



Photo by Anthony J. Costello

The inscription over the Holy Door at St. Peter's reads: "Pius XI, supreme pontiff, opened and closed the Holy Door which he himself had opened and closed in the Jubilee Year 1925 during the Jubilee Year of Human Redemption 1933-34. Pius XII, supreme pontiff, opened and closed during the Jubilee Year 1950 the Holy Door which Pius XI, supreme pontiff, had broken open and sealed in the Jubilee Year 1933-34." A Holy Year was held in 1933 to note the anniversary of the Redemption of Man.

Jubilee Year

Continued from Page 3

The Diocesan Holy Year Committee hopes to publish a summary of the activities of our diocesan jubilee observance.

Now we must focus our attention on Rome, as we strive to maintain our jubilee spirit of reconciliation.

Age old ceremonies take place when the popes open an official Holy Year. The main event inaugurating each Jubilee Year is the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's on the Christmas Eve prior to the beginning of the actual year. The Holy Door is one of the five entrances into the great Basilica. It is kept walled up all the time except when a Holy Year occurs. Then the Pope breaks it open, to symbolize a welcome pardon at the tomb of St. Peter the Apostle.

Of course, the pope does not batter the door down himself (although Pope Gregory XIII tried that in 1525, and broke the hammer!) He simply taps on it with a ceremonial hammer. Thereupon the engineers of the church, who have already removed the cement of the marble closure, let it down inside the building and remove it. The Holy Father then leads solemn procession through the doorway into the church. After that, the Porta Santa (as it is called in Italian) remains open until the following Christmas Eve, when it is once more walled up, in a reverse ceremony.

This year, for the first time, the opening of the Holy Door and the following Mass are being televised internationally, locally beginning at 11:30 p.m. Dec. 24 on WRCC-TV, Channel 8.

The first record of the Holy Door ceremony dates from 1450. It may be that the Golden Gate in the walls of Jerusalem suggested the practice. Many medieval pilgrims to the Holy Land saw this gate through which Christ reputedly rode on the first Palm Sunday, and which in later centuries was opened only on Palm Sunday and the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

By 1450 there was a similar Holy Door in the Roman basilica of St. John Lateran, which also was broken open at the beginning of the Year of Jubilee. At least by 1700, the other two principal churches of pilgrimage, St. Mary Major and St. Paul's outside the Walls, had acquired Porte Sante. What the popes did was to commission three cardinals to open the other three Holy Doors at the same time that he was opening the door at St. Peter's. Early in December Pope Paul announced the names of the three cardinals delegated to the task. The Holy Doors will have more than usual significance in Holy Year 1975, since the par-

ticular theme of this jubilee year is "reconciliation." The open church door has long since been a symbol of man's reconciliation with God and the people of God.

It has also been traditional for the popes, during the Roman Holy Years, to beatify certain holy people and canonize new saints. Holy Year 1975 will not be wanting in these special rites. Pope Paul has already announced the names of several saints who are to be canonized, and they come, appropriately from many nations.

Most important of these to us Americans will be the canonization of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton, foundress of the Sisters of Charity in the United States (Her spiritual daughters manage St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester.) She will be the first native American to be declared a saint of God. Mother Seton was as American as apple pie. Think of having a saint who was known to her friends as "Betty" or "Betsy." Yet she was a woman of a resilient spirituality to match that of the saints of other climes and times.

It has been my privilege to be in Rome during two Years of Jubilee. The first was the extraordinary Holy Year of 1933-1934, proclaimed by Pope Pius XI to honor the 19 hundredth anniversary of Christ's death. The second was the regular Holy Year of 1950.

What I remember particularly of these jubilee years was the canonizations of saints that then took place, especially those of St. Bernadette of Lourdes, on Dec. 8, 1933; St. John Bosco, on April 1, 1934, and St. Maria Goretti, on June 7, 1950. The ceremonies before World War II were especially magnificent. On the evening of the canonizations, the whole outside of St. Peter's was illuminated by thousands of large vigil lamps, speedily hand-lighted by steeple-jacks let down by ropes from the crown of the dome. Canonizations since World War II have been less spectacular, and those enacted after the Second Vatican Council have been rather less prodigal. I applaud the decision, but also regret it. The old illumination was glorious.

Rochester diocesans who go on pilgrimage to Rome during 1975 will still find the events of their Roman pilgrimage exciting, as millions of Catholics have found them exciting since the first great Holy Year took place in 1300 A.D. We urge as many local Catholics as possible to take advantage of the pilgrimage tours that will be available. Prices will be higher, than before of course, but the travel agencies will be able to present economical pilgrimage packages.

Bishops Issue Bicentennial Guideline

'Liberty and Justice for All'

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — A U.S. Roman Catholic bishops' committee on the forthcoming bicentennial in 1976 has published a 60-page document designed to serve as a parish discussion guide on the theme "Liberty and Justice for All" in American society and in the global community.

Made up of discussion questions and resource papers on a variety of topics relating to the theme, the document in effect will seek to give life to the principles of Catholic social teaching as it applies to concrete and complex problems today.

The program outlined in the document was prepared by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' committee on the bicentennial and will be the principal mode of Catholic participation in the 200th anniversary celebration of this nation. It was introduced at a meeting here of the diocesan coordinators for the bicentennial, representing some 90 Catholic dioceses in the U.S.

Stating that the program

offers a means of responding collectively to the Church's teaching on justice, Cardinal Dearden noted that "this is contingent upon the actual interest, understanding and participation of those at the local church level."

In the introduction to the document, Father J. Bryan Fehir, of the USCC Division of Justice and Peace, noted that the entire "Liberty and Justice for All" program has three phases:

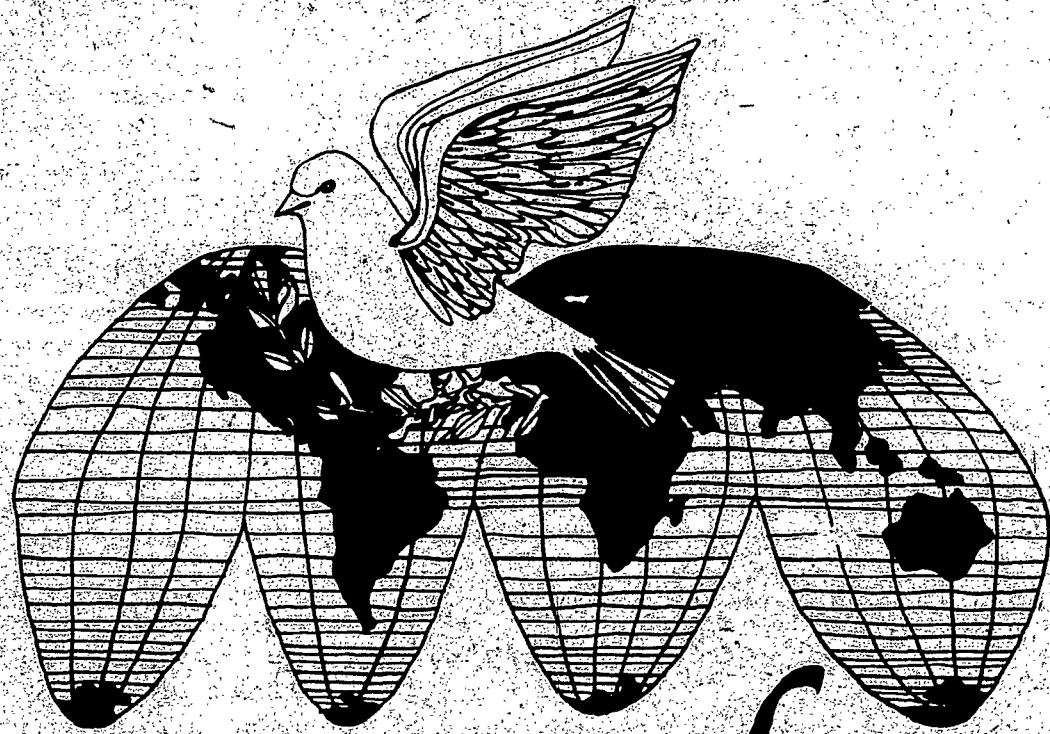
In 1975, the effort seeks a broad participation by Catholics in discussions locally and at the regional level through "hearings on justice" to be held throughout the year. In October, 1975, a

national hearing on justice will be held in Detroit, bringing together the results of earlier discussions and hearings.

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Seasonal Thoughts...

Each year as we sit down to write these few lines, we always have second thoughts. Because we continually strive for the support of the missions, there is always a danger that whatever we say here will have overtones of fund raising that are not intended. We only wish to share with you our feelings of joy for this season, and ask you to join with us in a prayer for a year of peace throughout the world. Certainly we all look forward to the moment when each man can accept his fellow man as a brother... when the promise of this season is fulfilled!

Rev. Joseph F. Reinhart
DIOCESAN DIRECTOR

Mary Metrana

Vera J. Trabold

Carmel M. Buonc

Joseph M. Bartolomeo

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith