

Public events with the Jubilee Icon in the Diocese

Tuesday 9 December:

6.30pm Mass, St Margaret of Scotland, Twickenham, TW1 1RL.

Thursday 11 December:

9.15am Mass, Our Lady of the Rosary, Staines, TW18 2BD.

Friday 12 December:

12noon Catholic Mass, Lady Chapel, St Alban's Cathedral, AL1 1BY.

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 December:

6.00pm (Sat), 9.00am, 11.00am, 6.00pm (Sun) Masses, St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2ND.

Tuesday 16 December:

7.00pm Mass, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Enfield, EN2 6DS.

Thursday 18 December:

9.15am Carol Service for St Mary and St Michael Primary School, St Mary and St Michael, Commercial Rd, E1 0AA;
7.00pm Advent Penitential Service, Holy Apostles, Pimlico, SW1V 4LY.

Friday 19 December:

9.30am Mass, Holy Apostles, Pimlico, SW1V 4LY, then on display there till 3.30pm.

Saturday 20 December:

2.00pm till 4.00pm, Notre Dame de France, Leicester Sq, WC2H 7BX.

Sunday 21 December:

10.00am and 11.30am Masses and 1.00pm Ethiopian Chaplaincy Mass, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Queensway, W2 3JF.

Monday 22 till Friday 26 December:

12.30pm Mass, Westminster Cathedral, SW1P 1LT.

The Icon will be formally received at the 12:30pm Mass and will remain in the Cathedral until the evening of Friday 26 December.



Diocese of Westminster



Resources for the Tour of the Jubilee Icon, December 2025



Icon of Hope © Mulugeta Araya/CAFOD
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<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/jubilee-icon>

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The Jubilee Prayer

Official prayer for the Jubilee Year 2025, "Pilgrims of Hope"

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us in your son,
Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen.



The Jubilee Hymn: “Pilgrims of Hope”

Original text: Pierangelo Sequeri

English translation: Andrew Wadsworth

Chorus: Like a flame my hope is burning,
may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending,
on life’s path I trust in you.

1. Ev’ry nation, tongue, and people
find a light within your Word.
Scattered fragile sons and daughters
find a home in your dear Son. *[Chorus]*
2. God, so tender and so patient,
dawn of hope, you care for all.
Heav’n and earth are recreated
by the Spirit of Life set free. *[Chorus]*
3. Raise your eyes, the wind is blowing,
for our God is born in time.
Son made man for you and many
who will find the way in him. *[Chorus]*

*For more information about the Jubilee Hymn, see
[https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/qiubileo-2025/
inno-qiubileo-2025.html](https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/qiubileo-2025/inno-qiubileo-2025.html)*



When Art Becomes Prayer: CAFOD’s Jubilee Icon for a Pilgrim Church

Christian art is more than decoration. It is a doorway into prayer, devotion, and divine encounter. Icons, especially, act as windows into the heavenly realm, drawing us beyond mere words into sacred presence. When we gaze at an icon, our eyes meet scriptural truths, and our pilgrim hearts are offered a path toward contemplation.

CAFOD’s Jubilee Icon, painted by Mulugeta Araya, a 30-year-old Ethiopian artist and engineer educated at St Mary’s College in Wukro, Ethiopia, offers precisely such an invitation.

Commissioned to mark the Jubilee Year 2025 “Pilgrims of Hope”, it depicts Jesus reading from Isaiah 61: 1-2 in Nazareth, as recounted in Luke 4:16-21: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim good news to the poor, liberty to the captives...’. A beautiful Icon, accompanying beautiful words.

In Araya’s portrayal, Christ stands in solidarity with those on the margins, his gesture evoking liberation, healing, and Jubilee hope. The Icon reflects not only the biblical announcement, but also Araya’s own context: coming from Tigray, Ethiopia; a region marked by displacement, poverty, and resilience. His vision unites Scripture and lived reality into one image of solidarity.

When Christians pray before this Icon, we do more than just look. We watch Jesus, we listen to Him read, and we reflect on the words ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’ (Luke 4:21). The visual encounter becomes verbal encounter, communal encounter! As we meditate, we join the jubilee song of Christ for a world weighed down by injustice.

This is no novelty in Christian art. Throughout history, artists have sought to depict Luke 4 or Isaiah 61. Though less common than themes like the Annunciation or depicting many parables

such as the Good Samaritan, these passages have inspired works that show prophets like Michelangelo's Isaiah on the Sistine Chapel's ceiling and Raphael's Isaiah in Rome; figures holding scrolls whilst their prophetic gaze turns to future hope of liberation. These frescoes remind us that Christian art has long portrayed their prophetic voice: heralding freedom and hope.

What makes Araya's Jubilee Icon deeply effective is its rootedness in community and story. His Ethiopian tradition of icon painting, coupled with his engineering background and commitment to solidarity, give the image earthy authenticity. The Scriptures Jesus is holding are at the very centre of the Icon, just as they have to be at the very centre of our lives. The rainbow of peace and the figures listening as a community reflect our Catholic faith across borders and cultures.

Thus, this Icon becomes prayer. In its colours and composition, its gestures and symbols, it speaks the Gospel in visual language. It offers us an invitation: to see Jesus in marginal faces, to hear the scroll unrolled again, and to answer the call to proclaim the good news.

May CAFOD's Jubilee Icon lead us deeper into prayer, deeper into the Gospel, and inspire us to live its proclamation in solidarity with the poor, oppressed and marginalised.

*Father Patrick van der Vorst,
Precentor, Westminster Cathedral.*



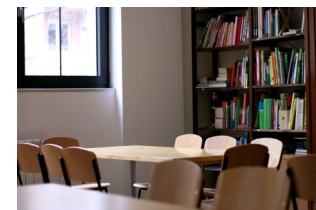
By allowing the beauty of global iconography to 'direct us Godwards', we may even find it easier to see the Divine at work in what feels unfamiliar in those we meet. In a world where the voices seeking to turn us against each other grow louder, I would say we need art like this more than ever.

Some suggestions for using this Icon in a school environment.

1. Visio Divina

Set aside 10-15 minutes in a chapel or an RE classroom, perhaps at the start of a lesson. Use a simple structure:

- ◇ Look in silence;
- ◇ Reflect on what you notice;
- ◇ Read Luke 4:16-21 aloud;
- ◇ Ask: Where am I in this Icon?
What is Jesus saying to us today?
- ◇ Invite a short sharing in response.



2. Assembly Prayer Focus

Use this in an assembly setting as a springboard to discuss justice, global solidarity, and the meaning of Jubilee.

3. Printed Mass, Liturgy and Assembly Slides

Incorporate the Icon into your Mass, liturgy booklets or slides for Celebrations of the Word. Make sure to build time with it into the celebration so that students are engaging actively.

4. Cross-Curricular Links

In RE, link the Icon to liberation theology and other religious art; in Geography or PSHE, explore how issues like conflict, climate, and migration are also spiritual concerns.

5. Creative Reflection

Invite students to paint or collage their own version of the Icon with modern figures or local figures. Who brings 'good news to the poor' in their lives?

James Johnston, Chaplain, Bishop Challoner School, East London.

Using the Jubilee Icon in Schools

I am privileged to be a lay chaplain serving a large and diverse school in the East End. I often turn to Ethiopian iconography to support my work - on assembly slides, in printed Mass booklets and as a focal point for Visio Divina.

This Jubilee Year, CAFOD has gifted us a remarkable image to pray with. The Jubilee Icon shows Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth unrolling the scroll of Isaiah, and in doing so proclaiming salvation, hope and liberation.

Araya's Icon is a global one that reminds us that our Church is not European by default. In our school, over 70 different languages are spoken in the homes of our young people, and global perspective matters. Icons like this help our students understand that we belong to a worldwide family of faith that grows every day. We glimpsed that truth in a particular way this Jubilee Year, as we mourned the death of Pope Francis and welcomed Pope Leo as a new successor of Peter, experiencing this grief and renewal together as one Church.

As Pope Benedict reminded us: 'The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness.' The context of Tigray, the troubled region where this beautiful work was made, is vital to its message. Rather than shying away from suffering, it places Christ's words of liberation in the middle of it, reminding us that that prayer is always connected to justice. Icons like this show us that greatness lies in solidarity with the poor. They are not just art to admire, but calls to discipleship.

Icons like Araya's may help some to more easily see themselves, but above all they help all of us to see God. Msgr Ronald Knox tells us that 'when the Son of God came to earth, he came to turn our hearts away from earth, Godwards' – and used correctly, iconography can do the same thing.

Jesus of the Jubilee:

A reflection on the Jubilee Icon by CAFOD

An icon is a visual aid for reflection and discernment, inspiring prayer and devotion. CAFOD commissioned an icon, depicting Luke 4:16-21, from Mulugeta Araya, an Ethiopian artist, to commemorate and celebrate the Jubilee Year 2025. Ethiopia was chosen because of its strong tradition of iconography, but also because of the Jubilee's focus on liberation for those facing poverty, captivity, oppression or inequality.

Take some time to remind yourself of 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 in front of the Icon. 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?
- What thoughts or feelings does the Icon bring up for you about Jubilee?

The Icon portrays Jesus faithfully in the Northern Ethiopian tradition and is full of meaning.

In this Jubilee Year, Pope Francis has called on us to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.

Please consider donating to CAFOD to support our work with our sisters and brothers experiencing poverty, injustice and conflict around the world.



Step three: Pray and Reflect

Pray: How has God been speaking to you as you meditated upon the Icon of Hope? It's now time for you to respond to the Divine. What is your response? What is your prayer? Allow your words to be formed in the depth of your soul. Articulate any yearnings or desires that arise. Give voice to the emotion that moves within.

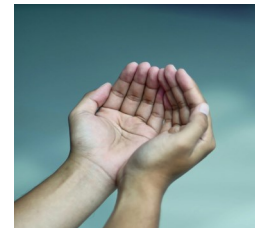
Reflection: Prayer and action are intrinsically linked. Perhaps the Holy Spirit through the Words of the Gospel expressed in the Icon of Hope has inspired you to serve God in a particular way. Reread the words of the Gospel passage, and gaze again upon the Icon of Hope. What comes to mind?

Step four: Contemplation:

Contemplate: Words and images are seldom sufficient to express our deepest selves. We now turn to the prayer of silence. Simply rest in communion with the Creator – the One who created your soul at the moment of your conception – the One who loves you beyond measure. Delight in the stillness. Be soothed by his Divine Love. Allow all that you have heard and seen to penetrate the depths of your innermost heart. Just rest in the silence of God's love for a few moments.

When you are ready, open your eyes and bring yourself gently back into the room. Continue to be aware of the presence of God within yourself and the room. Then end your prayer with a Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

*Sister Carolyn Morrison, Social Outreach Chaplain,
Catholic Chaplaincy for London's Universities.*



¹ Pope Benedict XVI, (2009)
Meeting with Artists, Sistine Chapel.

Step one: Read

When you are ready, gradually open your eyes, and read the Gospel according to Luke (4:18-9) slowly:

*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'*

Step two: Gaze and Meditate

Gaze: Now lift up your eyes from the text and gaze upon the Icon in its entirety. Notice the beauty of the foliage and buildings in the background. Notice the shapes, the colours of the rainbow, and the characters in the foreground. Who do identify with? Or are you simply a bystander? Allow the Icon of Hope to be a door of grace for you.

Once you have visually scanned the Icon, note what has drawn your attention. Just like Lectio Divina, it is God that is guiding you to a treasure meant just for you. Just rest your gaze on the first thing that drew your attention. Do not be tempted to look elsewhere. Stay with what you first noticed, and rest there for a few moments.

Meditate: Now meditate upon the part of the image that has drawn your attention. How is God speaking to you through this image? Why do you think God drew your attention to this particular part of the Icon? Is a message conveyed that pertains to your life today? Do you sense an invitation? Do you hear a call? What memories are aroused? Allow these thoughts to descend into your heart. What emotions does it evoke for you? What words describe your inner stirring as you embrace these feelings? Allow God's love to touch you deep within, where the Spirit of God dwells.

1. The crowd gathered to listen to Jesus includes men, women and children. Old and young. Their eyes are fixed on Jesus; they are engaged with the Word of God.
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 person with a stick at the front shows Jesus' concern for those who are often overlooked in our society, such as the elderly, vulnerable and those living with a disability.
4. The golden halo shows that Jesus is divine and the Son of God. It was not possible to obtain gold leaf in Ethiopia because of the fragile state of the area in which the artist lives. Paint was used instead. The challenge of painting an icon in such turbulent times inspires us to reflect again on the Jubilee message.
5. Jesus' right hand is raised to show that 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. In this icon, Jesus has come into an open space where the crowds can gather together on equal terms, unlike the required segregation in the Synagogue and the Temple of the original story. This is to show that the Good News and the Jubilee liberation are for the whole world.

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<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/jubilee-icon>*

CAFOD's Jubilee for Schools Prayer
written in collaboration with Missio

God, our loving Father,
in this Jubilee year,
you remind us of our call to love creation.
Help us to work together
to replant, repair, and renew.

Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Jesus, our light,
in this Jubilee year,
you remind us of our call to love our neighbours
and to set free those who suffer.
Help us to treat everyone with dignity;
to be fair, forgiving and kind.

Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Holy Spirit, our inspiration,
in this Jubilee year, you remind us of our call
to grow in faith and love.
Help us to hear you in scripture,
to see Jesus in others,
and to be united as God's global family.

Guide us on our journey as pilgrims of hope.

Amen



**Visio Divina: A Contemplative Reflection on the
Icon of Hope by Mulugeta Araya**

*'Art, in all its forms, at the point where it encounters the great questions of our existence, the fundamental themes that give life its meaning, can take on a religious quality, thereby turning into a path of profound inner reflection and spirituality.'*¹

What is Visio Divina? Visio Divina is a form of prayer that utilises an image to aid reflection and contemplation. Like Lectio Divina there are four basic steps to Visio Divina, namely, read, meditate, pray and contemplate.

Firstly, to pray using the Visio Divina method we need to prepare and relax.

Prepare: Place an image that you would like to contemplate where you can clearly see all the details. For this prayer we will use the Icon of Hope by Mulugeta Araya. Typically, icons are seen as windows or doors of grace that have the potential to enable the faithful to go beyond the image and so encounter the mysteries of the divine. Icons are not objects of worship in themselves, rather they are aids that assist us to venerate a holy image and the message that it portrays.

Relax: Choose a comfortable place/chair where you will not be disturbed or distracted. Then place yourself in the presence of God. If it helps, close your eyes. Acknowledge all the sounds around you, then put them to one side. Feel your feet touching the floor. Feel your back resting against the chair. Place your hands gently on your lap. Now focus on your breathing. This is a helpful way to centre yourself in the presence of the divine. Be attentive to the rhythm your breathing and relax. Continue to focus on your breathing: breathing in the presence of God and breathing out all your worries and doubts.