

From the desk of Fr. Stimpson:

November 7, 2021

Dear Friends,

I am a devotee of praying for our beloved dead, also known as the poor souls in purgatory. It has been a great consolation to me in the spiritual life to know that though we may suffer the loss of a loved one, we are not left helpless. Our acts of love, prayer, and sacrifice, offered in atonement for the sins of our beloved dead, actually assist in the expedition of their purification. Yes, there are refined ways of understanding Purgatory theologically, but in layman's terms- when I pray for my dead grandfather Douglas, it gets him into Heaven faster.

The month of November is a month particularly devoted to praying for our beloved dead. November 2nd, we celebrate the memorial of All Souls, meaning the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Normally, there is a plenary indulgence attached to the visitation of a cemetery and the prayer for the holy souls during the first week of November.

In short, a plenary indulgence is a complete remission of temporal punishment due to sin (again in layman's terms- a straight ticket to heaven). Some essentials: Jesus alone is the Savior! His saving atonement on the Cross and in the Resurrection has infinite merit. Jesus also has incorporated into his Mystical Body the Church, people, many we call saints :) The saints have sacrificed and loved in union with the one saving sacrifice of Christ, thus in Jesus and the saints there is a surplus of merit. Holy Mother Church at times because of the authority entrusted to her by Christ is able to designate certain acts of love as extraordinarily powerful and those certain acts are tapped into that surplus of merit. These acts are thus indulgenced.

The requirements for a plenary indulgence are:

1. A total detachment from sin (meaning a sincere act of Contrition as well as an affirmation of Faith)
2. To go to confession two weeks before or after the indulgenced act
3. Received Holy Communion on the day of the indulgenced act
4. Pray for the Intentions of the Holy Father
5. Do the indulgenced act

So as an example "normally" during the first week of November the indulgenced act is to go to a cemetery and pray for the dead. So if I wanted to obtain a plenary indulgence...

1. Each day make an act of renouncing sin and accepting Christ
2. Go to confession sometime the week before during or after but you don't need to go to confession every day...once in the time frame suffices
3. You do go to Mass each day for the indulgence to be "plenary" (if you didn't receive holy communion on that day but still went to the cemetery- the act would be a "partial indulgence" which of course is still awesome)
4. Pray for the Holy Father's Intentions- which could be his specific published monthly intentions or a general Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be for his intentions suffices
5. Go to the cemetery each day and pray for the dead

For Plenary Indulgences: You can only obtain one plenary per day (though you can obtain multiple partials). Personally, I usually make an intention to offer a plenary indulgence for a specific person, with the caveat that if that person is already in Heaven, then I let Our Blessed Mother Mary decide who to apply the indulgence to.

OK, but here is the super fun Co-vid part...the normal plenary indulgence opportunity is not just for one week this year, it's for the whole month. The Pope granted this permission last year and it's in effect again this year. Also if one is restricted from receiving communion each day or from even physically getting to the cemetery, they can still obtain a plenary indulgence each day.

I can't express enough how crazy the amount of extraordinary merciful superabundance of grace that is for the whole world. So please, please, please, let us all strive to obtain plenary indulgences for the dead this month.

Peace,
Father