

What is an Indulgence? And How to Get One.

Basically, an indulgence is the grace we receive from the Treasury of the Church through performing a specific good act or praying specific prayers specified by the Church. The grace is specifically for the freeing of us from temporal punishment. The **Enchiridion of Indulgences** (enchiridion means “manual”) has a complete list of all the indulgenced prayers.

Indulgences have been divided into two kinds:

- Partial – gives one a partial remission of temporal punishment
- Plenary – gives one a full remission of temporal punishment

In the past the Church used to attach a number of days or years off purgatory to each partial indulgence. But now she wants us to understand that the amount of freedom we receive from temporal punishment is based on our own level of devotion. The more charity and devotion we have in prayer, the greater the remission we receive. For example, one of the indulgenced prayers is simply this: saying the Sign of the Cross devoutly and crossing oneself properly.

A plenary, full, indulgence is harder to get. One has to:

1. do the prescribed prayer or action, for example, pray the Stations of the Cross at legitimately erected stations (ie. in a church or grotto);
2. pray for the intentions of the Pope;
3. receive Holy Eucharist and go to the Sacrament of Confession within 8 days or so of the indulgenced act or prayer; and
4. be free of all attachment to even venial sin.

If one is not able to meet all these conditions, then one can still earn a partial indulgence.

You may already know this, but just in case you don't, here is the info on indulgences you can obtain for the Poor Souls in Purgatory (each day this week) and also for yourself (today)!

Grant #29.1.1

For the Souls in Purgatory

Plenary Indulgence

A plenary indulgence, applicable only to the souls in purgatory, is granted each and every day from Nov 1 to Nov 8, who devoutly visit a cemetery and there pray, if only mentally, for the departed.

Grant #29.1.2

All Souls' Day – Plenary Indulgence

A plenary indulgence is granted the faithful who, on All Souls' Day (or according to the judgment of the bishop, on the Sunday preceding or following it, or on the solemnity of All Saints), devoutly visits a church or an oratory and recites an Our Father and the Creed.

Requirements for obtaining a plenary indulgence:

- Do the work while in a state of grace,
- Receive Sacramental confession within 20 days of the work (several plenary indulgences may be earned per reception),
- Receive Eucharistic communion (one plenary indulgence may be earned per reception),
- Pray for the pope's intentions (Our Father and Hail Mary, or other appropriate prayer, is sufficient),
- Have no attachment to sin (even venial) – i.e., it is sufficient that the Christian makes an act of the will to love God and despise sin.

Requirements for a partial indulgence: The work must be done while in a state of grace and with the general intention of earning an indulgence.**Notes:**

- Only baptized persons in a state of grace who generally intend to do so may earn indulgences.
- Indulgences cannot be applied to the living, but only to the one doing the work or to the dead.
- Only one plenary indulgence per day can be earned (except for prayer at the hour of one's own death).
- Several partial indulgences can be earned during the same day.
- If only part of a work with plenary indulgence attached is completed, a partial indulgence still obtains.
- If the penance assigned in confession has indulgences attached, the one work can satisfy both penance and indulgence.
- Confessors may commute the work or the conditions if the penitent cannot perform them due to legitimate obstacles.
- In groups, indulgenced prayer must be recited by at least one member while the others at least mentally follow the prayer.
- If speech/hearing impairments make recitation impossible, mental expression or reading of the prayer is sufficient.
- For an indulgence attached to a particular day requiring a church visit, the day begins at noon the day before and ends at midnight.

What are you waiting for? This is a fantastic opportunity to help the Church Suffering!