

JUBILEE YEAR INFORMATION

The Jubilee is a time for reconciliation and mercy. This dates back to the Jubilees of the Old Testament, when the Lord commanded the people to free slaves, forgive debts, and return property. Instead of being freed from physical bondage or released from monetary debts, God wants to deliver us from what truly ties us down: sin and death. He did so on the Cross, but he calls us to participate in this through the sacraments and acts of mercy and charity. There is a special indulgence given during this Jubilee Year, which Pope Francis says “allows us to discover how limitless God’s mercy is.”

How do I receive the Jubilee indulgence?

The Vatican has announced that this Jubilee indulgence will be given to those pilgrims who, repentant of their sins, make a pilgrimage to any sacred Jubilee site. Saint Ambrose is a Co-Cathedral, so we are one of those sites along with the Cathedral in Halifax.

In order to obtain a plenary indulgence, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

1. Detachment from all sin, even venial.

2. Sacramental confession, holy Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the pope.

These three conditions can be fulfilled a few days before or after performing the works to gain the indulgence, but it is appropriate that Communion and the prayer take place on the same day that the work is completed. A single sacramental confession is sufficient for several plenary indulgences. For each plenary indulgence that is sought, however, a separate holy Communion and a separate prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father are required. The prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father is left up to the choice of the individual, but an Our Father and Hail Mary are suggested. Plenary indulgences obtained during the Jubilee Year can also be applied to souls in purgatory with the possibility of obtaining two plenary indulgences for the deceased in one day, according to the Apostolic Penitentiary.

What is an “Indulgence”?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, “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.”

(Paragraph 1471) In other words: Our sins have effects – some of these effects may be eternal. That’s why we need confession for this part. But some effects are temporal. Even after we go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and are forgiven our sins and freed from the eternal punishment we deserve, we still have to atone for our sins. We need to

be purified of the unhealthy attachments and ways we've hurt ourselves, others, and God. This purification can be done in Purgatory, but it can also be done here on earth.

What an indulgence is NOT

To be clear, an indulgence is *not*: permission to commit a sin, something you pay for, a "get out of jail free card," or a way to earn God's love (which isn't earned, but is freely given). Rather, indulgences are graces given through the Church as she opens "the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints."

More info on other ways to get an indulgence

The jubilee year is a time when Catholics are especially encouraged to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The Apostolic Penitentiary lists visiting prisoners, spending time with lonely elderly people, aiding the sick or disabled, and helping those who are in need as instances to obtain an indulgence. Practicing the works of mercy, it says, is "in a sense making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them."

Indulgences for works of mercy can be received multiple times throughout the jubilee year, even daily, according to the decree. If the indulgence is being applied to the deceased, two plenary indulgences can be obtained on the same day.

The decree says: "Despite the rule that only one plenary indulgence can be obtained per day, the faithful who have carried out an act of charity on behalf of the souls in purgatory, if they receive holy Communion a second time that day, can obtain the plenary indulgence twice on the same day, applicable only to the deceased."

Acts of penance can also obtain a plenary indulgence. The Vatican lists several options, including:

- Abstaining for at least one day a week from "futile distractions," such as social media or television
- Fasting
- Donating "a proportionate sum of money to the poor"
- Supporting religious or social works, especially in the defence of life in all phases
- Offering support to migrants, the elderly, the poor, young people in difficulty, and abandoned children
- Volunteering in service to your community

Sacred places around the world have also been designated as places of pilgrimage where one can obtain a plenary indulgence to Rome or the Holy Lands.