



January 20, 2016

Dear Brother Priests,

As Pope Francis reminds us, the Jubilee also entails the granting of indulgences." He has spoken specifically of the granting of indulgences in the Jubilee Year in the Bull of Indication, *Misericordiae vultus* (paragraph 22) and in a Letter concerning an Indulgence granted to the Faithful on the occasion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, September 1, 2015 (see: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150901\\_lettera-indulgenza-giubileo-misericordia.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150901_lettera-indulgenza-giubileo-misericordia.html)).

In order to assist the Faithful of the Diocese of Arlington in obtaining the indulgences of the Jubilee Year, I recall the teaching of the Apostolic Penitentiary on the occasion of the granting of indulgences in the Jubilee Year 2000, which remains the instruction for obtaining indulgences in the upcoming Jubilee Year of Mercy:

#### General Remarks On Indulgences

1. This is how an indulgence is defined in the Code of Canon Law (can. 992) and in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (n. 1471): "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints".
2. In general, the gaining of indulgences requires certain prescribed conditions (below, nn. 3, 4), and the performance of certain prescribed works.
3. To gain indulgences, whether plenary or partial, it is necessary that the faithful be in the state of grace at least at the time the indulgenced work is completed.
4. A plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day. In order to obtain it, the faithful must, in addition to being in the state of grace:
  - have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin;
  - have sacramentally confessed their sins;
  - receive the Holy Eucharist (it is certainly better to receive it while participating in Holy Mass, but for the indulgence only Holy Communion is required);
  - pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff.
5. It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the sacramental Confession and especially Holy Communion and the prayer for the Pope's intentions take place on the same day that the indulgenced work is performed; but it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days (about 20) before or after the indulgenced act. Prayer for the Pope's intentions is left to the choice of the faithful, but an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary" are suggested. Pope Francis has also asked for the recitation of the Profession of Faith (Creed) in any appropriate form. One sacramental Confession suffices for several

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plenary indulgences, but a separate Holy Communion and a separate prayer for the Holy Father's intentions are required for each plenary indulgence.

6. For the sake of those legitimately impeded, confessors can commute both the work prescribed and the conditions required (except, obviously, detachment from even venial sin).

7. Indulgences can always be applied either to oneself or to the souls of the deceased, but they cannot be applied to other persons living on earth.

Some may recall, and questions may arise, concerning the traditional norm that going to confession, receiving Holy Communion, and praying for the intentions of the pope, in order to gain a plenary indulgence, was 8 days before or after doing the prescribed work (counting the day of the work). In the Great Jubilee Year 2000, the Apostolic Penitentiary relaxed this norm to "several days (about 20) before or after the indulgenced act" (Gift of the Indulgence, General remarks, 5). The question often arises whether this norm of about 20 days applied only to the Great Jubilee Year Indulgence, or whether it remains in effect. The Apostolic Penitentiary responded that this norm of "about 20 days" remains in effect, since it was contained under the "General remarks on indulgences," and not under those specific to the Jubilee Indulgence.

It is my hope that you and all of the Faithful of our diocese will receive the gift of indulgences as one of the many graces we experience in the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Faithfully in the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul S. Loverde". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde  
Bishop of Arlington