

Vatican Extends Plenary Indulgence for the Dead Throughout November

According to a decree dated October 23 and signed by Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, certain indulgenced acts, which can help to remit the temporal punishment due to sin for those who have died in a state of grace, can be obtained throughout the entire month of November 2020.

In the month of November, the Church has two traditional means of obtaining a plenary indulgence for the souls in Purgatory. The first is to visit a cemetery and pray for the dead during the Octave of All Saints' Day, which is Nov. 1-8. The second plenary indulgence is connected to the Feast of All Souls' Day on Nov. 2nd and can be received by those who piously visit a church or oratory on that day and recite the Our Father and the Creed. This year, due to Covid-19 and the concern of crowded churches on these dates, the Vatican has decreed that these plenary indulgences can be obtained on any day in November.

A Catholic who wishes to obtain a plenary indulgence must fulfill the ordinary conditions of an indulgence, which are: sacramental Confession; reception of the Eucharist; praying for the intentions of the Pope; and full detachment from sin. Sacramental Confession and reception of the Eucharist can occur within a week of the indulgenced act.

The Vatican also said that, because of the health emergency, the elderly, the sick, and others who cannot leave the house for serious reasons, can participate in the indulgence from home by reciting prayers for the deceased before an image of Jesus or the Virgin Mary. They must also spiritually unite themselves to other Catholics, be completely detached from sin, and have the intention of fulfilling the ordinary conditions as soon as possible.

The Vatican's decree offered examples of prayers that homebound Catholics can pray for the dead, including Lauds or Vespers of the Office for the Dead, the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, other prayers for the deceased, or performing a work of mercy by offering their pain and discomfort to God on behalf of the deceased.