



Transformations

An HSCC Youth Newsletter

January, 2007

This month: Indulge me!

We get into the controversial topic of indulgences!

Five hundred years ago unscrupulous priests sold indulgences. They encouraged people who thought they could buy their way out of Purgatory and go straight to heaven without any repentance.

Although many people still attack the Church for the abuse of indulgences, the Church has strongly supported the doctrine of indulgences while condemning their abuse.

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

See paragraphs #1471-1479 for specific teaching on indulgences.

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Acts of indulgence

When you think of indulgence, what comes to mind? The latest, smallest iPod? Every cookie you can stuff in your mouth? Five hundred pairs of stylish shoes? Guess what? When the Catholic Church talks about an indulgence, there is a completely different idea involved!

What's an indulgence?

Technically, an indulgence is the partial or full removal of the temporal punishment of sin. Temporal punishment is the time we spend atoning for our sins in this life or in Purgatory after the sins have been forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Looking at it another way, temporal punishment is a way for us to learn to be better people now and to avoid sin in the future. An indulgence just helps us shorten the time of atonement, and should help speed up the learning process.

An indulgence is **not** an encouragement to commit sin **nor** forgiveness of all future sins. It **is** the recognition that a person can be very sorry for committing sins, and is willing to actively make up for that sin during his lifetime.

There are two types of indulgences:

1. **Plenary** - Full remission of temporal punishment
2. **Partial** - Partial remission of temporal punishment

Getting an indulgence

To receive a plenary indulgence you have to do 5 things:

- ★ Perform the prescribed act with the intention of receiving the indulgence
- ★ Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- ★ Receive Eucharistic communion
- ★ Pray for the intentions of the Pope (one Our Father and 1 Hail Mary minimum)
- ★ Be free from the attachment to the sin. (Not wishing you could do it all over again!)

A partial indulgence may be granted when the person performs a particular act, but does not include all five actions. No indulgence is received when in the state of mortal sin.

Indulgences can be earned for oneself, or can be offered for someone who has died and may be atoning in Purgatory. We cannot give our indulgences to another living person; in this life we do have to atone for our own sins!

A merciful gift

Learning the truth about the Church's teaching of indulgences is important for every Catholic. Accepting this gift of indulgences, and the challenges that go with it, is part of our journey to complete conversion to God. As with every part of our spiritual journey, indulgences can help us live our faith in every aspect of our lives.

CHURCH HISTORY

Simony is the buying or selling of spiritual things. The abuse of selling indulgences was simony, a grave, or mortal, sin against the first commandment. It helped spark the Protestant Reformation.

While a few unscrupulous people were wreaking havoc in the Catholic Church, many upright, holy

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people defended their faith and worked hard to renew their Church during the sixteenth century. This time is known as the Counter Reformation.

Members of religious communities in particular were energetic reformers who demanded stricter standards for clergy, and who revived the powerful spirit of poverty and service. St. Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits); the Jesuits were well-educated preachers and teachers who built schools and colleges. St. Teresa of Avila was an avid reformer of her religious order, and her writings earned her the title of Doctor of the Church. How many other institutions of the mid-sixteenth century gave that much power and respect to a woman?

A series of good leaders who were intent on reform also flourished during the Counter Reformation. Pope St. Pius V reformed the liturgy and published a catechism which clearly explained Catholic beliefs. Pope Gregory XIII reorganized the calendar; we use his Gregorian calendar to this day. Bishops were also intent on strengthening the faith and supporting the pope. They concentrated on serving their parishes, educating their priests, and being an example of moral religious practices.

These reforms strengthened the Catholic Church during the Counter Reformation and beyond. They set the stage for our modern willingness to again be one Christian Body.

Partial or Plenary?

Can you tell a plenary indulgence from a partial indulgence? Below is a list of indulgenced acts. Identify which are partial and which are plenary. Don't forget - in order to receive the plenary indulgence the general rules must be followed. If they are not, the act which could receive a plenary indulgence will only receive a partial indulgence!

- _____ 1. Eucharistic Adoration for at least 30 minutes.
- _____ 2. Devout reading of Scripture for at least 30 minutes.
- _____ 3. Prayer to the Guardian Angel
- _____ 4. Attending a spiritual retreat lasting at least three days
- _____ 5. Reciting the Magnificat
- _____ 6. Devout use of an article of devotion (cross, crucifix, scapular, etc) which has been properly blessed by a priest
- _____ 7. Time in mental prayer
- _____ 8. Pious exercise of the Stations of the Cross
- _____ 9. Making the sign of the Cross and saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"
- _____ 10. Pious exercise of a public Novena before the feast of Christmas, Pentecost, or the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

1-Plenary, 2-Plenary, 3-Partial, 4-Plenary, 5-Partial, 6-Partial,
7-Partial, 8-Plenary, 9-Partial, 10-Partial

Answers from:

<http://www.hismercy.ca/content/ebooks/The.Enchiridion.of.Indulgences.pdf>