

DECREE

The gift of a Plenary Indulgence conceded to the faithful of the Diocese of St. Paul on Sunday, June 28, 2009, the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul

During the Jubilee Year marking the occasion of the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Saint Paul the Apostle, the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, motivated by pastoral solicitude, has offered to the universal Church an opportunity for the faithful to benefit from the gift of a *Plenary Indulgence* if they take part devoutly in a sacred function in honour of Saint Paul, on a day specified by the local Ordinary.

In the Diocese of St. Paul,

A *Plenary Indulgence* will be granted to each and every member of the faithful under the usual conditions (sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayers for the Supreme Pontiff's intentions, in a spirit of total detachment from any inclination to sin), on Sunday, June 28, 2009 by their devout participation at a Mass celebrated in honour of the Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

In each parish community, on Sunday, June 28, 2009, at least one Mass is to be celebrated according to the formula for the Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul with its proper texts from the *Roman Missal* (using the Preface Apostle I or II).

Members of the faithful prevented by illness or by other just causes from attending Mass on that day may obtain the *Plenary Indulgence* in their own home, or wherever the impediment obliges them to be, as long as they are totally free from any desire to relapse into sin, and intend to observe the three habitual conditions as soon as they possibly can.

Given on the 25th of January in the Year of Our Lord 2009 in the Curia of the Diocese of St. Paul.

† Luc Bouchard
Bishop of the Diocese of St. Paul

Fr. Peter Tran
Chancellor

INDULGENCES

I. Terminology

Indulgence: Remission before God of temporal punishment due to sin (c.992)

Partial indulgence: Remission of part of the temporal punishment due to sin. (c.993)

Plenary indulgence: Remission of all the temporal punishment due to sin. (c. 993)

By way of absolution (*per modum absolutionis*): Remission of temporal punishment due to sin by an authoritative act of the Church imparted to a person subject to the Church, i.e., a living Christian.

By way of suffrage or prayer (*per modum suffragii*) Remission of temporal punishment due to sin through the Church's intercessory prayer for a person not subject to her authority, i.e., a deceased individual.

Eternal punishment: punishment that has no end, lasts forever, that continues without end in the next life for individual who dies in the state of enmity with God.

Guilt: the state resulting from an unforgiven sin

Treasury of the Church: "It is infinite value which can never be exhausted, which Christ's merits have before God. They were offered so that the whole of humankind could be set free from sin and attain communion with the Father. This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary ... and the prayers and good works of all the saints. It is not the sum total of the material goods which have accumulated over the centuries." (Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, January 1, 1967 No.5)

II. Theology of Indulgences

Up to Middle Ages: The beginnings of indulgences were a practice: The Church had claimed the right to adjust the amount of ecclesiastical penance to the concrete circumstances and capabilities of individual penitents. The Church asserted this right although the sinners had to pay the temporal punishment due to their sins before God with the assistance from the Church and her authoritative intercession.

From the end of the twelfth century the practice of indulgences was clarified and recognized in theology. We have the traditional doctrine: indulgence is the remission of temporal punishment due to sin. Indulgences came to be reserved to the Pope, for only he or his delegate could dispose of the Church's treasury in a legal manner.

What are temporal punishments due to sin? They are the consequences of sin and a judgment upon it at the same time.

Why temporal punishments due to sin happened? People taking their freedom as persons as the center and source of their action, misuse the rest of their personal makeup, violating and damaging it, this is a distortion of their own nature whose forms and tendencies were created by God.

The prayer of the Church is not simply an authoritative remission of the punishments due to sin as though it were a simple amnesty of a punishment to be imposed in purely external terms. The Church assures the sinner in a special and explicit act of a prayer of intercession such that it draws down a remission of the punishments due to sin. This is what takes place in an indulgence. An indulgence implies that the Church agrees to offer her official intercession on behalf of the repentant sinner. An indulgence is only gained in the definitive sense when the intercessory prayer of the Church achieves its goal.

III. Definition of indulgences (cc.992-993)

Can. 992 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 satisfactions of Christ and the saints.

- An indulgence may be gained only for sins for which a person is penitent and has been forgiven
- An indulgence is a remission before God of a temporal punishment due to sin; not a remission of an ecclesiastical penalty.
- The individual must be properly disposed; “remission will be in proportion to the charity of the one acting” The individual must fulfill all the conditions required for gaining the indulgence.
- An indulgence is obtained with the help of the Church acting as the minister of redemption. The Church acting with authority dispenses and applies based on the treasury of the Church.

Can. 993 An indulgence is partial or plenary insofar as it partially or totally frees from the temporal punishment due to sins.

- Paul VI established a new norm for partial indulgences: A partial indulgence shall be designed by the words “partial indulgence” alone without any indication of days or year being added.
- The norms state what one must do to gain a plenary indulgence for oneself or to apply it for the deceased *per modum suffragii*.
- Fulfillment of three conditions: Sacramental confession; Eucharistic Communion; Prayer for the Pope’s intention. A further requirement is then exclusion of all attachment to sin, even venial sin.
- The three conditions may be carried out several days preceding or following performance of the prescribed work. But it is more fitting that Communion and prayer for the pope’s intention takes place on the day this work is performed.
- Pope’s intention is satisfied by reciting once Our Father and Hail Mary of his intention

IV. Applicability of Indulgence

Can. 994 Any member of the faithful can gain partial or plenary indulgences for oneself or apply them to the dead by way of suffrage.

No one gaining an indulgence may apply it to other living people.

V. Right to grant Indulgences:

Can. 995 §1. In addition to the supreme authority of the Church, only those to whom this power is acknowledged in the law or granted by the Roman Pontiff can bestow indulgences.

§2. No authority below the Roman Pontiff can entrust the power of granting indulgences to others unless the Apostolic See has given this expressly to the person.

The norms on indulgences published by the Apostolic Penitentiary to implement *Indulgentiarum doctrina* specify which person below the pope have the faculty to grant indulgences. In general, diocesan bishops and those equivalent to them in law can grant partial indulgences to all the Christian faithful within in their territory. Parish priests can impart of the apostolic blessing to those in danger of death.

The Apostolic pardon for the dying “Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy. Amen

VI. Capacity to gain indulgences

Can. 996 §1. 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.

The basic requirements of person seeking to gain an indulgence:

- That person must be baptized and follows from the fact that the purpose of an indulgence.
- That the individual does not deserve eternal punishment due to a mortal sin. A person in the state of mortal sin praying or doing any other indulgence good work does something pleasing to God, but is incapable of gaining an indulgence attached to the work until he/she receives forgiveness for mortal sins.
- According to common opinion, baptized non-Catholics are incapable of gaining indulgence.

§2. To gain indulgences, however, a capable subject must have at least the general intention of acquiring them and must fulfill the enjoined works in the established time and the proper method, according to the tenor of the grant.

An indulgence is a special gift or grant that is not imposed upon anyone. So the person must have the intention of receiving indulgence. It is sufficient for an individual to make a general intention of receiving all indulgences.

VII. Canonical Prescription outside the Code

Can. 997 As regards the granting and use of indulgences, the other prescripts contained in the special laws of the Church must also be observed.

Four General Grants:

1. A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who, while performing their duties and enduring the difficulties of life, raise their minds in humble trust to God and make, at least mentally, some pious invocation.
2. A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who, prompted by a spirit of faith, devote themselves or their goods in compassionate service to their brothers and sisters in need.
3. A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who, in a spirit of penitence, voluntarily abstain from something which is licit for and pleasing to them.
4. A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who spontaneously make a public witness of faith before others in the special circumstances of daily life.