

PLENARY INDULGENCE FOR THE YEAR OF FAITH

Catholics who participate in events connected with the 2012-2013 Year of Faith can receive a special indulgence, according to a decree issued by the Vatican on September 14, 2012. Pope Benedict established the Year of Faith to run from Oct. 11, 2012, to Nov. 24, 2013.

An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due for sins that have been forgiven. It can be granted on behalf of the individual petitioner or on behalf of departed souls. The plenary indulgence is being offered to those who visit designated churches and shrines, to those who participate in local events connected to the Year of Faith, and to those who may be too ill or otherwise prevented from physical participation.

According to the Vatican decree, conditions for the special Year of Faith indulgence include the normal requirements set by the church for all plenary indulgences, that is: that the person truly repents of their sins, goes to confession, receives the Eucharist, and prays for the intentions of the Holy Father. A member of the Church who has fulfilled those conditions may acquire a plenary indulgence in any of the following ways:

A. Each time they attend at least three sermons during a mission, or at least three lectures on the Second Vatican Council or on the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

B. Each time they visit by way of pilgrimage a papal basilica, a Christian catacomb, a cathedral church or a holy site designated by the local Bishop for the Year of Faith and there participate in a liturgy, or at least remain for an appropriate time of prayer and pious meditation, concluding with the recitation of the Our Father, the Creed in any legitimate form, and invocations of the Blessed Virgin Mary and, depending on the circumstances, of the holy Apostles or patron saints.

In the Diocese of Austin the following four sites have been designated by Bishop Joe S. Vásquez for the Year of Faith plenary indulgence:

St. Mary Cathedral in Austin
St. Mary Parish in College Station
St. Mary Parish in Lampasas
St. Louis Parish in Waco

C. Each time they participate in the Mass, or the Liturgy of the Hours adding the Creed, in any parish church in the diocese, on the days determined by the local Bishop.

In the Diocese of Austin the following days have been designated by Bishop Vásquez for the Year of Faith plenary indulgence:

February 13	Ash Wednesday
March 28	Holy Thursday
March 30	Easter Vigil
March 31	Easter Sunday
April 8	Solemnity of the Annunciation

May 19 Pentecost
August 15 Solemnity of the Assumption
November 1 All Saints' Day
November 24 Solemnity of Christ the King

D. On any day they choose, during the Year of Faith, if they make a prayerful visit to the place where they received the Sacrament of Baptism, and there renew their baptismal promises in any legitimate form.

Members of the faithful who are truly repentant and are unable to take part in public liturgies for serious reasons (such as, for example, nuns who live in perpetually cloistered monasteries, prisoners, the elderly, the sick, and those who serve the sick in hospitals) will gain the plenary indulgence on the same conditions, if, united in mind and spirit with the faithful present, especially at a moment when the words of the Holy Father or one of the Diocesan Bishops are broadcast via the television or radio, they recite at home, or wherever their impediment obliges them to be (for example, in the monastery chapel, in the hospital, in a clinic, in prison, etc.), the Our Father, the Creed in any legitimate form, and other prayers in conformity with the objectives of the Year of Faith, offering up their suffering or the hardship in their lives.

The decree on the Year of Faith indulgence said, "Since the primary objective is to develop sanctity of life to the highest degree possible on this earth, and thus to attain the most sublime level of pureness of soul, immense benefit may be derived from the great gift of indulgences which, by virtue of the power conferred upon her by Christ, the Church offers to everyone who, following the due norms, undertakes the special prescripts to obtain them."