesus, beyond this threshold we will find eternal life, consisting in full communion with God as we forever contemplate and share in his infinite love. All that we now experience in hope, we shall then see in reality. We are reminded of the words of Saint Augustine: “When I am one with you in all my being, there will be no more pain and toil; my life shall be true

life, a life wholly filled by you”. What will characterize this fullness of communion? Being happy. Happiness is our human vocation, a goal to which all aspire.

But what is happiness? What is the happiness that we await and desire? Not some fleeting pleasure, a momentary satisfaction that, once experienced, keeps us longing for more, in a desperate quest that leaves our hearts unsated and increasingly empty. We aspire to a happiness that is definitively found in the one thing that can bring us fulfilment, which is love. Thus, we will be able to say even now: I am loved, therefore I exist; and I will live forever in the love that does not disappoint, the love from which nothing can ever separate me. (n. 21)

JULY 24

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for our dear departed ones ... (feel free to mention their names). May God, who is the source of forgiveness and salvation, grant them eternal joy in the heavenly homeland; and may we daily pray, saying: “Come, Lord, may we be judged only by You and experience your merciful love”.

◆ *Reflection*

Another reality having to do with eternal life is God’s judgment, both at the end of our individual lives and at the end of history. Artists have often attempted to portray it – here we can think of Michelangelo’s magnum opus in the Sistine Chapel – in accordance with the theological vision of their times and with the aim of inspiring a sense of awe in the viewer. We should indeed prepare ourselves consciously and soberly for the moment when our lives will be judged, but we must always do this from the standpoint of hope, the theological virtue that sustains our lives and shields them from groundless fear. The judgment of God, who is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8.16), will surely be based on love, and in particular on all that we have done or failed to do with regard to those in need, in whose midst Christ, the Judge himself, is present (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Clearly, then, we are speaking of a judgment unlike any handed down

by human, earthly tribunals; it should be understood as a rapport of truth with the God who is love and with oneself, within the unfathomable mystery of divine mercy. (n. 22)

JULY 25

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for the deceased whom no one remembers. May our prayer hasten their eternal meeting with the Father.

◆ *Reflection*

In the words of Benedict XVI: “At the moment of judgment we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves. The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy”.

Judgment, then, concerns the salvation in which we hope and which Jesus has won for us by his death and resurrection. It is meant to bring us to a definitive encounter with the Lord. The evil we have done cannot remain hidden; it needs to be purified in order to enable this definitive encounter with God’s love. Here we begin to see the need of our prayers for all those who have ended their earthly pilgrimage, our solidarity in an intercession that is effective by virtue of the communion of the saints, and the shared bond that makes us one in Christ, the firstborn of all creation. The Jubilee indulgence, thanks to the power of prayer, is intended in a particular way for those who have gone before us, so that they may obtain full mercy. (n. 22)

JULY 26

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for the newly married couples. May their families experience peace, joy,

serenity and good health. May they have the grace to spread the message of hope and peace by bringing forth children to the world.

◆ *Reflection*

Openness to life and responsible parenthood is the design that the Creator has implanted in the hearts and bodies of men and women, a mission that the Lord has entrusted to spouses and to their love. It is urgent that responsible legislation on the part of states be accompanied by the firm support of communities of believers and the entire civil community in all its components. For the desire of young people to give birth to new sons and daughters as a sign of the fruitfulness of their love ensures a future for every society. This is a matter of hope: it is born of hope and it generates hope. (n. 9)

JULY 27

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, that we may be faithful to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to experience the infinite mercy of the Lord.

◆ *Reflection*

Indeed, the indulgence is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God's mercy. Not by chance, for the ancients, the terms "mercy" and "indulgence" were interchangeable, as expressions of the fullness of God's forgiveness, which knows no bounds.

The sacrament of Penance assures us that God wipes away our sins. We experience those powerful and comforting words of the Psalm: "It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion... The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy... He does not treat us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our faults. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so

strong is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins” (Ps 103:3-4.8.10-12). The sacrament of Reconciliation is not only a magnificent spiritual gift, but also a decisive, essential and fundamental step on our journey of faith. There, we allow the Lord to erase our sins, to heal our hearts, to raise us up, to embrace us and to reveal to us his tender and compassionate countenance. There is no better way to know God than to let him reconcile us to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:20) and savour his forgiveness. Let us not neglect Confession, but rediscover the beauty of this sacrament of healing and joy, the beauty of God’s forgiveness of our sins! (n. 23)

JULY 28

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, for the senior citizens, so that they may not be left alone and abandoned, but that they may feel that they are a fully part of the civil and Christian community. We also pray for the grandparents. May they experience understanding, care and encouragement from their children and grandchildren.

◆ *Reflection*

The elderly, who frequently feel lonely and abandoned, also deserve signs of hope. Esteem for the treasure that they are, their life experiences, their accumulated wisdom and the contribution that they can still make, is incumbent on the Christian community and civil society, which are called to cooperate in strengthening the covenant between generations.

Here I would also mention grandparents, who represent the passing on of faith and wisdom to the younger generation. May they find support in the gratitude of their children and the love of their grandchildren, who discover in them their roots and a source of understanding and encouragement. (n. 14)

JULY 29

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, that during this Jubilee Year, we may value the gift of Indulgence for the souls in Purgatory, and be open to experience forgiveness.

◆ *Reflection*

Still, as we know from personal experience, every sin “leaves its mark”. Sin has consequences, not only outwardly in the effects of the wrong we do, but also inwardly, inasmuch as “every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death, in the state called Purgatory”. In our humanity, weak and attracted by evil, certain residual effects of sin remain. These are removed by the indulgence, always by the grace of Christ, who, as Saint Paul VI wrote, “is himself our ‘indulgence’”. The Apostolic Penitentiary will issue norms for obtaining and rendering spiritually fruitful the practice of the Jubilee indulgence.

This experience of full forgiveness cannot fail to open our hearts and minds to the need to forgive others in turn. Forgiveness does not change the past; it cannot change what happened in the past, yet it can allow us to change the future and to live different lives, free of anger, animosity and vindictiveness. Forgiveness makes possible a brighter future, which enables us to look at the past with different eyes, now more serene, albeit still bearing the trace of past tears. (n. 23)

JULY 30

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts Ann and Joachim, for the families who are going through suffering and difficult times due to illness, war, poverty or situations that only God knows. May they invoke the protection of their Daughter, the Virgin Mary who supports and encourages them to have faith and to continue to hope.

◆ *Reflection*

Hope finds its supreme witness in the Mother of God. In the Blessed Virgin, we see that hope is not naive optimism but a gift of grace amid the realities of life. Like every mother, whenever Mary looked at her Son, she thought of his future. Surely she kept pondering in her heart the words spoken to her in the Temple by the elderly Simeon: “This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed, so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too” (Lk 2:34-35). At the foot of the cross, she witnessed the passion and death of Jesus, her innocent son. Overwhelmed with grief, she nonetheless renewed her “fiat”, never abandoning her hope and trust in God. In this way, Mary cooperated for our sake in the fulfilment of all that her Son had foretold in announcing that he would have to “undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mk 8:31). In the travail of that sorrow, offered in love, Mary became our Mother, the Mother of Hope. It is not by chance that popular piety continues to invoke the Blessed Virgin as *Stella Maris*, a title that bespeaks the sure hope that, amid the tempests of this life, the Mother of God comes to our aid, sustains us and encourages us to persevere in hope and trust. (n. 24)

JULY 31

◆ *Intention*

Let us pray, through the intercession of Sts. Ann and Joachim, that in this Jubilee Year we may strengthen our hope in God and rediscover trust in the Church and in society. May we grow in interpersonal and international relationships, promote the dignity of each person and respect for creation.

◆ *Reflection*

The coming Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident

trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:13), where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promises.

Let us even now be drawn to this hope! Through our witness, may hope spread to all those who anxiously seek it. May the way we live our lives say to them in so many words: "Hope in the Lord! Hold firm, take heart and hope in the Lord!" (Ps 27:14). May the power of hope fill our days, as we await with confidence the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory, now and forever. (n. 25)