

**CONCERNED ABOUT GETTING TO CONFESSION?**

**A PLENARY INDULGENCE HAS BEEN OFFERED BY THE HOLY FATHER, POPE FRANCIS**

The CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH defines an indulgence as “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 for the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispense 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...” (#1471)

A decree came from Rome on the coronavirus about a special indulgence offered during this time. Here are a few excerpts: “The gift of special indulgences is granted to the faithful suffering from the COVID-19 sickness..., as well as to health workers, their relatives and all those who take care of them in any capacity.

It goes on to include health care agents, their relatives and all those that, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of infection, take care of the sick with Coronavirus.....Moreover, this Apostolic Penitentiary willingly grants also the Plenary Indulgence on the occasion of the present global epidemic, to those faithful that offer to visit the Most Blessed Sacrament..., or the praying of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the VIA CRUCIS (Stations of the Cross), or the praying of the Divine Mercy chaplet, to implore Almighty God for an end to the epidemic, the relief of the afflicted, and the eternal salvation of those that the Lord has called to Himself.

The Church prays for those unable to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and the Viaticum, entrusting each and all of them to Divine Mercy, in virtue of the Communion of Saints, and grants a Plenary Indulgence at the point of death so long as they are duly disposed and have prayed some prayers during their life (in this case, the Church supplies the three usual required conditions). To obtain this indulgence, the use of a crucifix or of a cross is recommended.”

It’s a bit dense, and the typical Vaticanese technical language. But it basically extends to ANYONE WHO DESIRES IT and who prays for it.

Pope Francis then delivered his daily Mass homily the following day at his residence, in which he clarified further. And here we hear a wise and compassionate pastor at work:

“When I read or listen to this passage of the Prophet Hosea, which we heard in the First Reading: “Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God,” when I hear it, there comes to mind a song that Carlo Buti sang 75 years ago, and that Italian families in Buenos Aires loved to listen to: “Return to your Papa. He will sing a lullaby again to you.” Return: but it’s your Papa who asks you to return. God is your Papa; he isn’t a judge; He is your Papa; Return home, listen, come.”

The Pope continues: “I know that many of you go to Confession for Easter to meet with God again. However, many will say to me: “But, Father, where can I find a priest, a confessor, because one can’t leave home? And I want to make peace with the Lord, I want Him to embrace me, that my Papa embrace me....What can I do if I can’t find priests?” Do what the Catechism says; it’s very clear: if you don’t find a

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priest to hear your Confession, talk with God, He is your Father, and tell him the truth. “Lord, I’ve done this, and that, and that....I’m sorry,” and ask Him for forgiveness with all your heart, with the Act of Contrition and promise Him: “Afterward, I will go to Confession, but forgive me now.” And you will return to God’s grace immediately. AS THE CATECHISM TEACHES, YOU YOURSELF CAN APPROACH GOD’S FORGIVENESS WITHOUT HAVE A PRIEST AT HAND (emphasis mine). Think: it’s the moment! And this is the right moment, the opportune moment. An Act of Contrition well made, and so our soul will become white as snow. It would be good if today this ‘return’ resounded in our ears, “return to your Papa, return to your Father.” He is waiting for you and will celebrate you. (homily of March 20, 2020)

Be at peace, my friends. We are in the hands of a loving and merciful God – who is good all the time. All the time, God is good. Amen.

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