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### **24 Hours for the Lord: Friday March 4 to Saturday March 5**

Dear Friends,

When Pope Francis announced the Jubilee Year of Mercy, one of the special events he proposed was "24 Hours for the Lord", to be celebrated throughout the world from Friday March 4 to Saturday March 5. Pope Francis has encouraged us to observe this as a special time of prayer that would include the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In so far as possible, I ask that this 24 Hours for the Lord be celebrated in each parish of our diocese. The details of the celebration would be arranged at the local level. However, I would suggest a number of elements that could be part of the celebration. Where possible, the 24 Hours might begin and/or end with Mass, with the homily relating to the Jubilee Year of Mercy. There could be a common celebration of Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer. There could be a Penance Service. Where priests are available, there would be opportunities for individual confession. There could be a celebration of the Stations of the Cross. There could be times of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with people invited to put their names on a roster of prayer.

In all these ways, this special 24 Hours will indeed be 24 Hours for the Lord and will provide an occasion for us to draw nearer to Christ. It will be a time to experience the mercy of God in our own lives and a time to grow in mercy ourselves, so that we might be more and more merciful to each person we meet, as God our Father is merciful to us.

May this 24 Hours for the Lord bring blessings on us all.

Yours in Christ,

Paul Bird CSsR

Bishop of Ballarat