

# Holy Father Announces Day of Indulgence

In August 2002 The Vatican announced a new occasion for plenary indulgence - complete remission from punishment for sins - in honour of God's mercy on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday.

This decree was decided on by Pope John Paul II as a further example of his great commitment to spreading the message of Divine Mercy and of highlighting the special

graces available to the faithful on Divine Mercy Sunday.

According to the decree, the faithful will be able to obtain the indulgence on that day, provided they confess their sins, sincerely repent, receive holy communion, pray and dedicate themselves to works of Christian piety.

The Vatican says the Second Sunday of Easter should be dedicated to remembering God's mercy and "that to make sure that the faithful live this celebration with intense piety, the pontiff has established that the stated Sunday will be enriched by the plenary indulgence. The faithful can thereby receive more broadly the gift of consolation from the Holy Spirit and nourish a growing charity toward God and toward others".

The decree will be in perpetually in effect.

## Three conditions for the Plenary Indulgence

And so the Supreme Pontiff, motivated by an ardent desire to foster in Christians this devotion to Divine Mercy as much as possible in the hope of offering great spiritual fruit to the faithful, in the Audience on June 13, 2002, granted to those responsible for the Apostolic Penitentiary, the following Indulgences:

A plenary indulgence, granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honour of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (eg. Merciful Jesus, I trust in You!).

A partial indulgence, granted to the faithful who, at least with a contrite heart, pray to the merciful Lord Jesus a legitimately approved invocation.

## For those who cannot go to Church or the seriously ill

In addition, sailors working on the vast expanse of the sea; the countless brothers and sisters, whom the disasters of war, political events, local violence, and other such causes have been driven out of their homeland; the sick and those who nurse them, and all who for a just cause cannot leave their homes or who carry out an activity for the community which cannot be postponed, may obtain a plenary indulgence on Divine Mercy Sunday, if totally detesting any sin, as has been said before, and with the intention of fulfilling as soon as possible the three usual conditions, will recite the Our Father and the Creed before a devout image of Our Merciful Lord Jesus and, in addition, pray a devout invocation to the Merciful Lord Jesus (eg. Merciful Jesus, I trust in You).

If it is impossible that people do even this, on the same day they may obtain the Plenary Indulgence if with a spiritual intention they are united with those carrying out the prescribed practice for obtaining the Indulgence in the usual way and offer to the Merciful Lord a prayer and the sufferings of their illness and the difficulties of their lives, with the resolution to accomplish as soon as possible the three conditions prescribed to obtain the plenary indulgence.

## **From the Catechism of the Catholic Church**

### ***What is an indulgence?***

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.

An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.

*For further understanding of the Church's teaching on indulgences, see Catechism, \*1471-1479.*

*This plenary indulgence does not change the promises of Our Lord of complete forgiveness of sin and punishment due to sin, for those who observe Divine Mercy Sunday, as found in the Diary of St. Faustina. Rather, it provides the Church's highest mark of approval to the practice of this message and devotion.*