

Introduction

Christ is our Redeemer and Lord. He is the Savior of mankind for all ages. His death on the cross and his resurrection is a *reservoir of grace* and power for all people. Christ calls every person to holiness and experience of his divine grace. All saints including Our Blessed Mother Mary and every martyr find their salvation in Christ and joining their merits to his. As baptized persons, we are called to holiness. We respond to the grace of Christ our Redeemer and we are called to contribute and share our penance, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and works of mercy as members of the Body of Christ. Indulgences are our participation and sharing in the great works of Christ and those saints who have responded already in their lives to this grace and contributed to the reservoir of merits. We share in their merits.

1. What is an indulgence?

An indulgence is the remission of temporal punishment due to sin already forgiven. Indulgences cannot be bought or sold. They are a free gift from God to us.

2. Why do I need indulgences?

Every sin has three consequences: separation from God, guilt and punishment. After sin is forgiven, an act of reparation and restitution is due for all sins we have committed. Through indulgences God gives the Church power to remit or lessen punishment due to sin, to blot out guilt, and to heal broken relationships. (Ps 51) Indulgences help a Christian to grow in holiness, perform works of charity and mercy; collaborate with Christ in the salvation of oneself and of the faithful departed; to share and contribute to the reservoir of grace in Christ.

3. Who can obtain indulgences?

Anyone who is baptized and who is in the state of grace may obtain indulgences. The person should be properly disposed, should make the intention of gaining an indulgence, meeting the prescribed conditions set by the Church.

4. For whom can I obtain indulgences?

I can obtain indulgences for myself and for the souls in purgatory.

5. Are there different types of indulgences?

There are two types of indulgences: plenary and partial. A plenary indulgence removes all temporal punishment due to sin. A partial indulgence removes part of the temporal punishment due to sin.

6. What must I do to obtain a plenary indulgence?

To gain a plenary indulgence, one must be free from all attachment to sin, even venial sin; it is necessary to perform the indulgenced work and fulfill the following three prescribed conditions: Sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope. Confession could be done several days before or after one seeks to obtain indulgences. It is fitting that Holy Communion be received and the prayer for the intention of the Pope be said on the day the indulgenced work is performed.

There are many indulgenced works and prayers, but five are especially mentioned in the tradition of the Church:

- * Visit the Blessed Sacrament for Eucharistic Adoration, at least ½ hour
- * Read Scripture devoutly, at least ½ hour
- * Make the Stations of the Cross devoutly
- * Recite the Rosary in church, with family, in a religious Community, or in a pious association
- * Devoutly visit a cemetery on any and each day from November 1 to 8 and pray for the departed souls to obtain an indulgence for the souls in purgatory

7. What must I do to obtain a partial indulgence?

There are many prescribed prayers and spiritual actions to obtain partial indulgences:

- * Study and teach the Christian doctrine
- * Recite the Act of Family Consecration, on the anniversary of enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in your family
- * Recite the Act of Dedication of the Human Race to Jesus Christ the King on all Fridays
- * Recite an act of Spiritual Communion or an act of thanksgiving prayer after communion
- * Devoutly make an Examination of Conscience and Act of Contrition
- * Make a monthly period of Recollection
- * Devote time for personal and mental prayer (Luke 18:1)
- * Pray devoutly the Prayer approved for Christian Unity Week
- * Offer your daily duties, hardships, sufferings and pains to Jesus with a humble trust in God
- * Give compassionately to the needs of others
- * Give explicit and voluntary witness to your faith
- * Devoutly use the blessed rosaries, crucifixes and medals or Scapulars

8. How many can I obtain? How often?

A Plenary Indulgence can be acquired once in a day but in danger of death another one can be gained. A partial indulgence can be acquired multiple times a day.

9. What does scripture say about indulgences?

Several passages refer to indulgences in reference to the remission of sins. Christ has given the power to his disciples to remit sins, heal the sick, cast out demons, and bless those who seek blessing. For example: *“Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”* Matt 16:19; Matt 5:26; 2 Chronicles 7:14:

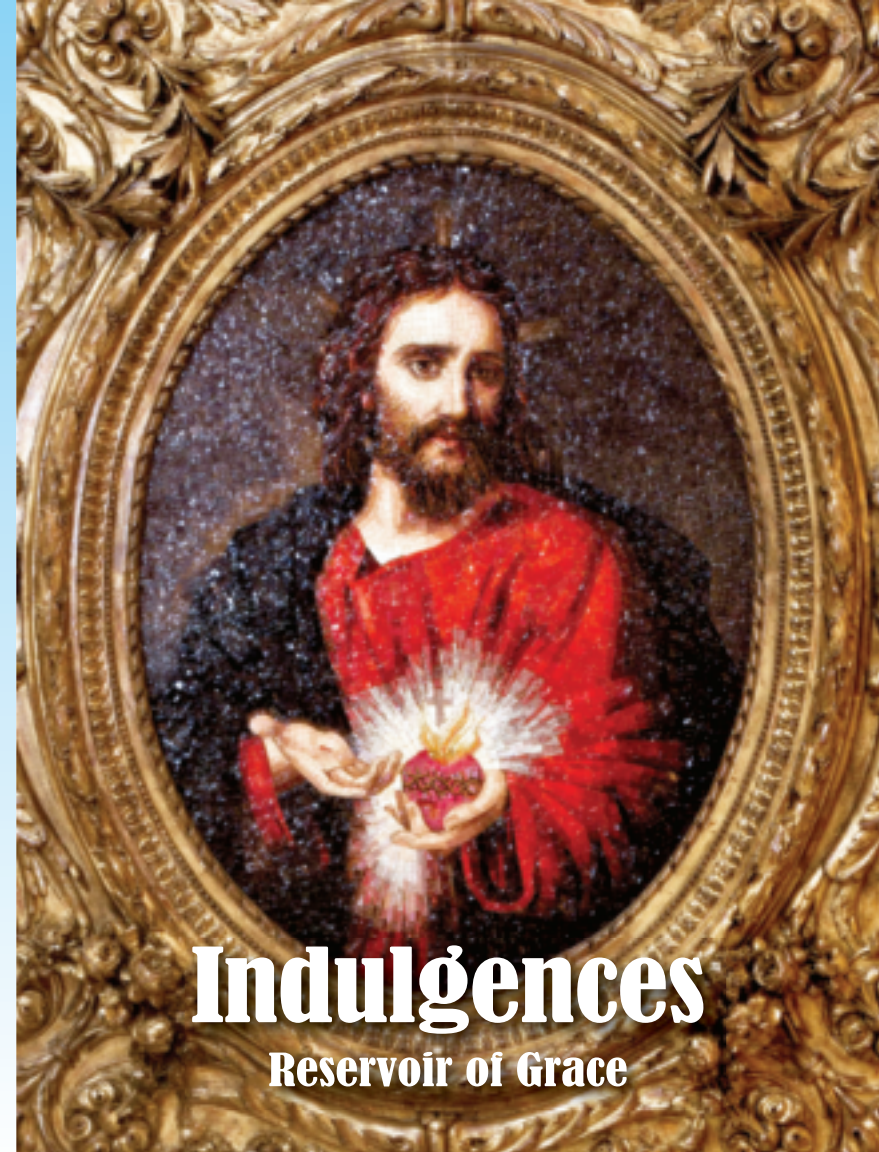
10. How do indulgences affect my life?

Indulgences cancel or lessen our temporal punishment, console us before God, encourage us to go frequently to the sacraments. Indulgences help us grow in holiness and discipleship and closer union with Christ. They help us to follow the commandments of God faithfully, and perform spiritual and corporal works of mercy in a diligent manner. Indulgences enable us to participate with Christ in the work of our own salvation and the salvation of souls in purgatory. We share and contribute in the great work of Christ’s salvation for the world.

References:
Manual of Indulgences, USCCB,
Catechism of the Catholic Church #1471-1484

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Indulgences
Reservoir of Grace