

## **GRAB THE GRACE OF THE JUBILEE INDULGENCE DURING THIS HOLY YEAR!**

**By Susan Tassone**

*Indulgences are of such value that I find myself unable to appreciate them according to their true worth or to speak of them highly enough. Thus, I exhort you to hold them in the highest possible esteem. --ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA*

Pope Francis will open the Holy Year at the Vatican on December 24, 2024, and close it January 6, 2026, the Feast of the Epiphany. He asked that Bishops around the world celebrate the Jubilee in their dioceses from December 29, 2024, to December 28, 2025.

A common feature of holy years is the indulgence. An indulgence is the remission of temporal punishment due to sin. We will explain more about that later in this article.

However, something *unprecedented* with this Jubilee indulgence will be allowed. Cardinal DeDonatis, the new head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court dealing with matters of conscience and with the granting of indulgences wrote:

“Despite the rule that only one plenary indulgence can be obtained per day, the faithful who have carried out an act of charity on behalf of the souls in Purgatory, if they receive Holy Communion a second time that day, can obtain the plenary indulgence twice on the same day,” although the second indulgence is “applicable only to the deceased.”

Here is an excerpt from the Decree on the Granting of Indulgence during the Jubilee year:

*Despite the rule that only one plenary indulgence can be obtained per day (cf. Enchiridion Indulgentiarum, IV ed., norm. 18, § 1), the faithful who have carried out an act of charity on behalf of the souls in Purgatory, if they receive Holy Communion a second time that day, can obtain the plenary indulgence twice on the same day, applicable only to the deceased (this must take place within a Eucharistic celebration; see can. 917 and the Pontifical Commission for the authentic interpretation of the CIC, Responsa ad dubia, 1, 11 July 1984). Through this double act, a praiseworthy exercise of supernatural charity is carried out, through that bond by which the faithful still journeying on this earth are united in the mystical Body of Christ, with those who have already completed their journey, by virtue of the fact that “the Jubilee indulgence, thanks to the power of prayer, is intended in a particular way for those who have gone before us, so that they may obtain full mercy” (Spes non confundit, 22).*

To read the Decree in full which includes those who are unable to gain the indulgence under normal circumstances go to: [press.vatican.va](http://press.vatican.va).

### **WHAT IS AN INDULGENCE?**

The word itself comes from the Latin *indulgenita* which means to be kind or tender. Quoting Pope Paul VI’s apostolic constitution *Indulgentiarum Doctrina* and the Code of Canon Law, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1471) defines it this way:

**“An indulgence is a 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 treasure of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.”**

**“An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.”**

## **WHY DO WE HAVE INDULGENCES?**

**Their purpose is to make up for penances omitted, poorly done, or too light in comparison with the enormity of the sins. Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen explained:**

**“It is like a nail in a board. Once you remove the nail—the sin—with confession, the hole which is the punishment remains to be filled. How is that to be filled? By penance and reparation.” Indulgences fill that hole on earth by fulfilling a person’s need to atone for the harm they have caused to themselves and to others.**

## **INDULGENCES ARE NOT A DISCOUNT**

**Indulgences arise from the mercy of Jesus: that is, with them we can satisfy our debts. They are an aid for growth toward spiritual perfection, inner change, or a deeper conversion of heart. They are not a discount for performing outward acts. The appropriate inner disposition is required to benefit from indulgences. In the words of St. John Henry Newman (d.1890): “The smallest venial sin rocks the foundation of the created world.” That is, even our smallest sins can have a ripple effect that travels great distances and influences many lives. However, through God’s grace the holiness even of the lowliest saint far exceeds the harm even the greatest sinner can do. The graces won by Christ and the saints are an inexhaustible treasure that can be used to heal the wounds of the world. God desires us to use this spiritual treasury to move us closer to Him in this life and to prepare our souls to be with Him in the next. The Church fulfills a command for reconciling man with God. It is a defined doctrine that the Church can grant indulgences. What a marvelous privilege we have in indulgences. They are another concrete sign of God’s tender, loving mercy!**

## **SAINTS INDULGE ON INDULGENCES**

**We can do this “repair work” here on earth or in purgatory. By going to confession regularly, one can gain many indulgences. St. Alphonsus Liguori (d. 1787) was so solicitous about gaining indulgences that, after his death, several “indulgenced” articles were found on him. The saint had always carried sacramentals and prayers wherever he went to gain as many indulgences as possible.**

**St. Joseph Cafasso (d. 1860) was called a “glutton for indulgences” as a means for both avoiding purgatory himself and for helping the souls in purgatory speedily attain heaven.**

**We, too, must learn from purgatory and pray to avoid purgatory. We must become a “glutton” for penance, spiritual sacrifices, and service.**

**St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi (d. 1607) was not content that only the usual prayers for the dead be said for a deceased member of her religious congregation. Her community applied to the soul the indulgences they gained that day. In a vision, the saint saw the sister’s soul ascending toward heaven. “Farewell, Sister!” St. Mary exclaimed. Jesus appeared to console her, declaring it was because of the indulgences that this soul was swiftly released from purgatory. As a result, a fervor for gaining indulgences was enkindled within that convent.**

**God lavishes his mercy on us through indulgences. In addition, we have a treasure house of indulgences to be gained for our souls and the souls of our departed. They include: the Eternal Rest Prayer, litanies, the Rosary, praying the Stations of the Cross, visiting cemeteries, teaching Religious Education, renewing our Baptismal vows at Easter, Eucharistic processions, public novenas, pilgrimages and much more. Remember Gregorian Masses for yourself (put them in your Will) and deceased loved ones. Contact the Pious Union of St. Joseph in Grass Lake, Michigan. [www.pusj.org](http://www.pusj.org)**

**I can’t imagine the joy of a holy soul receiving this Jubilee indulgence. Indulge on indulgences for your family, friends, and those who were entwined in the fabric of your lives. By delivering them from their intense pains of the loss of the sight of God, by hastening their entrance into heaven, we draw to ourselves the gratitude of all paradise and forge bonds of friendship here and in eternity!**

**BOX THIS:**

**WHAT IS THE APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY?**

**At the death of a pontiff the only office at the Vatican whose duties do not cease is that of the Apostolic Penitentiary. It is a tribunal of mercy responsible for issues relating to the forgiveness of sins in the Church. That branch of the Holy See is responsible for assuring God’s people of mercy. God’s mercy endures forever! His mercy is available to us at all times in all circumstances. It never ceases. We only have to avail ourselves of it.**

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