

The Coronavirus Plenary Indulgences

Granted by the Apostolic Penitentiary on March 19th, 2020

WHAT IS A PLENARY INDULGENCE?

An indulgence is obtained when - through the power of “binding and loosing” granted to the Church by Jesus (Matthew 16:19) - the Church “opens” the treasury of the merits of Jesus Christ and the saints, so that the Christian faithful on earth can be “loosed” from the temporal punishments due to sin. (CCC 1478)

Through indulgences, the Christian faithful can obtain remission of the temporal punishments due to sin, both for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory. (CCC 1498, CIC 984)

An indulgence is called “partial” when it obtains *incomplete* remission temporal punishments, or called “plenary” when it obtains *complete* remission from all temporal punishment. (CIC 993)

WHO CAN GAIN THESE PLENARY INDULGENCES?

Once per day, the following categories of baptized persons can gain a plenary indulgence - either for themselves or for the souls in purgatory - if they are in a state of grace and not excommunicated:

- ❖ Those who have contracted the coronavirus and are therefore quarantined (in hospitals or in their own homes), and thus unable to receive the Church’s sacraments normally.
- ❖ Health care workers, family members, and all those exposing themselves to contagion as they care for those who are sick from the coronavirus.
- ❖ Those who pray to Almighty God, imploring Him for the end of this epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted, and eternal salvation for all those who have died.
- ❖ Those on the point of death, provided that they are properly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime.

It should be noted that, those who are not in a state of grace can obtain forgiveness from their sins, and thereby return to a state of grace, through making a sincere Act of Perfect Contrition, on the condition that their contrition includes the firm resolution to seek sacramental confession as soon as possible. (CCC 1452)

HOW CAN THESE PLENARY INDULGENCES BE GAINED?

For those who are ill and subject to quarantine by health authorities, in hospitals or in their own homes:

A plenary indulgence can be gained if, with a spirit detached from any sin, offering up their trial with a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters: they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the practice of the Way of the Cross, or another form of devotion; or if they at least recite the Creed, and the Our Father, and make a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the same time, they must also desire to fulfill the three usual conditions required, as soon as they are able: seeking sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and offering prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father.

For health care workers, family members and all those who care for those sick from the coronavirus:

A plenary indulgence can be gained by following the same conditions listed above (for those quarantined).

For those who pray to God, on the occasion of the current world epidemic:

A plenary indulgence can be gained if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they implore God for the end of the this epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted or suffering, and eternal salvation for those who have died, and offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or by piously reciting the Holy Rosary, or the Way of the Cross, or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. At the same time, they must also desire to fulfill the three usual conditions required, as soon as they are able: seeking sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and offering prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father.

For those on the point of death:

In this case, provided that they are duly disposed (being in a state of grace, with a desire to be free from any attachment to sin) and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime, the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required. For the attainment of this indulgence, the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended.