

INDULGENCES

An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted to her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins. Thus the Church does not want simply to come to the aid of these Christians, but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity.

Plenary or Partial

An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin. It may be applied to the living or the dead: through indulgences the faithful can obtain (for themselves and also for the souls in purgatory) the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin. Because we and the faithful departed now being purified are members of the same communion of saints, one way in which we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishments due to their sins may be remitted.

A Plenary indulgence can be acquired only once in the course of a day; a Partial indulgence can be acquired multiple times. The faithful however can obtain the plenary indulgence at the hour of death, even if they have already gained one on the same day.

In order to be capable of gaining indulgences one must:

1. Be baptized, not excommunicated, and in the state of grace at least at the completion of the prescribed works.
2. One must have at least the general intention of doing so and must carry out the enjoined works at the stated time and in due fashion, according to the sense of the grant.
3. In addition to excluding all attachment to sin, even venial sin, it is necessary to perform the indulgenced work and fulfill the following three conditions: Sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff."

A single sacramental confession suffices for gaining several plenary indulgences; but Holy Communion must be received and prayer for the intention of the Holy Father must be recited for the gaining of each plenary indulgence.

The three conditions may be fulfilled several days before or after the performance of the prescribed work; it is, however, fitting that Communion be received and the prayer for the intention of the Holy Father be said on the same day the work is performed.

If the full disposition is lacking, or if the work and the three prescribed conditions are not fulfilled, the indulgence will only be partial.

A Plenary Indulgence is granted to the faithful who:

1. Visit the Blessed Sacrament for adoration lasting at least a half hour.
2. Visit a parish church:
 - On the solemnity of its titular feast.
 - On August 2, the day of the “Portiuncula indulgence.”
 - On All Souls’ Day (applicable to the dead only).

On these visits one should recite the Our Father and the Creed and fulfill the three requirements (Confession, Communion, and prayer for the pope’s intentions).

3. Read the Sacred Scriptures for at least a half hour.
4. Make the pious Way of the Cross.
5. Recite the Marian Rosary devoutly in a church, oratory, or in a family.
6. Receive the Apostolic Blessing at the hour of death.

A partial Indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who:

1. While carrying out their duties and enduring the hardships of life, raise their minds in humble trust to God and make, at least mentally, some pious invocation.
2. Led by the spirit of faith, give compassionately of themselves or of their good to serve their brothers in need.
3. In a spirit of penance, voluntarily abstain from something that is licit for and pleasing to them.
4. In the particular circumstances of daily life, voluntarily give explicit witness to their faith before others.