



## Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

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### **Statement from Bishop Robert P. Deeley Regarding Pope Francis' Letter on Tuesday, September 1**

“The purpose of the Year of Mercy is to help all believers have a genuine experience of God’s mercy. In his letter, Pope Francis has outlined ways to make that mercy more available, especially to those who might otherwise feel it is not available to them. In a particular way, Pope Francis directs his concern to women who have resorted to abortion as a solution at a difficult time in their lives. He worries that they might lose hope of God’s mercy. So he wants to encourage them to seek compassion and forgiveness after making these painful decisions. Though acknowledging the seriousness of the act of abortion, the Holy Father wants to underline that ‘the forgiveness of God cannot be denied to one who has repented, especially when that person approaches the Sacrament of Confession with a sincere heart in order to obtain reconciliation with the Father.’

In the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, which begins on December 8, all priests will have the ability to absolve the sin of abortion to those who, with a contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it. In fact, permission to do that has been available to all priests in the Diocese of Portland for many years. Many women seeking solace, kindness, and care, have found that comfort through Project Rachel, the Church’s post-abortion healing ministry, which offers assistance to those suffering from the loss of a child by abortion.

May the words of Pope Francis today inspire all of us to know that God, in his mercy, constantly reaches out to all who seek it.”