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## Hope Inspires and Informs the Work of Mary's Meals As the Year of the Jubilee Begins

**Bloomfield, N.J. – December 19, 2024** – “Hope does not disappoint,” Pope Francis wrote in a document formally proclaiming the Holy Year 2025.

“Hope is a word that has informed and inspired the work of Mary's Meals since the beginning,” says Mary's Meals founder and CEO Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow. Ahead of the upcoming Year of Jubilee 2025, the global school feeding charity named in honour of Our Lady is reaffirming its mission as one rooted in hope.

The Holy Father will officially open the Holy Year with the rite of the Opening of the Holy Door of the Papal Basilica of St. Peter at 7 pm on Tuesday, December 24. He will then preside over the celebration of Mass on the night of the Lord's Birth inside the Basilica, and on the following Sunday, December 29, he will open the Holy Door at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome.

Mary's Meals' mission is one of hope in communities where hunger and poverty prevent children from gaining an education. MacFarlane-Barrow, recalled, “In the 1990s, we painted 'Delivering Hope' on the side of our truck carrying aid donations to people in Bosnia during the war there. Twenty years later, we began calling the young adults whose lives had been changed by receiving Mary's Meals at school 'Generation Hope.' And in our various daily tasks, which enable this mission, we like to describe ourselves as 'Servants of Hope'.”

As Pope Francis called on the Church during the Jubilee to be: “...tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind,” Mary's Meals continues to be a beacon of hope for children around the world, particularly in areas where conflict, the climate crisis, and the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic have left many children experiencing extreme poverty.

In the spirit of the Jubilee's theme 'Pilgrims of Hope,' Mary's Meals invites all supporters to come together this Holy Year to help to bring hope into situations of hardship. Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, who will make his own pilgrimage during the Jubilee year, said, “In learning to do this work with more love, we become better at proclaiming hope to a world that is crying out for it.”

As Pope Francis wrote in the Bull of Indiction, hope is for every one of us, “I ask with all my heart that hope be granted to the billions of the poor, who often lack the essentials of life. Before the constant tide of new forms of impoverishment, we can easily grow inured and resigned. Yet we must not close our eyes to the dramatic situations that we now encounter all around us, not only in certain parts of the world. It is scandalous that in a world possessed of immense resources, the poor continue to be the majority of the planet's population, billions of people. These days they are mentioned in international political and economic discussions, but one often has the impression that their problems are brought up as an afterthought, a question which gets added almost out of duty or in a tangential way, if not treated merely as collateral damage. Indeed, when all is said and done, they frequently remain at the bottom of the pile.”

'Pilgrims of hope' will be able to obtain the Indulgence by undertaking a pilgrimage to any Holy Door in Rome or elsewhere in the world. But the faithful, following the example and mandate of Christ, are encouraged as well to carry out works of charity or mercy more frequently, especially corporal works of mercy such as feeding the hungry. The Jubilee Plenary Indulgence can also be obtained through initiatives that put into practice the spirit of penance. This can include reaffirming the penitential nature of Fridays by fasting or stepping away from unnecessary distractions, as well

as by donating generously to the poor.

The Jubilee will conclude with the closing of the Holy Door in the Papal Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican on January 6, 2026, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. The Holy Year will conclude in the churches on Sunday, December 28, 2025.

For those who want to live this Jubilee opportunity through Mary's Meals' little acts of love, or find out more about pilgrimages, please visit [www.marysmeals.org](http://www.marysmeals.org).

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## About Mary's Meals

Now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, Mary's Meals is a global movement that sets up school-feeding programs in some of the world's most vulnerable communities, where conflict, poverty and hunger often prevent children from gaining an education. Mary's Meals works with in-country volunteers and trusted partners to provide one daily nutritious meal in a place of learning to bring children into the classroom to receive an education. This simple solution to help end world hunger also enables children to lift themselves from the cycle of hunger and poverty.

Mary's Meals began by feeding 200 children in Malawi in 2002. Today, the organization feeds more than 2.4 million children every school day in more than 5,000 schools in the following countries: Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Mary's Meals is part of the global School Meals Coalition, an emerging initiative of governments and partners to drive actions that can urgently reestablish, improve, and scale up food and education systems. For more information about Mary's Meals, visit [marysmealsusa.org](http://marysmealsusa.org).

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