



As pilgrims of hope, we continue onward

*Letter from the Roman Catholic bishops of the Netherlands
on the occasion of the conclusion of the Jubilee Year 2025*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is with joy and gratitude that we look back on the Holy Year, or Jubilee Year, 2025, which will soon come to an end. On the 28th of December, dioceses around the world will close the Jubilee Year. Pope Leo XIV will do so in Rome in St. Peter's Basilica on the 6th of January, the Feast of the Epiphany. He will then close the Holy Door that Pope Francis opened on the eve of Christmas 2024.

"In the Catholic tradition, the Holy Door symbolises the passage to salvation, the path to a new and eternal life that Jesus has opened for humanity," wrote Pope Francis in the bull in which he proclaimed the Jubilee Year at the time. "Hope does not disappoint" is the title of the bull with which Pope Francis invited us to renew ourselves as "pilgrims of hope".

Together with you, we want to continue to respond to this invitation, even after the Jubilee Year. Our world needs hope. We receive that hope through our faith, and we want to share and radiate it. Hope that comes from the promise that God loves us in Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and rose from the dead. We trust that He will guide us on our journey through life. As 'pilgrims of hope', we carry this trust, especially to those who have lost hope or are in danger of losing it. As 'pilgrims of hope', we recognise the 'signs of the times'. During this Christmas season, we are united in prayer with all those who suffer from war and violence, hunger, fear, injustice and other forms of suffering. May they experience the hope of Christ.

Many of you met during the Jubilee Year. Around 1,100 believers from the Netherlands took part in the National Pilgrimage to Rome during the May holidays. Together with millions of others from all over the world, they found renewal and solidarity there. The death of Pope Francis shortly before their departure and the subsequent election of Pope Leo XIV were deeply moving events. The Dutch dioceses organised pilgrimages in their own dioceses. The national Catholic Youth Day in November, where more than seven hundred young people gathered around the theme of 'hope', was heart-warming. Throughout the country, believers reflected on the Jubilee Year during celebrations and pastors spoke about 'hope'. We shared our own 'stories of hope' with each other.

In prayer, we ask that the Jubilee Year may continue to inspire us to face the future with faith and hope. "May the grace of the Jubilee Year rekindle in us, pilgrims of Hope, a longing for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Saviour throughout the earth" (from the Prayer for the Jubilee Year 2025).

The pilgrimage of hope continues. The hymn of the Jubilee Year 2025 continues to resound: "*Like a flame my hope is burning...*"

Baarn, December 2025

the Roman Catholic bishops of the Netherlands