

## ***Plenary or Partial Indulgences, What Are They?***

Indulgences have its historic origin in Sacred Scripture, when Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, instituted them for all the Christian faithful. We read in St. Matthew (16:15-19), when Jesus asked His Apostles:

*"But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven."*

This holy command from Jesus Christ to **St. Peter represents the ordination of the first Pope** of the Universal Church (in Greek is called Catholic) on this earth and the Catholic Church has continuously maintained this hierarchy of Apostolic authority ever since, until our present Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. As we reflect on Jesus' institution of the Catholic faith, we understand that Jesus not only ordained Peter as Pope, but also instructed him in his authority as Pope:

(St. Matthew 16:19), *And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."*

This instruction and authority given to St. Peter clearly indicates that whatever prayers or actions the Pope on earth wishes to implement as a means of "Indulgences" would, through Jesus' authority, forever be instituted for the Catholic faithful to obtain remission of Temporal Punishment. "Loose on Earth" is defined as Loosing the bands of Temporal Punishment, called an Indulgence. Since the beginning of the Church, Pope's have offered particular prayers or actions that help remove any stains of Temporal Punishment. Some of these actions are provided here:

- Eucharistic Adoration for thirty-minutes.
- Reading the Holy Bible for thirty-minutes, either privately or with your family or prayer group.
- Reciting the Holy Rosary, either privately or with your family or prayer group.
- Saying the Stations of the Cross in a church.
- Novena's that have received Indulgences.

Some Indulgences are "Partial" meaning they do not offer the full Remission of Sins, but Plenary Indulgences are the full Remission of Temporal Punishment, representing an extreme grace that will remit all of your Purgatory. Indulgences can only be obtained by the person who completes all requirements to obtain the remission for his/her soul; or for the Holy Souls already suffering in Purgatory. In order to obtain Indulgences, that have been granted by the Supreme Pontiffs for the whole world, the following Canons on Indulgences, taken from the Code of Canon Law are listed:

- **Article 1, Canon 911:** All men are to value indulgences highly: this is to say, the remission before God the Temporal Punishment due to sin even after its guilt has been forgiven, which ecclesiastical authority grants from the treasury of the Church in behalf of the living after the manner of an absolution, and in behalf of the dead after the manner of an intercession.
- **Article 2, Cannon 925:** In order that a person may be capable of gaining Indulgences for himself, he must be Baptized, not excommunicated, in the State of Grace at least at the end of the prescribed works, and the subject of the grantor.
- **Canon 928:** A plenary indulgence, unless it be otherwise expressly stated, can be gained only once a day, even though the prescribed work be performed several times. A Partial Indulgence, unless the contrary be expressly stated, can be gained frequently throughout the day, whenever the prescribed work is repeated.
- **Canon 930:** No one gaining an Indulgence can apply it to others who are still living; but all Indulgences granted by the Roman Pontiff, unless the contrary is evident, are applicable to the Souls in Purgatory.
- **Canon 931:** The confession which may be required for gaining any particular Indulgences can be made within the eight days which immediately precede the day to which the Indulgences are appointed; and the Communion may take place on the previous day; or again, both conditions may be satisfied within the following eight days. Likewise, to gain indulgences for pious exercises conducted for three days or for a week, etc., the Confession and Communion may be made within the eight days immediately following the close of the exercises.