

INDULGENCES: A HIDDEN TREASURE

History

- Public penance system of the early church – persecutions. Indulgence was offered to lighten the penance. St. Cyprian's time (d. 258)
- Solemn reconciliation of penitents
- The Crusades (1095)
- Clement VI 1343 – talks about the superabundant merits of Jesus
- 1563 Trent say no collect fees with indulgences
- *Indulgentiarum doctrina* Jan 1, 1967
- The Apostolic Penitentiary “earnestly hopes that the faithful are greatly aided in their quest for holiness, whether through their devout use of indulgences or through their zeal for the charity and good works which are the very root and foundation for indulgences”

What is an indulgence?

- It is a remission of the temporal punishment due to sin. It is the remission in the eyes of God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose culpable element has already been taken away.
- Indulgences don't gain forgiveness of sins, they are not grace itself. Manifest grace of God in sacrament.
- Punishment meant to: purge the soul, protect the blessedness of the moral order, restore the divine glory to its full majesty.
- Punishments remain even after sin forgiven:
 1. Numbers 20:12 God tells Moses and Aaron that because they failed in faith, they will not lead the chosen people into the promised land.
 2. 2 Sam 12:13-14 After David sinned – slept with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed, the prophet Nathan said The Lord has put away your sin, you shall not die. Nevertheless because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die.
- Plenary and Partial – all or partial. For plenary: Need to be free of all attachment to sin, celebrate Confession, receive Communion, pray for the Pope's intentions. These can be done several days preceding or after the prescribed work. Several indulgences can be gained on the basis of a single confession.
- Church recommends indulgences as a dear practice to Christian people through the many centuries, while at same time not taking anything away from Mass or other sacraments. Together all these sanctify and purify.
- Bible, Adoration, Prayers, Pilgrimages, First Communion, Teaching, At approach of death
- The Mass and the sacraments remain *the* outstanding sources of sanctification and purification.
- Knit together as God's family. Members of the same body. Help each other.
- Continuing bond of charity even after death between the church triumphant, the church suffering, and the church militant. Pray for each other.

Indulgences

1. Teach us humility – by own powers cannot atone for the evil we have inflicted upon selves and community. Not being presumptuous about heaven
2. Teach closeness of union in Christ that binds us together – saints, purgatory
3. Builds up hope and confidence in Father for full reconciliation

Freely given favors