

General Information about Indulgences

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.

1. Indulgences *can* always be applied either to oneself or to the souls of the deceased, but they cannot be applied to other persons living on earth.
2. A *plenary indulgence* can be gained *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 the Holy Eucharist* (it is certainly better to receive it while participating in Holy Mass, but for the indulgence only Holy Communion is required);
 - *pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff*.
3. It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the sacramental Confession and especially Holy Communion and the prayer for the Pope's intentions 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 8) before or after** the indulgenced act. Prayer for the Pope's intentions is left to the choice of the faithful, but an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary" are suggested. One sacramental Confession suffices for several plenary indulgences, but a separate Holy Communion and a separate prayer for the Holy Father's intentions are required for each plenary indulgence.