

2. What is an Indulgence?

The Jubilee Year of Mercy Indulgence Explained

Pope Francis the Jubilee Year Indulgences

1. “A Jubilee also entails the granting of *indulgences*” (*The Face of Mercy*, no. 22)
2. Pope Francis, Letter regarding the Special Jubilee Year Plenary Indulgence (see below)
3. Some Difficulties with the Jubilee Year Indulgence?
 - a. What exactly *is* an Indulgence?
 - b. Hasn’t the Church *done away* with indulgences?
 - c. Is this some kind of papal “magic”?

Pope Paul VI: Past Abuses of Indulgences

“Unfortunately, the practice of indulgences has on occasion been improperly applied...sometimes through the collection of ‘unlawful profits’ which blasphemously took away the good name of indulgences. The Church deplored and corrected these improper uses. It “teaches and commands that the usage of indulgences—a usage most beneficial to Christians and approved by the authority of the Sacred Councils—should be kept in the Church...” (Paul VI, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina* 8)

The Catechism: What Is An Indulgence?

“An indulgence is *a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins* whose *guilt has already been forgiven*, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.” “An indulgence is *partial* or *plenary* according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.” The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead. (CCC 1471)

The Consequences of Sin

To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has *a double consequence*. *Grave sin* deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the “eternal punishment” of sin. On the other hand *every sin, even venial*, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the “temporal punishment” of sin. *These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin*. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain. (CCC 1472)

Indulgence Analogy: A Son Breaks His Father’s Window

1. Son breaks his Father’s Window (=Sin)
2. Father forgives the Son (=Reconciliation/Forgiveness)
3. The Window is still broken (=temporal punishment/consequences of sin)
4. Who is Going to Pay to Fix It? (=Indulgence)

Jesus on the Effects of Our Sin (Matthew 5)

²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; ²⁶ *truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.* (Matthew 5:21-26)

Why Does God allow the Consequences of Sin to Remain?

The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains. While patiently bearing sufferings and trials of all kinds and, when the day comes, serenely facing death, the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace. (CCC 1473)

Getting Help from the Communion of Saints

The Christian who seeks to purify himself of his sin and to become holy with the help of God's grace is not alone... In the communion of saints, "a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. *Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things.*" In this wonderful exchange, *the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others.* Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin. (CCC 1474-75)

The "Treasury" of the Saints

We also call these spiritual goods of the communion of saints the *Church's treasury*, which is "not the sum total of the material goods which have accumulated during the course of the centuries. On the contrary the 'treasury of the Church' is the infinite value, which can never be exhausted, which *Christ's merits have before God.* They were offered so that the whole of mankind could be set free from sin and attain communion with the Father. In Christ, the Redeemer himself, the satisfactions and merits of his Redemption exist and find their efficacy. This treasury includes as well *the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are *the prayers and good works of all the saints*, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission the Father entrusted to them..." (CCC 1476-77)

Pope Francis on the Jubilee Year Indulgence

I wish that the Jubilee Indulgence may reach each one as a genuine experience of God's mercy, which comes to meet each person in the Face of the Father who welcomes and forgives, forgetting completely the sin committed. (Letter of Pope Francis, September 1, 2015).¹

¹ https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150901_lettera-indulgenza-giubileo-misericordia.html

Two Kinds of Indulgences

1. Plenary Indulgence: removes *all* of the consequences (temporal punishment) for sin
2. Partial Indulgence: removes *some* of the consequences (temporal punishment) for sin

How Do I Gain a Plenary Indulgence? (Ordinary Conditions)²

1. Be a baptized Catholic in a state of grace.
2. Perform the indulgenced work with the intention of gaining the Indulgence.
3. Sacrament of Confession
4. Receive the Eucharist
5. Pray for the intentions of the Pope (usually 1 Our Father and 1 Hail Mary)
6. Interior disposition: complete detachment from sin, both mortal and venial

Time Frame and Circumstances

1. The Eucharist must be received *once* for every plenary indulgence
2. A person can receive *several* plenary indulgences for 1 Confession
3. Eucharist and Confession: preferably on or close to the day of the indulgenced act
4. But Eucharist and Confession may be received within several days before or after

1. The Holy Doors: The Special Jubilee Year of Mercy Plenary Indulgence

1. Brief Pilgrimage to the “Holy Door” of Mercy (Local Cathedral or Roman Basilicas)
2. Enter the shrine or church with a deep desire for true conversion
3. Receive the Sacrament of Confession (preferably same day, but within a few days)
4. Receive the Eucharist and spend time reflecting on mercy (same day or w/in few days)
5. Pray the Apostles Creed
6. Pray for Pope Francis’ intentions for the Church and the world.

2. Works of Mercy: Special Jubilee Year of Mercy Indulgence

1. Pope Francis: “Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, *he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence.*”

Corporal Works of Mercy

1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Clothe the naked.
4. Shelter the Homeless.
5. Visit the Sick.
6. Visit the Imprisoned.
7. Bury the Dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. Instruct the ignorant.
2. Counsel the doubtful.
3. Admonish sinners.
4. Bear wrongs patiently.
5. Forgive offences willingly.
6. Comfort the afflicted.
7. Pray for the living and the dead

Pope Francis’ Indulgence For the Elderly, the Homebound, and the Sick:

1. The Sick, the Homebound, the Elderly and Alone:
 - a. “Live their sickness and suffering as an experience of closeness to the Lord”
2. Actions and Conditions: Living with faith and joyful hope in this moment of trial
 - a. Receiving communion or attending Holy Mass or community prayer (even TV)

² See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Manual of Indulgences* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2006).

Pope Francis' Indulgence For Those Who are In Prison:

1. Prisoners and Those Incarcerated:
 - a. "May they all be touched in a tangible way by the mercy of the Father
 - b. who wants to be close to those who have greatest need of his forgiveness"
2. Actions and Conditions:
 - a. By attending the chapels of the prisons
 - b. By directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell...

Jubilee Indulge For the Dead

1. "Furthermore, the Jubilee Indulgence can also be obtained for the deceased."
2. Actions and Conditions:
 - a. Remember them in the Eucharistic celebration
 - b. Pray for them the merciful Face of the Father free them of every remnant of fault and strongly embrace them in the unending beatitude

Jesus and the Works of Mercy

³⁴ The King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for *I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.*' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? ³⁸ And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? ³⁹ And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, *you did it to me.*' (Matt 25:34-40)

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