



### INDULGENCES

#### The Church still believes in them

The following article on Indulgences was written by Msgr. Michael Cariglio in the September '09 edition of *Priest* magazine.

Shortly after the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI issued his Apostolic Constitution, "The Doctrine of Indulgences." While strongly condemning the historical abuses which contributed to the Protestant Reformation, the Pope strongly affirmed the doctrine of indulgences as most beneficial for the salvation of Christian believers.

In describing the meaning and the value of indulgences for the care of souls, the document is pregnant with scriptural notations, along with sources taken from the Church's Tradition and several references from the Second Vatican Council—all carefully detailed with the intent to firmly ground the Church's doctrine of indulgences.

In order to have a clear and precise understanding of the teaching on indulgences, there are some primary truths of the Faith to be considered which lead to the core meaning of the granting of indulgences:

#### *His Sacrifice Alone*

1. Only the once crucified, now risen and ascended Jesus Christ made possible the forgiveness of sin in our world. His sacrifice alone has won for the world redeeming grace that claims the victory over sin and death.

2. The Church herself continues the ministry of the forgiveness of sins as the members struggle for holiness. This struggle exists since the love of God and neighbor is often imperfect and that undue attachment to the things of this world is ever present.

3. Jesus Himself has given to the Church the power to forgive sins through the ministry of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

4. The Church, in her authority granted to her directly from Jesus Christ to forgive sins, has the power to pardon the temporal punishment that can remain with an individual even after a particular sin is forgiven.

5. By virtue of the merits of Jesus' Church through His cross and resurrection, the holiness of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints in heaven, Christ's Church enjoys an inestimable and inexhaustible spiritual treasury to assist the faithful in the path of holiness.

*Temporal punishment* that can remain in an individual whose sin is forgiven through sacramental confession is the actual residue from a particular sin. For example, the sin of adultery, even though the sin is forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and by the betrayed spouse, the pain and hurt that such betrayal inflicted on the relationship still exists.

The *temporal punishment* due to sin is in fact the damage done. It is the fallout after the forgiven sin, vestiges that remain within the individual and the community, not yet expiated or cleansed. This is the "penal consequence" of sin from which the individual and community must be set free. Full remission of sin is not, therefore, only forgiveness, but also the repairing of the harm done to the person or community due to the effects of sin committed, though already forgiven.

The punishment is temporary, not eternal; but does really exist. This is a necessary and painful process that brings restoration, purification and sanctification.

For this reason, the Church affords to the Faithful the granting of indulgences to benefit our spiritual lives, and to assist in the salvation of our immortal souls.

There are *two kinds of indulgences: partial and plenary*, the latter totally freeing an individual from the temporal punishment due to sins. Indulgences may be applied to one's self or also for the souls in purgatory. Only the Holy Father can bestow an indulgence, unless he expressly entrusts this power to another.

#### **Four conditions to obtain a plenary indulgence**

To obtain a *plenary indulgence*, one must fulfill *four prescribed conditions*, in addition to the particular practice attached to the indulgence. The four requirements are:

- Reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Reception of the Eucharist
- Prayers (the Our Father and the Hail Mary) for the intentions of the Holy Father
- A contrite heart which excludes all attachments to sin, even venial sin.

The conditions are ideally fulfilled on the day of the indulgence but may also be fulfilled several days before or several days after (usually within eight days before or after).

*An indulgence is the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose culpable element has been taken away.* The Faithful who are rightly disposed and observe the definite, prescribed conditions gain this remission through the help of the

Church, which, as the minister of Redemption, authoritatively distributes and applies the treasury of the expiatory works of Christ and the Saints (Pope Paul VI - Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences, No. 1).

The Church recommends the faithful practice of indulgences. This practice does not in any way diminish the value of other means of sanctification and purification: foremost the Sacrifice of the Mass, the other sacraments and, particularly, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Indulgences also complement the sacramentals, works of piety, penitence and charity in the Christian life. The faithful practice of indulgences promotes a love for the Word and sacraments and primacy of charity among members of the Church.

#### **Any Day of the Year**

Indulgences are granted for numerous prayers and pious practices. Worthy of special mention is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for one hour, devout reading of the Sacred Scripture for at least one-half hour, the devout performance of the Stations of the Cross, or the recitation of the Rosary in a church or oratory. To each of these, the Christian Faithful may obtain a plenary indulgence any day of the year. Due to the sublime nature of a plenary indulgence, only one plenary indulgence is granted per day.

The recent popes have been positively promoting the practice of indulgences in the life of the Faithful. In the Jubilee Year of St. Paul, which commemorated 2000 years since St. Paul's birth, Pope Benedict XVI directed the bishops of the diocesan churches to designate specific holy places and times in each diocese that the Faithful could benefit from a plenary indulgence.

Receiving a plenary indulgence is supremely salutary for the Faithful. Pope Paul wrote, "For when the Faithful gain indulgences they realize that by their own powers they cannot atone for the evil that they have inflicted upon themselves and the entire community by sinning; they therefore are moved to a healthy humility" (No. 9).

#### **Thank you from the Philippines**

A few weeks ago, Ralph Turingan, a parishioner, carried a gift of \$15,000 from our parish to victims of the recent typhoon in the Philippines. The following is a thank you letter I received.

*The Couples for Christ (CFC) of our Lady of Snows Parish, Enrile, Cagayan, Philippines is very grateful for the big and surprise gift coming from your community. You were able to lift the spirits of the dismayed victims of typhoon Pepeng in our parish not only with the relief goods that they have received from you but with the thought that they have brothers and sisters in a faraway land who care for them. God's love has been*

*concretized through you with the bagful of goods that each of them carried happily home. Thank you very much for sending them glad tidings.*

*Please allow us further to thank your community for the trust you have given Sanlahi Inc., Melbourne, Florida and of course our Filipino brother, Dr. Ralph G. Turingan and his wife. Through them, your donation was able to reach rightfully the typhoon victims in our area.*

*We pray that the good Lord reward your generosity all these years.*

(See page 8 of this bulletin for the ways our money helped.)

#### **Space Coast Center for Women with Children (formerly Resurrection Ranch) Wish List**

You probably heard me speak about this new place. What was once Resurrection Ranch (located just north of Pineda Causeway off US 1) is now being transformed into a Christ-centered residential center for homeless women with children. Women and children account for more than half of the homeless population in Brevard County.

At this time, a place is being prepared for about 15 women and children. Some of our Knights are helping to renovate the place.

Lila Buescher is President and Chairman of the Board (email: [lilabuescher@spacecoastcenter.org](mailto:lilabuescher@spacecoastcenter.org)).

Recently, when speaking to Lila about how the place was coming along, I asked her to send me a list of the items that they needed to get the place open. The following is their Wish List. Some of them may appeal to you as a way to include the poor in your Christmas shopping list.

1. Two ranges: \$900 each
2. Washer & dryer: \$800 each
3. Money to refurbish stainless sinks and tables
4. Mechanic to inspect Van, make any needed repairs
5. Laser printer for office: \$1,000
6. Fax machine with scanner: \$300
7. Alarm system for children's home
8. Computers for training center: \$8,000-\$10,000
9. TV for children's room: \$350
10. 30-40 chairs for chapel and training center: \$1,200
11. 3 weather resistant picnic tables: \$700 each

If interested in helping out in preparing the place for the mothers and children, or for more information about this outreach to the poor, contact Lila Buescher at the abovementioned email address or, if you want, contact me.

Have a blessed week,

*Lila Buescher*