

PARISH OF DUNGIVEN

November The Month of the Holy Souls in Purgatory Suffrage For The Dead including Covid modifications.

Some quotes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Faith in the Resurrection of the Dead

248. "It is in regard to death that man's condition is most shrouded in doubt"(348). However, faith in Christ changes that doubt into the certainty of life without end. Christ has told us that he came from the Father "so that whosoever believes in him might not die but have eternal life" (John 3, 16). Again he says, "it is my Father's will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life; and I shall raise him up on the last day" (349).

Based on the Word of God, the Christian firmly believes and hopes that "just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day" (350).

249. Belief in the resurrection of the dead is an essential part of Christian revelation. It implies a particular understanding of the ineluctable mystery of death.

Death is the end of earthy life, but "not of our existence" (351) since the soul is immortal. "Our lives are measured by time, in the course of which we change, grow old and, as with all living beings on earth, death seems like the normal end of life" (352). Seen from the perspective of the faith, "death is the end of man's earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers him so as to work out his earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide his ultimate destiny" (353).

In one light death can seem natural, in another it can be seen as "the wages of sin" (Rm 6, 23). Authentically interpreting the meaning of Scripture (cf. John 2, 17; 3,3; 3, 19; Wis 1, 13; Rm 5, 12; 6, 23), the Church teaches that "death entered the world on account of man's sin" (354).

Jesus, the Son of God, "born of a woman and subject to the law" (Gal 4,4) underwent death which is part of the human condition; despite his anguish in the face of death (Mk 14, 33-34; Heb 5, 7-8), "he accepted it in an act of complete and free submission to his Father's will. The obedience of Jesus has transformed the curse of death into a blessing"(355).

Death is the passage to the fullness of true life. The Church, subverting the logic of this world, calls the Christian's day of death his *dies natalis*, the day of his heavenly birth, where "there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness [for] the world of the past has gone" (Aps 21, 4). Death is the prolongation, in a new way, of life as the Liturgy says: "For your faithful, O Lord, life has changed not ended; while our earthly dwelling is destroyed, a new and eternal dwelling is prepared for us in Heaven"(356).

The death of a Christian is an event of grace, having, as it does, a positive value and significance in Christ and through Christ. Scripture teaches that: "Life to me, of course, life is Christ, but then death would bring me something more" (Phil 1, 21); here is a saying you can rely on: if we have died with him, then we shall live with him" (2 Tim 2,11).

250. According to the faith of the Church, "to die in Christ" begins at Baptism. In Baptism, the Lord's disciples sacramentally die in Christ so as to live a new life. If the disciples die in the grace Christ, physical death seals that "dying with Christ", and consummates it by incorporating them fully and definitively into Christ the Redeemer.

The Church's prayer of suffrage for the souls of the faithful departed implores eternal life not only for the disciples of Christ who have died in his peace, but for the dead whose faith is known to God (357).

The Meaning of Suffrage

251. The just encounter God in death. He calls them to himself so as to share eternal life with them. No one, however, can be received into God's friendship and intimacy without having been purified of the consequences of personal sin. "The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent"(358).

Hence derives the pious custom of suffrage for the souls of the faithful departed, which is an urgent supplication of God to have mercy on the souls of the dead, to purify them by the fire of His charity, and to bring them to His kingdom of light and life. This suffrage is a cultic expression of faith in the communion of saints. Indeed, "the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honoured with great respect the memory of the dead; and 'because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' (2 Mac 12, 46) she offers her suffrages for them"(359). These consist, primarily, in the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist (360), and in other pious exercises, such as prayers for the dead, alms deeds, works of mercy (361), and the application of indulgences to the souls of the faithful departed (362).

(Taken from The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. 249 -252)

What are Indulgences?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says in #1471 the following:

"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 treasury 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.

The Bible and the Church teach that sin has 2 components – the guilt of the sin, and the temporal punishment for the sin. The best example of this in scripture is in 2 Samuel 12:13-14 when Nathan told David that God had forgiven his sin of killing Uriah and stealing his wife Bathsheeba, but that his punishment would be the death of his son. Adam and Eve were also forgiven for their sin, but they had to endure

the temporal punishment of toiling in the sun and the pain of childbirth.

Of the two components, guilt is the most important component, because if the guilt isn't forgiven (going to confession is the best way), then the punishment could be permanent (in hell), not temporal (in purgatory). This guilt and punishment concept is also true in the secular world – If you wreck someone's car, the owner can forgive you, but you still owe the debt of fixing his car.

The most famous biblical example of someone getting an indulgence is when Jesus, from the cross in Luke 23:43, gave the good thief complete remission for his sins, promising him that he would be in paradise that day. This power of binding and loosing sins and punishment was given to the Church by Jesus, in Matthew 18:18, when he said “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” “Whatever” means anything, including punishment for sins.

How to gain Indulgences

There are 2 kinds of indulgences, plenary (full remission of sins), and partial (partial remission of sins). To gain a plenary indulgence, you must fulfill all of the following conditions:

From 12 o'clock noon on 1st November until midnight on 2nd November, all who have confessed, received Holy Communion and prayed for the Pope's intentions (one Our Father and Hail Mary, or any other prayer of one's choice) can gain one plenary indulgence by visiting a church or oratory, and there reciting one Our Father and the Apostle's Creed. This indulgence is applicable only to the souls of the departed. Confession may be made on any day from 1st to 8th November. The faithful who visit a cemetery and pray for the dead may gain a plenary indulgence applicable only to the Holy Souls on the usual conditions once per day from the 1st to 8th November.

The Apostolic Penitentiary announces modifications to the Plenary Indulgence for the deceased during the month of November.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the need to avoid large groups from forming where prohibited, the Plenary Indulgence applicable to the deceased by those who visit a cemetery has been extended beyond the normal dates of 1 to 8 November. This year, the indulgence can be obtained by anyone who visits a cemetery, even if only mentally, on any day in November, and devoutly prays for the faithful departed.

A Plenary Indulgence is offered to those who are suffering from the Corona-virus Covid-19 and quarantined by health authorities in hospitals or in their homes if; “with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite themselves spiritually through the media to the celebration of the Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion.”

A plenary indulgence is also granted to healthcare workers, family members and all those who, “exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick” under the same conditions stated above.

Also, the faithful who offer a “*visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or read the Holy Scriptures for half an hour, or recite the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy*” while praying for an End to the Pandemic will be granted a *Plenary Indulgence*. Conditions for the Plenary Indulgence- *Confession within 21 days (if possible) reception of the Holy Eucharist, and prayers such as the Creed and prayers for the intentions of the Pontiff* and full detachment from sin.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, an indulgence is

“a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven.” Indulgences are either partial or plenary depending on if they remove part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.

Recommended prayers for November 2nd-Lauds or Vespers of the Office for the Dead, the rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, other prayers for deceased among their family or friends, or performing a work of mercy by offering their pain and discomfort to God.

‘Eternal Father, I offer You the most Precious Blood of Your Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for all sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.’

Plenary Indulgence for Feast of All Souls’ Day

Regarding the Plenary Indulgence attached to All Souls’ Day, 2 November, this year, it can be obtained not only on the preceding or succeeding Sunday, or on the actual Feast day, but on any other day of the month chosen by each member of the faithful. In this case, the indulgence is obtained by “devoutly visiting a church or an oratory”, along with the recitation of the Our Father and the Creed, and the other requirements associated with a Plenary Indulgence.

The housebound

For anyone who cannot leave their home for various reasons, including anti-Covid restrictions, they too can obtain the Plenary Indulgence by “uniting themselves spiritually to other members of the faithful”. In this case, the condition of being “completely detached from sin” and the intention of completing the other requirements for obtaining a Plenary Indulgence remain. These conditions are Sacramental Confession, reception of Holy Communion and a prayer for the Holy Father’s intentions.

The Decree suggests that such prayer take place before an “image of Jesus or the Blessed Virgin Mary”. Among the various prayers that are recommended are “prayers for the deceased, Morning or Evening Prayer from the Office of the Dead, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, meditating on various Gospel passages proposed for the liturgy of the Dead, or completing a work of mercy by offering to God the suffering and discomforts of one’s own life”.