

Indulgences
and the
Year of Mercy



Diocese of Fort Worth

November 15, 2015

This information is intended to be a summary of key aspects regarding Indulgences. For details regarding the norms that regulate Indulgences, as well as for a listing of Indulgences, see the *Manual of Indulgences* (English translation © 2006 USCCB).

Definition of and Conditions for an Indulgence

From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1471)

“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.”

From the *US Catholic Catechism for Adults* (p. 244)

“Every sin has consequences. It disrupts our communion with God and the Church, weakens our ability to resist temptation, and hurts others. The necessity of healing these consequences, once the sin itself has been forgiven, is called temporal punishment. Prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other works of charity can take away entirely or diminish this temporal punishment. Because of the fullness of redemption obtained for us by Christ, the Church attaches to certain prayers and actions an *indulgence* or pardon, that is, the full or partial remission of temporal punishment due to sin. Christ, acting through the Church, brings about the healing of the consequences of sin when an individual uses such a prayer or engages in such an action.”

Conditions for Gaining a Partial Indulgence

- ✘ Be baptized, not excommunicated, and in a state of grace.
- ✘ Have the intention of gaining the indulgence (including being contrite)
- ✘ Perform the work or offer the prayers as described for the Year of Mercy – see page 4
- ✘ May be obtained more than once per day.

Conditions for Gaining a Plenary Indulgence

In addition to the above:

- ✘ Exclude all attachment to sin
- ✘ Three conditions:
 - ❖ Go to sacramental confession
 - ❖ Receive Eucharistic Communion
 - ❖ Make a Profession of Faith and Pray for the intentions of the Holy Father for the Church and the World
- ✘ May only be obtained once per day.

If any component is lacking, the indulgence will be partial.

From Norm 20: A single sacramental confession suffices for several plenary indulgences but receiving Communion and praying for the intention of the Holy Father are required for each indulgence. While the three conditions may be fulfilled several days before or after the performance of the indulgenced work, it is fitting that Communion be received and the prayer for the intention of the Holy Father be said on the same day.

Examples of Indulgences

The Four General Concessions (or Grants)

A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who:

- ✘ 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;
- ✘ led by the spirit of faith, give compassionately of themselves or of their goods to serve their brothers in need;
- ✘ in a spirit of penance, voluntarily abstain from something that is licit for and pleasing to them; and
- ✘ in the particular circumstances of daily life, voluntarily give explicit witness to their faith before others.

Indulgence at the Point of Death

Among the Specific Concessions or Grants (#12) is the Indulgence granted at the time of death, which reads:

§1 A priest who administers the sacraments to someone in danger of death should not fail to impart the apostolic blessing to which a *plenary indulgence* is attached.

§2 If a priest is unavailable, Holy Mother Church benevolently grants to the Christian faithful, who are duly disposed, a *plenary indulgence* to be acquired at the point of death, provided they have been in the habit of reciting some prayers during their life time; in such a case, the Church supplies for the three conditions ordinarily required for a plenary indulgence.

§3 In this latter case, the use of a crucifix or a cross in obtaining the plenary indulgence is commendable.

§4 The faithful can obtain this plenary indulgence at the hour of death, even if they have already acquired a plenary indulgence on that same day.

§5 The catechetical instruction of the faithful should ensure that they are duly made aware and frequently reminded of this salutary benefaction of the Church.

Plenary Indulgence for The Year of Mercy (8 December 2015-20 November 2016)

Those who make a pilgrimage to and pass through the Holy Door/Door of Mercy at

- ✘ St. Peter's Basilica in Rome or any of the other Papal Basilicas in Rome;
- ✘ Any Shrine or Jubilee Church in which the Door of Mercy is open; or
- ✘ The Holy Door in every Cathedral or church designated by the Diocesan Bishop.
- ✘ "It is important that this moment be linked, first and foremost, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy. It will be necessary to accompany these celebrations with the profession of faith and with prayer for me and for the intentions that I bear in my heart for the good of the Church and of the entire world."
- ✘ The sick and the elderly who are unable to go on pilgrimage may receive the Jubilee Indulgence by "[l]iving with faith and joyful hope this moment of trial [and] receiving

communion or attending Holy Mass and community prayer, even through the various means of communication.”

- ✘ Those who are incarcerated, “may obtain the Indulgence in the chapels of the prisons.” The Holy Father adds: “May the gesture of directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell signify for them their passage through the Holy Door, because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts, and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom.”
- ✘ Those who perform the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. (“Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence. Hence the commitment to live by mercy so as to obtain the grace of complete and exhaustive forgiveness by the power of the love of the Father who excludes no one.”)
- ✘ The deceased. The Holy Father reminds us that we may gain the Jubilee Indulgence not only for ourselves, but for the deceased as well. He states: “...as we remember them in the Eucharistic celebration, thus we can, in the great mystery of the Communion of Saints, pray for them, that the merciful Face of the Father free them of every remnant of fault and strongly embrace them in the unending beatitude.”
- ✘ Once they have crossed through the Holy Door or Door of Mercy, or have fulfilled one of the other conditions under which Pope Francis has granted the Jubilee Indulgence, in addition to the usual conditions, the faithful should stop in prayer to fulfill the final actions asked for: the profession of faith, and prayer for the Holy Father and his intentions. The latter should be at least an “Our Father.” Taking into consideration the spirit of this Holy Year, it is suggested that pilgrims recite the lovely prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee, and that they conclude the time of prayer with an invocation to the merciful Lord Jesus (for example, “Merciful Jesus, I trust in You”).

In the Diocese of Fort Worth the following are designated as pilgrimage churches:

Diocese of Fort Worth	Pilgrimage Sites	
Diocesan Holy Door	Our Mother of Mercy	Fort Worth
Northwest Deanery	St. Mary	Windthorst
Southwest Deanery	Our Lady of Lourdes	Mineral Wells
South Deanery	St. Frances Cabrini	Granbury
West Central Deanery	Holy Redeemer	Aledo
East Central Deanery	Christ the King	Fort Worth
Arlington Deanery	St. Matthew	Arlington
Northeast Deanery	St. Catherine of Siena	Carrollton
North Deanery	St. Thomas Aquinas	Pilot Point