

Plenary Indulgences for the Souls in Purgatory
“Praying for those who have gone before us, marked with the sign of faith.”

Understanding Plenary Indulgences

What is a Plenary Indulgence?

A plenary indulgence is the complete remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. By the merits of Christ, Mary, and all the saints, the Church offers this grace to free souls in purgatory from remaining consequences of forgiven sins.

Reference: Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), 1471.

Applying a Plenary Indulgence for the Souls in Purgatory

The Church permits us to offer plenary indulgences specifically for souls in purgatory, assisting their final purification so they may enter heaven. This practice aligns with our call to Christian charity and hope in the communion of saints (CCC, 1032).

Why Seek a Plenary Indulgence for the Departed?

As Catholics, we believe in the mercy of God and the promise of eternal life. Offering prayers and indulgences for the departed is an act of spiritual mercy and charity, uniting us with those who await the beatific vision.

Steps to Obtain a Plenary Indulgence for the Faithful Departed

1. Be in a State of Grace

Begin by making a sincere examination of conscience and go to sacramental confession, ideally within about 20 days before or after performing the indulgenced act.

2. Receive Holy Communion

Receive Communion on the day you intend to offer the indulgence. Each act of Communion and indulgence intention requires an individual Eucharistic celebration.

3. Pray for the Pope’s Intentions

Pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. This can include the *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*, or another appropriate prayer.

4. Perform an Indulgenced Work

To gain a plenary indulgence for a soul in purgatory, perform one of the following acts:

- Visit a cemetery and pray for the deceased during the first eight days of November (especially meaningful during All Souls’ Octave).
- Recite the *Rosary* in a church or with family members.
- Read Sacred Scripture for at least half an hour.
- Make a *Holy Hour* before the Blessed Sacrament.

5. **Have No Attachment to Sin**

Resolve to be detached from all sin, even venial sin. The Church teaches that a complete, sincere detachment from sin is necessary to fully obtain the plenary indulgence (Enchiridion of Indulgences, 1968).

Reference: Manual of Indulgences (Enchiridion Indulgentiarum), 4th Edition, 1999.

Traditional Litany for the Souls in Purgatory

This litany is a beautiful devotion that can be prayed privately or in a group, and it is especially fitting to pray for souls in purgatory during November.

Litany for the Faithful Departed

V. Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

V. Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

V. Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

V. Christ, hear us.

R. Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,

have mercy on the souls of the faithful departed.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

have mercy on the souls of the faithful departed.

God the Holy Spirit,

have mercy on the souls of the faithful departed.

Holy Trinity, One God,

have mercy on the souls of the faithful departed.

For Each Petition, Respond: *Pray for them.*

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

St. Michael,

All you holy angels and archangels,

St. Joseph,

All you holy patriarchs and prophets,

St. John the Baptist,

St. Peter,

St. Paul,

All you holy apostles and evangelists,

St. Stephen,

All you holy martyrs,

St. Gregory,
St. Augustine,
All you holy bishops and confessors,
St. Jerome,
All you holy doctors,
St. Benedict,
St. Francis,
All you holy monks and hermits,
St. Mary Magdalene,
St. Catherine,
All you holy virgins and widows,
All you saints of God,

V. Be merciful,
R. Spare them, O Lord.
V. Be merciful,
R. Graciously hear us, O Lord.

From all evil, O Lord,
deliver them.
By your holy birth,
deliver them.
By your cross and passion,
deliver them.
By your glorious resurrection,
deliver them.
By your ascension,
deliver them.
By the coming of the Holy Spirit,
deliver them.

V. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
R. Grant them eternal rest.
V. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
R. Grant them eternal rest.
V. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
R. Grant them eternal rest.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.
V. May they rest in peace.
R. Amen.

Resources & Further Reading

- **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, 1992.
- **Manual of Indulgences** (*Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*), 4th Edition, 1999.
- **Enchiridion of Indulgences**, 1968.

May our prayers rise like incense for the souls of our departed brothers and sisters, hastening their journey to the fullness of eternal life.