

Jubilee 2025

PILGRIMS OF HOPE REFLECTION GUIDE



Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development



JUBILEE 2025
PILGRIMS OF HOPE



Scan to find your
leader's guide.

INTRODUCTION

"For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope." Pope Francis

Welcome to CAFOD's reflection guide for the 2025 Jubilee Year, Pilgrims of Hope. This booklet will help you to reflect on the meaning of this special year, and how it calls us to reset, renew our faith and commit to building a fairer world where all people may flourish.

Whether you are exploring this on your own, in a small group or with your parish we hope the contents will deepen your faith and renew your hope.

If you are planning to facilitate sessions for a group, you can find full details of how to do so in our leader's guide.

For full details of how to journey with CAFOD this Jubilee Year, go to cafod.org.uk/jubilee

Wishing you every blessing,

Christine Allen
CAFOD Director

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SESSION 1

Jesus of the Jubilee

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

What comes to your mind when you hear the word Jubilee?



Scan to
watch

THE BIBLICAL ORIGINS OF JUBILEE

Watch a video or read the transcript below.

2025 is a Year of Jubilee! The word 'Jubilee' comes from the Hebrew word for a ram's horn, which was blown to announce the start of a Jubilee Year in the Bible.

In the Old Testament, the Jubilee Year was a time of renewal and celebration. Debts were cancelled, people could rest, and because crops weren't planted even the land was able to rest. It was also a time of freedom: prisoners and slaves were freed, and land was given to those who didn't have any. It was known as the year of the Lord's favour.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Jesus makes it clear that his mission is to bring the justice and freedom of the Jubilee. Inspired by his example, we can share in his mission to create a world of justice, peace and love.

Now we celebrate a Jubilee every 25 years. It's still a very special, holy year of forgiveness and mercy, a time to reset, to renew our relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation.

Pope Francis has called this Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope'. It is an invitation to renew our hope, a hope which comes from knowing that God loves each one of us, whoever we are. Pope Francis says: "Pilgrimage is of course a fundamental element of every Jubilee event. Setting out on a journey is traditionally



associated with our human quest for meaning in life.” Even if we can’t travel far away, the Jubilee Year will still be a journey for all of us - a journey of hope.

Pope Francis asks us to be signs of hope for others, by putting Catholic Social Teaching into action through caring for our common home and supporting our sisters and brothers who are experiencing war, hunger or poverty.

We know that the world is facing many of these challenges... but you are one of millions of people who are joining together in the Jubilee Year to bring the light of hope and the message of God’s love to every part of the world!

We can all be Pilgrims of Hope, so let’s start our journey right now! Pope Francis says: “By our actions, our words, the decisions we make each day, our patient efforts to sow seeds of beauty and kindness wherever we find ourselves, we want to sing of hope... and reawaken in every heart the joy and courage to embrace life to the full.”

Reader 1: Luke 4:16-21

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Pause for a moment of quiet reflection.

JUBILEE ICON

An icon is a visual aid for reflection and discernment, inspiring prayer and devotion. CAFOD commissioned a Jubilee icon, depicting Luke 4:16-21, from Mulugeta Araya*.

Take some time now to look at the icon, below, while the gospel is read again.

You could consider the following questions:

- > What do you notice?
- > What draws you in?
- > Does the icon help you to see the story of the Gospel in a different way?

Share one thing with the group which strikes you about the icon.



**Mulugeta Araya is an artist and an engineer who studied at St Mary's College, Wukro in Ethiopia, which is supported by CAFOD. St Mary's offers vocational training for young people in agriculture, IT and accounting, as well as the arts. The college also takes part in programmes to improve food security, the supply of water and emergency response in the area.*



The icon portrays Jesus faithfully in the Northern Ethiopian tradition and is full of meaning:

- 1 The crowd gathered to listen to Jesus includes men, women and children. Old and young. Their body language shows they are engaged with the Word of God. Their eyes are fixed on Jesus. The people are hungry for this truth.
- 2 Jesus looks out into the world. His gaze encompasses all people, not just this crowd, and his teaching is for all time.
- 3 The woman with a stick at the front shows Jesus' concern for those who are often overlooked in our society, such as the elderly, the vulnerable and those living with a disability.
- 4 The golden halo shows that Jesus is divine and the Son of God.
- 5 Jesus' right hand is raised to show he is teaching.
- 6 This man holds a leather bag used to carry and protect the Holy Bible in Ethiopia.
- 7 The words of the Scripture are written in Ge'ez, an Ethiopian liturgical language.
- 8 The rainbow is a symbol of hope and of God's covenant with all people bridging the Old and New Testaments, and which will lead to liberation.
- 9 The brick wall shows the separation between God's house – the Synagogue and the outside world. Jesus has come into an open space where the crowds can gather together on equal terms. Here the Good News and the Jubilee liberation are for the whole world.

ICON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > Does the knowledge of the artist's intentions change anything about how you view the icon?
- > Do you notice anything new?
- > What thoughts or feelings does the icon bring up for you about Jubilee?

Your leader may invite you to share your thoughts with the group.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Pope Francis has declared that the theme for this Jubilee Year will be “pilgrims of hope”. Let’s think a little bit more about what this means.

The gift of hope is greatly needed in our world, where we are daily faced with the challenges of poverty, injustice, violence and the destruction of the environment. Hope is transformative. It widens our vision and fills our hearts, inspires our imagination and creativity, strengthens our resolve and helps us to live differently.

But what does it mean to be a pilgrim? The difference between a pilgrim and a traveller is openness to God. A pilgrim seeks God not just in their ultimate destination but in all that they encounter along the way.

So in this Jubilee Year, we are called to our own journey – a journey in which we become “tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.” (*Spes non confundit*, #10)

A JUBILEE PLEDGE

Having reflected on the biblical origins of Jubilee, Christ’s mission on earth, and about what it means for us today, let’s consider how we can be a pilgrim of hope in our homes, our communities and within the wider world in this Jubilee Year.

- > How will you be a pilgrim of hope?
- > How will you walk alongside people experiencing poverty?
- > How will you take care of the earth and each other?

Please turn to the back cover to fill in your pledge.



CLOSING PRAYER

Christ Jesus, on whom the Spirit rests,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, bringer of Good News,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, liberator of captives and all who are oppressed,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, restorer of sight,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, proclaimer of the year of the Lord's favour,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, in whom the Scripture was fulfilled,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.
Lead us all to be signs of your hope in our world.

Amen.

*People taking part
in a pilgrimage
near Ampleforth
Abbey, York.*



SESSION 2

Jesus of Good News

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

What good news have you heard or thought about recently?

Leader: Sharing good news is something we all like to do. As Christians, we are called to share the gospel, the good news of



Christ Jesus. Maybe your faith journey began with a powerful encounter with Jesus which transformed your life. Or perhaps the Lord's presence has been a constant for you, a source of quiet strength, guidance and comfort. Either way, sharing the story of Jesus and the new life he brings is a vital part of our Christian mission.

Today we will be focusing on Jesus' words proclaiming the good news. Luke tells us he spoke these words right at the start of his ministry at the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. Reading from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, Jesus said:

Reader 1: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor."

Reader 2: The good news that Jesus brings is good news for each of us. A chance to recognise our own poverty, need for God and dependence on his goodness. However, Jesus' teachings and actions make it clear that the good news is not simply about our spiritual relationship, but a radical call for transformation in our world so it reflects the justice, healing and peace of God's kingdom.



Reader 3: We know we live in an unequal world. The world's richest 1% own 43% of all global financial assets¹ and emit as much carbon pollution as the poorest two-thirds of humanity.² Despite there being enough food in the world to feed everyone, approximately 735 million people worldwide face hunger daily.³

Leader: Yet there is also good news. The Spirit is inspiring individuals and communities around the world to come together to build a world where all can flourish.

¹ Oxfam (2024), Inequality Inc: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/inequality-inc>

² A. Khalfan et al. (2023). Climate Equality: A Planet for the 99%. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/climate-equality-a-planet-for-the-99-621551/>

³ In Brief to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023, UN The Food and Agriculture Organization, 5 <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc6550en>

ISACKO'S STORY



Scan to
watch or
read the
transcript
below

*Gabbra huts
in Kenya.*



"I was born in those small huts, those Gabbra huts there. There were a lot of difficulties during my childhood growing up as a pastoralist child. There's a lot of problems with the livelihoods in this area because of the aridity because of the remoteness of the area. We entirely depend on livestock and because of drought and livestock diseases, animals die in large numbers and reduce our livelihood assets. For most of the time we go hungry without food and people's health is a big issue because there are no hospitals.

It feels really great to be back and joining that community in a different capacity. When I was growing, I was going through the same difficulty that they are experiencing now. But now because of the skills that I've got, because of the education and the exposure I have got, and the opportunity to work in a humanitarian and development organisation, I feel proud. This is a community that have integrity and they don't want to beg. That's one very clear thing. That they don't want to be on aid year on end. The future is promising because we have had change. Forty years ago this community was in darkness, in isolation. Now they are getting slowly linked up."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > The word gospel means good news. Who is it that the gospel is good news for and why?
- > How is Isacko living Jesus' words in Luke 4? Have you heard of or met other people whose lives and actions reflect the priorities of Jesus?

> How does the good news challenge us or offer us hope?

> How can we share the good news with others?

Your leader may invite you to share your thoughts with the group.

Leader:

Loving Lord,
May we be still and know you are God.
Grant us the grace to rest in your presence,
ready to receive the good news of Jesus
and reflect on his call for our lives.
Amen.

There will be some time now for silent prayer. Distractions are normal but try to let these go and gently bring yourself back to the still centre of God's love.

CLOSING PRAYER

Christ Jesus, on whom the Spirit rests,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, bringer of Good News,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, liberator of captives and all who are oppressed,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, restorer of sight,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, proclaimer of the year of the Lord's favour,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, in whom the Scripture was fulfilled,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.
Lead us all to be signs of your hope in our world.

Amen.





SESSION 3

Jesus the Liberator

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

What does freedom mean to you?

Reader 1: “He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”

CHAINS OF OPPRESSION

Who are the captives and the overburdened in our world today?

While you discuss the question above, write some of the examples on strips of paper and add them together to make a paper chain. These chains serve as symbols of oppression in our world.

Leader: Debt is one way in which people can be trapped, unable to free themselves from the burden laid upon them by their lenders. But in Leviticus, it is laid out that in the Jubilee Year debts should be released and property returned to its original owner (Leviticus 25:28). This was a recognition that over time, wealth could become concentrated in the hands of a small minority, and a call for society to be rebalanced every 50 years. Debts were to be cancelled, equality restored and those who had been trapped in poverty would be freed and could have a fresh start.

Ahead of Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis has called for richer countries to cancel the debts of poorer nations who are struggling with immense debt burdens, saying: “More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice.”

DEBT IN SRI LANKA

Reader 2: Sandun Thudugala, an activist who speaks out for social justice in Sri Lanka, explained the impact that a huge debt burden is having in the country.

“We are trapped by debt. For decades, after independence, we’ve been increasingly depending on foreign borrowings for our needs...”



Scan to
hear more
from Sandun

*Sri Lanka's debt
crisis means that
everyday life is
much harder
for people like
Wasanthi.*



Our local industries and local economy have collapsed significantly, which has destroyed our capacity for producing and earning income. So we have no way out, we just earn, and we just keep paying our debt back. And we will have to keep borrowing to fulfil our needs. So that's why we're trapped.



Scan to read
more about
the debt crisis

In order to pay the debt, the government is reducing fuel and fertilizer subsidies, electricity, social spending like health, education, and social security. This means our basic expenses have increased rapidly. And we don't have a proper education or health system – the services have been reduced.

Every day normal people have to bear the burden of this debt crisis, because it's extremely difficult for us at the moment to get the basic services that we need for day-to-day life."



Reader 3: The number of low-income countries in debt crisis has more than doubled since 2015 to over 50. About 3.3 billion people now live in countries where debt interest payments are greater than expenditure on health or education.⁴

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

> Can you think of any other Scripture passages which mention setting people free?

⁴ UN Conference on Trade and Development (2024), A world of debt, <https://unctad.org/publication/world-of-debt>



- > Can you think of any more examples of where you feel trapped or see others trapped in our world?
- > What situations of injustice do we turn a blind eye to?
- > How does the Good News set us free? What does it free us from?
- > Are there any ways we can change or work so that more people can be free, especially in the Jubilee Year?

CHAINS OF OPPRESSION

While you discuss the questions above, add any additional examples of injustice you come up with to your paper chain.

PENITENTIAL RITE

Leader: We have listened to Sandun's words and considered how debt can keep countries and their people trapped in poverty. We have thought about other situations of injustice in our world, which keep us, and our brothers and sisters throughout the world, captive. We have thought about the times when we might have turned a blind eye to something we knew was wrong, as well as the times when we might have been afraid to speak out for what is right. Let us now turn to God in search of forgiveness and freedom.

Lord, you were sent to bring good news to the poor.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, you came to bring freedom to all people.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, you are our hope and salvation.

Lord, have mercy.

BREAKING THE CHAINS

The leader will play some music and invite you to break a link of the chains that we made earlier, as a sign of the liberation that we seek for ourselves and for others. If you are reflecting on your own, you could create the chain and then as an act of commitment, break one of the chain links each day.

As part of the Jubilee Year, we all hope for and try to work towards this liberation, in the knowledge that Jesus promised freedom for all.

Leader: We are called throughout the Jubilee Year to be tangible signs of hope in our world. We know that our actions can make a difference. Many people were inspired by the Jubilee in the year 2000 to come together and call for debt cancellation. As a result of the debt cancelled because of this campaign, Uganda had \$1bn (£715m) worth of debt relief and used it to double the number of children able to go to primary school.⁵

Raising our voices to call for change can make a difference. But the same structural causes remain in place. That is why we need action again now. As we leave this reflection session today, let us commit to taking action in our own way to free others and ourselves from the oppression that so many face.

We are campaigning on the vital issue of debt as part of the Jubilee Year. See cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt for ways for you and your parish or community to get involved.

CLOSING PRAYER

Christ Jesus, on whom the Spirit rests,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, bringer of Good News,
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Christ Jesus, liberator of captives and all who are oppressed,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, restorer of sight,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, proclaimer of the year of the Lord's favour,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, in whom the Scripture was fulfilled,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.
Lead us all to be signs of your hope in our world.

Amen.

⁵ Larry Elliott, The Guardian, Candle lit for debt relief's unfinished business, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2000/nov/27/debt.development>



SESSION 4

Jesus, Lord of Creation



We are a people
of hope who
believe in
redemption.
We must study
the signs of
the times and
take the action
that is needed
to repair our
relationship
with God's
creation."

*The Call of
Creation,
CBCEW, 2022*

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

> What brings you joy when you contemplate nature?

> Are there places or aspects of the created world that draw you closer to God? Why?

Leader: The Bible begins with a wonderful picture of abundance as God declares all creation good. Everything that follows in the scriptures is set in the context of the goodness of creation and our call to care for our common home.

Reader 1: So, it's no surprise that care for creation has been a feature of the Jubilee Year since its Old Testament origins. When Jesus stood up in the Synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth and proclaimed the year of the Lord's favour, his listeners would have thought at once of the Jubilee Law in the book of Leviticus, where it is written:

Reader 2: "And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you... in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines." (Leviticus 25:10-11)

Reader 3: This extended Sabbath not only let God's people rest from their usual labour but also allowed the land to heal and repair itself. Today that means promoting sustainable farming practices, enhancing biodiversity and allowing soil regeneration.

Reader 1: We can see the cost of our broken relationship with creation in the environmental crisis that we now face: climate change, pollution, deforestation, species extinction and biodiversity loss. People across the planet are already experiencing the effects of the climate emergency, from more frequent and severe storms and floods to historic droughts and food crises. Communities that have contributed the least to causing the crisis are hit hardest by these changes.

Leader: As waters and temperatures rise, individuals and communities are responding to the ecological crisis. Jenny Garzón Saavedra works with children in the Colombian Amazon. Inspired by Laudato Si', Jenny's work has focused on building peace and creating a better future while teaching young people how to combat the climate crisis. Her faith inspires her to dream and work for a peaceful future, where children's voices are listened to and where people come together to care for our common home:

JENNY'S STORY



Scan to
watch or
read the
transcript
below

*Burnt
rainforest in
Colombia.*



"It's been very painful to see and to walk or go around the territory and to pass through areas which have been totally burnt. Usually what you find more than anything are the turtle shells that are left in the middle of those forest fires, and you wonder how many other animals have been trapped there in the middle of the deforestation. Also, what are we going to do so that many other communities that have been deforested can be reforested again?

My specific role is to accompany and provide training to children and teenagers who are involved in a school for rights and responsibilities of children seeking peace, where through art they are taught about their duties, rights and caring for our common home. We use seeds in this school for children's rights to teach them what seed it is, what the tree is like, what





**When you
have faith,
when your love
is immense,
everything can
be achieved.
And I believe
that God
works perfect
miracles.”**

Jenny,
Colombia

the germination process is for this seed so that we can enjoy a leafy tree later on.

I also help them to take a critical look at the surroundings - the environment they live in - so that they don't just stand there and do nothing but take action so that we rise up, so that we contribute to each other's communities, so that their voice is heard.

Three children's councils have been set up. In this area the voice of rural children is hardly listened to. There are violations of fundamental rights that are basic to our lives. So, taking part in these types of meetings enables us to manage these problems and press for action to be taken about them.

We need all of us to take on this commitment to protect the Amazon. We need to be able to restore the damage that we have done and we don't have much time. Time is running out.

When you have faith, when your love is immense, everything can be achieved. And I believe that God works perfect miracles.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > In our busy world, what does the Jubilee Year focus on rest for the people and land have to teach us today?
- > What helps you to be hopeful when you think about the global issue of the environmental crisis?
- > What positive, practical steps can we take by ourselves or as a community to care for our common home? How can we be tangible signs of hope?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer, outside if possible, listening for God in nature. Be attentive to the sights and sounds around you. If something stands out, stop and take some time to notice the details of this.

Ask God to make you aware of the sacredness of all living things. Give thanks for the abundance and beauty of the world.

What might God be saying to you, or calling you to, through his presence in creation?

PLEDGE

At the end of our first gathering we invited you think about how you can be a pilgrim of hope in this Jubilee Year. Is there anything you want to deepen, change or add to your pledge as a result of your reflection and prayer? If so, add it now.

CLOSING PRAYER

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Christ Jesus, proclaimer of the year of the Lord's favour,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Christ Jesus, in whom the Scripture was fulfilled,
Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.
Lead us all to be signs of your hope in our world.

Amen.



To get involved with CAFOD throughout the Jubilee Year, as a pilgrim of hope, go to cafod.org.uk/jubilee



JUBILEE PLEDGE

Write how you will play your part in challenging inequality and injustice by standing alongside our brothers and sisters who experience hardship of any kind.

We are pilgrims of hope, walking in solidarity with our sisters and brothers worldwide, sharing challenges and celebrating joys. We promise to work together with others for justice, love and peace, locally and globally.

As a pilgrim of hope, I want to build a fairer world, where every person, and the earth can flourish.

I WILL DO THIS BY:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, similar to standard notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.