

Pope at Jubilee Audience: “The Jubilee invites us to begin again”

At his first Jubilee Audience on Saturday, 11 January Pope Francis framed the Jubilee as a moment of grace, an invitation to “begin again”. These words resonated throughout his Catechesis, serving as both a call to action and a reminder of the Jubilee’s essence: the opportunity for everyone to start anew from God, our ultimate source of hope.

To hope is to begin again

Hope, the underpinning theme of the 2025 Holy Year, will be the focus of this new cycle of bi-weekly audiences, which will integrate the traditional Wednesday catechetical sessions throughout the year, representing an ideal embrace for pilgrims visiting Rome in search of “a new beginning”.

Addressing nearly 8,000 people in the Paul VI Hall, Pope Francis centred his reflection on John the Baptist, whom he described as a “great prophet of hope”.

John the Baptist a great prophet of hope

Highlighting John’s pivotal role in biblical history, the Pope referred to Jesus’ praise of him as the “greatest among those born of women” (Lk 7:24,26-28).

John’s mission, marked by his call for repentance and renewal symbolized by crossing the River Jordan, mirrors the pilgrimage of Christians crossing the Holy Door during the Jubilee. This act, Pope Francis explained, represents a new beginning, a deep spiritual reset.

Hope as a gift of God

Hope, as the Pope elaborated, is not merely “a habit or a character trait”, but a “strength (“virtus” in Latin) to be asked for”, a gift of God that spurs Christians “to start again on the journey of life”.

As the Gospel of Luke tells us, it requires a recognition of our human smallness in the face of God's greatness. "It does not depend on us, but on the Kingdom of God," where even the "least" become great, the Pope said.

Pope Francis also addressed the struggles of faith, drawing on John the Baptist's own moments of doubt during his imprisonment. These doubts, the Pope noted, resonate with the challenges faced by Christians today navigating a world where "many Herods" still "oppose the Kingdom of God."

Recognizing our smallness

Yet, he stressed, the Gospel provides an antidote to this despair through its transformative teachings, particularly the Beatitudes, which chart a new path of hope.

Pope Francis concluded with a call to embrace hope and renewal through service and fraternity, particularly towards the least, and through responsibility for our "common home" the Earth "so abused and wounded".

This, he said, is the essence of the Jubilee: a new beginning grounded in God and a commitment to love and service.

"Let us start again from this originality of God, which shone in Jesus and which now binds us to serve, to love fraternally, to acknowledge ourselves as small. And to see the least, to listen to them and to be their voice. Here is the new beginning, our Jubilee!".

** Article published by Lisa Zengarini – Vatican News. Photo: Vatican Media.*