

**PLENARY INDUGENCE FOR PILGRIMS  
PARTICIPATING  
THROUGH VIRTUAL MEANS  
IN THE NATIONAL PRAYER VIGIL FOR LIFE AND THE MASS FOR LIFE  
JANUARY 28-29, 2021**

Pope Francis has granted a plenary indulgence for all faithful Catholics who participate virtually in the National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Thursday, January 28, 2021 and those who will participate virtually or in-person in the Mass for Life to be celebrated on Friday, January 29, 2021.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, persons who participate virtually due to age, sickness or other grave reasons that prevent them from leaving their homes, but who join via TV, radio, or social media in the National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Thursday, January 28, 2021 are included in the reception of a plenary indulgence. The same conditions apply for pilgrims, who will attend virtually the Mass for Life, which will be celebrated on Friday, January 29, 2021 at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew.

A copy of the decree from the Holy See and an English translation of the decree is available on the Fort Worth Diocese website. Below is a brief explanation of the nature of plenary indulgences and the conditions required to receive them.

The Church has never abandoned the practice of granting indulgences. However, there are many who still misunderstand the doctrine of indulgence, so it is fitting to briefly explain their nature and purpose before expositing the new, special grants which the Apostolic See has recently issued. According to Church teaching,

an indulgence is the remission before God of temporal punishment for sins whose guilt is already forgiven, which a properly disposed member of the Christian faithful gains under certain and defined conditions by the assistance of the Church which as minister of redemption dispenses and applies authoritatively the treasury of the satisfaction of Christ and the saints (c. 992; CCC 1471).

In other words, an indulgence is a special gift whereby the Church applies and dispenses the merits of Christ to the faithful to cancel out the painful punishments due to sin (i.e. temporal punishment). A plenary indulgence fully removes all temporal punishment due to sin (CCC 1471), whereas a partial indulgence does so only partially.

It is necessary to understand that there are two principal consequences of grave sin: eternal punishment and temporal punishment. According to Catholic doctrine:

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 (CCC 1472).

Even though sacramental confession absolves us of the guilt of sin, and therefore of the eternal punishment due to grave sin, temporal punishment remains even after the forgiveness of sins because we remain attached to our vices. In other words, the spiritual scars we have inflicted upon ourselves by sin remain, though the wounds have been bound up by forgiveness.

Works of devotion, penance, and charity in this life, and the purification of purgatory in the next, release us from the temporal punishment due to sin — as do indulgences. Indulgences are “...obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted 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” (CCC 1478). The release of punishment obtained by indulgences can be applied by the one performing the assigned devotion to himself or even to a member of the faithful departed.

Moreover, “to be capable of gaining indulgences, a person must be baptized, not excommunicated, and in the state of grace at least at the end of the prescribed works” (c 996 §1). Thus, one cannot gain an indulgence while in mortal sin, nor do indulgences forgive sin. The sacrament of penance grants absolution and forgiveness of sins and is therefore essential to obtain the benefits of indulgences. Sacramental absolution is therefore one of the three usual conditions placed upon such grants from the Church, alongside the reception of Holy Communion and praying for the Holy Father’s intentions.

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS-JANUARY 28-29, 2021 (ALL TIMES CENTRAL TIME)**

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.

The 7:00-10:00 P.M. (CDT) prayer events on January 28 and the 7:00-8:00 A.M. (CDT) Mass on January 29 will be televised by EWTN and livestreamed on the Basilica’s webpage.

To see the schedule and access the livestream links for the overnight holy hours during January 28–29, please click [here](#).

#### **Thursday, January 28, 2021**

7:00–7:30 pm	National Rosary for Life
7:30–8:45 pm	Opening Mass Principal Celebrant & Homilist: Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities

8:45–10:00 pm

Holy Hour for Life

Reflection: Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio,

Archbishop for the Military Services, USA

Special Note: During the overnight hours between 10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m., bishops in dioceses across the country will be livestreaming holy hours. To see the full listing for the overnight hours, please click [here](#).

Friday, January 29, 2021

7:00–8:00 am

Closing Mass

Principal Celebrant & Homilist:

Most Reverend William E. Lori,

Archbishop of Baltimore