



Richard Cardinal Ezzati opened the Jubilee Year of Mercy in the western region of the archdiocese by traveling to the Assumptionist basilica of Lourdes on this Third Sunday of Advent.

By Francisco Morón

“Pope Francis did something wonderful by inaugurating this year of mercy. It's something missing in the world and especially in our country. The Holy Door is an opportunity that we Christians have to start things all over again,” commented **René Contreras, one of the faithful** who was present at the opening ceremony which took place at 5 PM on the Third Sunday of Advent.

The Basílica of Lourdes was packed. About one thousand faithful gathered around the Cardinal at the entrance of the church as he opened the Holy Door, and then proceeded inside for the celebration of the Eucharist during which the Archbishop of Santiago underlined the importance of this Year for the Church of Santiago and for the whole nation.

“We are opening this Holy Door in order to receive the mercy of God and so become a Samaritan church, medicine of mercy, flame of truth, and promise of charity. It is meant to convey God's love for the world, offering a message of hope, serving men and women no matter what their needs may be”, **Cardinal Ezzati** said during the celebration.

Shrine of Lourdes

In this site there are three ways that one can experience the real meaning of the Holy Door. The idea is that, along with getting to know the grotto of Lourdes and the importance of this Shrine, people can pass through the Holy Door with real meaning.

"The idea is that parishes, Church movements, schools, or whoever wishes to come, may register in the office of the Shrine announcing their intention of making this pilgrimage. We here at the Shrine are offering three routes that one can follow to pass through the Holy Door. We don't want people simply to walk through the door, but to do so aware of its meaning by following a path of preparation," explained the rector of the Shrine, **Fr. Aldo Gajardo**.

The three routes are:

- 1) There will be six stations and is open to everyone who comes. These six stations will recall different passages of the gospels that reveal the merciful heart of God the Father.

- 2) A second route will be available for children and young people.

- 3) A third route has been foreseen for senior citizens. It will feature three stations on the esplanade of the Basilica.

All three routes end up by leading one through the Holy Door and into the Basilica of Lourdes.