

# St. John's Newsletter



## What is a plenary indulgence?

In this Jubilee year with the Theme Pilgrims of Hope, Catholics have the opportunity to journey to Holy places and receive a plenary indulgence.

But what is a plenary indulgence? A plenary indulgence is a special grace that completely removes the temporal punishment for sins already forgiven, cleansing the soul as if the person had just been baptized.

To understand how a plenary indulgence works, it's important to understand **sin**, **forgiveness**, and **temporal punishment**. When we **sin**, God forgives us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). After **forgiveness** is received, consequences or effects caused by the sin may remain. These effects need healing. **Temporal Punishment** is the effect of sin that needs to be healed after forgiveness is granted. Spiritually, temporal punishment is a way of restoring and healing the relationship with God and others, often seen as purification that can happen in this life or in purgatory after death.

So, while sacramental absolution forgives the eternal guilt of sin, which requires the infinite merits of Christ, it does not necessarily remove all the temporal punishment, since they are somewhat within our power to repair (and somewhat unknown to us). Depending on our degree of sorrow, absolution may result in the expiation of all the temporal guilt of sin. However, for that which it does not repair, we must offer further expiation through prayer, penance, carrying the Cross etc., or after death be purified in purgatory (Rev 21:27).

A plenary indulgence means that by the merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the full remission of the temporal punishment due to sacramentally forgiven sins is obtained. The person becomes as if just baptized and would fly immediately to heaven if he died in that instant.

A partial indulgence means that a portion of the temporal punishment due to forgiven sin is remitted. Partial indulgences are received either by doing some act to which a partial indulgence is attached (e.g. praying a partially indulgenced prayer), or by the incomplete fulfillment of the conditions attached to a plenary indulgence. Plenary indulgences can be offered for oneself or for anyone in purgatory.



The best analogy explaining temporal restitution is the story of a son and his father. While playing baseball in the backyard even after being told to be careful, a young batter hits the ball and breaks a window. The batter regrets the damage and goes to father asking forgiveness. The father forgives the "crime" and the relationship is restored. However, there is still the cost of the broken window – the temporal damage that needs to be repaired. Maybe the boy does extra chores, donates part of his allowance, or even offers to help in other ways to make up for the "debt." Even though he can't pay for a complete replacement of the window, he offers something and the father's grace completes it.

### Steps to Receive a Jubilee Plenary Indulgence

\*Visit at least one of the 23 pilgrimage sites in the Archdiocese of San Antonio

\*Celebrate Sacramental Confession

\*Receive Holy Communion

\*Pray for the Pope's intentions with one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be

\*Perform works of mercy (e.g. visiting the sick or imprisoned; helping the disabled)

\*Be free from all attachment to sin

In honor of the anniversary of the Diocese of San Antonio and the Jubilee Year, Catholics can receive a plenary indulgence from August 28, 2024–January 6, 2026. People who are unable to leave their home due to illness or other reason can gain plenary indulgence by spiritually joining themselves to the anniversary celebrations and offering their sufferings to God.

A complete list of the 23 locations in the Archdiocese can be found at <https://archsa.org/jubilee2025/pilgrimage-sites/>. Our Lady of Grace Church in LaCoste has been chosen as the pilgrimage site for the Hondo deanery.

Sources: <https://www.usccb.org/jubilee2025>  
<https://archsa.org/jubilee2025/>  
<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/what-13361>

Volume 16 - February 2025- St. John's Newsletter is a once-a-month publication aimed at providing you with items of interest about our Catholic faith. If there is a topic you are interested in, please contact the parish office and we will try to address it in future issues. – Submitted by Mary Jo Peters