

The Gift of the Indulgence *Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy*



In the Roman Catholic tradition, a **Holy Year, or Jubilee**, is a great religious event. It is a year of forgiveness of sins, reconciliation between adversaries, of conversion and receiving the Sacrament of Penance, and consequently of solidarity, hope, justice, commitment to serve God with joy, in peace with our brothers and sisters. A Jubilee Year is above all a year of Christ, Who brings life and grace to humanity.

The Jubilee is called Holy Year, not only because it begins, is marked, and ends with solemn holy acts, but also because its purpose is to encourage holiness of life.

A Jubilee can be “ordinary” if it falls after the set period of years, and “extraordinary” when it is proclaimed for some outstanding event. There have been 26 “ordinary” Holy Years so far. “Extraordinary” Jubilees began in the 16th century, and they can vary in length from a few days to a year. There were two extraordinary Jubilees last century: 1933, proclaimed by Pope Pius XI to mark the 1900th anniversary of Redemption, and 1983, proclaimed by Pope St. John Paul II to mark 1500 years since the Redemption carried out by Christ through His Death and Resurrection in the year 33. Pope Francis called for the extraordinary Jubilee Year, a Holy Year of Mercy, which began on Dec. 8, 2015, the Feast of Immaculate Conception and will conclude on Nov. 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King.

On Indulgences

“An indulgence is the 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.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1471)

In general, the gaining of indulgences requires certain prescribed conditions and the performance of certain prescribed works.

To gain indulgences, whether *plenary* (i.e., the complete remission of all sins) or *partial* (a remission of part of one’s sins) it is necessary that the faithful be in the state of grace at least at the time the indulgenced work is completed.

A *plenary indulgence* can be gained only once a day. In order to obtain it, the faithful must, in addition to being in the state of grace: -have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin; -have sacramentally confessed their sins; -receive Holy Communion; -pray for the intentions of the pope (e.g., The Apostles Creed, The Lord’s Prayer, The Hail Mary).

Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy ~ page 2

The Gift of the Indulgence

It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the sacramental confession and especially Holy Communion and the prayer for the pope take place on the same day that the indulgenced work is performed; but it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days (about twenty) before or after the indulgenced act.

One sacramental confession suffices for several plenary indulgences, but a separate Holy Communion and a separate prayer for the pope's intentions are required for each plenary indulgence.

Having fulfilled the necessary conditions, the faithful may gain the Jubilee indulgence by performing one of the following works:

WORKS OF PIETY OR RELIGION

~Either make a *pious pilgrimage* to a Jubilee shrine or place* --- in Rome, to one of the four Patriarchal Basilicas (St. Peter, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, or St. Paul Outside-the-Walls),....and participate there in Holy Mass or another liturgical celebration (Lauds or Vespers) or some pious exercise (the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy);

~Or make a *pious visit*, as a group or individually, to one of these same Jubilee places, and there spend some time in Eucharistic Adoration and pious meditation, ending with the Lord's Prayer, the Creed (in any approved form), and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

WORKS OF MERCY OR CHARITY

~Either visit for a suitable time *their brothers or sisters in need or in difficulty* (the sick, the imprisoned, the elderly living alone, the handicapped, etc.);

~Or *support* by a significant contribution works of a religious or social nature (for the benefit of abandoned children, young people in trouble, the elderly in need, etc.);

~Or devote a suitable part of personal free time to activities benefitting the community or other similar forms of personal sacrifice.

ACTS OF PENANCE

For at least one day...

~Either *abstain from unnecessary consumption* (smoking, alcohol, etc.);

~Or fast;

~Or *abstain from meat* (or other food according to the specific norms of the Bishops' Conferences), and *donate a proportionate sum of money to the poor*.

***At Divine Mercy Parish, Sts. Peter & Paul Church** is a designated holy site of pilgrimage in the Diocese of Springfield (one of nine). This means one may gain the indulgences by following the conditions above, and by passing through the **HOLY DOORS**. **After entering the main entrance of the church** (Main Street entrance), the **Holy Doors** are the two inner doors in the central vestibule.

“Repent”

~A beautiful prayer for Lent~

My Lord, Jesus, behold me defiled by sin. Again I have stained the holy garment of grace in my soul that your blood has cleansed so often. O, Father of Mercy, hear my prayer. Give me a true spirit of penance that through the humble supplication of a contrite heart I may again receive pardon.

Since my last confession I have fallen more frequently than usual. My Jesus, I have gone back. But do not forsake me, though I richly deserve to be rejected as obstinate and incorrigible. Behold me prostrate before you, O my God. My sinfulness weighs me down. Alas, Jesus my God and Savior, I dare not raise my eyes to you. How can I who have so often violated my past resolves presume to ask pardon again?

O my soul, crushed by the load of sin, take courage; your Redeemer will console you in your desolation. Reject me not, though I have miserably broken my promise of amendment. Cast not off your wretched child or I shall be forever lost. From my heart I grieve for having offended you. O holy Mother of God, my guardian angel, my holy patrons, intercede for me with my Judge and obtain for me the pardon of my sins. O Jesus, grant me a true spirit of penance. My Jesus, have mercy on me.

~Saint John Neumann (+1860), first American male saint, canonized in 1977