

Today I invite you all to take a pledge. I invite everyone here to sign your own copy of the jubilee pledge for charity, justice and peace from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. They are asking us for a personal commitment to make this year holy by our behavior. The pledge has eight points. I ask you to listen to and reflect on them. If you are willing to accept these behaviors as a more central part of life, then come forward at the end of this homily and sign your name.

The first point is pray. **I pledge to pray regularly for justice and peace.** Many are vulnerable to injustice because of their race, ethnicity, or economic status. Some suffer wars or natural disasters. They need our prayers. I pledge to pray regularly for justice and peace.

The second point is learn. **I pledge to learn more about Catholic social teaching and its call to protect human life, stand with the poor and care for creation.** The Catholic Church, more than any other religious body, has an enormous collection of teachings on issues like racism, the death penalty, international debt, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, abortion, sex, and media violence. People don't always agree with us, but they want to know what we think, because Catholics have been thinking about these issues for centuries. When I discuss these matters, I want to be informed. I learn through *The Catholic Key*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the documents from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops or the Vatican website. I pledge to learn more about Catholic social teaching.

The third point is reach. **I pledge to reach across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity, gender and disabling conditions.** To build bridges, I have to reach out to people different from me. I can socialize with them. When I make decisions, I can't favor one group over another. I pledge to reach across boundaries.

The fourth point is live justly. **I pledge to live justly in family life, school, work, the marketplace and the political arena.** The most important way to achieve justice and peace is with the people I meet. I can tip generously to supplement someone's low income. I can recycle. I can pick up trash in front of my neighbor's house. I pledge to live justly.

The fifth point is serve. **I pledge to serve those who are poor and vulnerable, sharing more time and talent.** I can volunteer with organizations that assist the needy. I can provide food for the pantry. I pledge to serve the poor.

The sixth point is give. **I pledge to give more generously to those in need at home and abroad.** I can contribute more to those annoying second collections at church. I can support organizations that feed the hungry and free those unjustly bound. I pledge to give.

The seventh point is advocate. **I pledge to advocate for public policies that protect human life, promote human dignity, preserve God's creation and build peace.** I can support our Dismantling Racism Task Force. I can write to congress with help from Bread for the World. I can write leaders of nations with help from Amnesty International. I pledge to advocate policies that promote human dignity.

The eighth point is encourage. **I pledge to encourage others to**

**work for greater charity, justice and peace.** In addition to performing this pledge I can encourage others to do so as well. I can tell people I plan to make this jubilee a true year of freedom and justice. I pledge to encourage others to work for greater charity, justice, and peace.

St. Paul tells the Corinthians that Christ will hand over the kingdom to God after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. Together we can destroy the powers of injustice, hatred, and bigotry, if we all make the pledge. The pledge is on tables in front of you. We have a version for adults and one for children. Please sign your copy now and take it with you.