



BLOGS

## Here's How You Can Get the Vatican's New Coronavirus Indulgences

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of the Church, Health of the Sick and Help of Christians, our Advocate, help suffering humanity, saving us from the evil of this pandemic and obtaining for us every good necessary for our salvation and sanctification.

By Joseph Pronechen – Posted 3/23/20 at 9:05 PM

During this worldwide battle against the coronavirus, the Holy See on March 20 gave us a big gift in the form of increased spiritual help to those caught especially on the front lines and in the trenches in this current pandemic. The Apostolic Penitentiary granted special new Plenary Indulgences to the faithful.

The decree states: “So that all those who suffer because of COVID-19, precisely in the mystery of this suffering, may rediscover ‘the same redemptive suffering of Christ,’ this Apostolic Penitentiary...trusting in the word of Christ the Lord and considering with a spirit of faith the epidemic currently underway, to be lived in a spirit of personal conversion, grants the gift of Indulgences in accordance with the following disposition.”

### What Disposition?

It continues: “The gift of special Indulgences is granted to the faithful suffering from COVID-19 disease, commonly known as coronavirus, as well as to health care workers, family members and all those who in any capacity, including through prayer, care for them.”

The [plenary indulgence decree](#) goes on to explain: “Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, compassionately respond to the wish of

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‘Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ (John 15:13), will obtain the same gift of the plenary indulgence under the same conditions.”

So again, who can receive this specially granted plenary indulgence?

1. The faithful suffering from the coronavirus
2. Health care workers (giving help to those with the virus)
3. Family members and all those who in any capacity, including through prayer, care for them. (Father Chris Alar of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception defines this to include “if you are praying for those who are affected in any way by the virus.” He rightly calls this the Emergency Plenary Indulgence.)
4. Those dying from the virus (as explained by [Father Alar](#))

## Steps and Conditions

In the words of the decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary:

The *Plenary Indulgence* is granted to the faithful suffering from coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.

Once more, these are the possibilities to do for this “emergency” plenary indulgence:

1. Unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass
2. Pray the Rosary
3. Practice the Way of the Cross piously
4. or other forms of devotion — Father Alar names here the Chaplet of Divine Mercy
5. As the Apostolic Penitentiary also adds, adds that it “willingly grants a Plenary Indulgence under the same conditions on the occasion of the current world epidemic, also to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.”

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## Usual Conditions Made Simple

Obviously, with one of the three usual conditions, receiving the Holy Eucharist, basically impossible with churches not having public Masses, Father Alar says to make Spiritual Communion. Confession is another usual condition. Do this within 20 days if you can, he says. But now make a perfect act of contrition. The third is prayers for the Holy Father — an Our Father, Holy Mary, and Glory Be suffice.

The Apostolic Penitentiary always explains — “at least recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.”

## What about the Suffering

The decree says, “The Church, following the example of her Divine Master, has always had the care of the sick at heart.” St. John Paul II taught of the twofold value of human suffering. He said, “It is supernatural because it is rooted in the divine mystery of the Redemption of the world, and it is likewise deeply human, because in it the person discovers himself, his own humanity, his own dignity, his own mission.”

Or as we were simply taught in Catholic grammar school about our suffering, “Offer it up.” Meaning, offer it with Jesus’ suffering. And offer it for something particular.

Again as the decree states: “So that all those who suffer because of COVID-19, precisely in the mystery of this suffering, may rediscover ‘the same redemptive suffering of Christ’...”

It reminds that Pope Francis has been showing “his paternal closeness” and renews inviting everyone to pray constantly for those sick with the coronavirus.

## Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

The decree states the Church is praying for those unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and receive Viaticum, “entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a Plenary Indulgence on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended (cf. *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*, no. 10).”

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The decree emphasizes that St. Paul's words to the Romans — *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer* (Romans 12:12) — guide the faithful as they face any suffering, sickness and calamity.

There's also the necessity and urgency of turning to our Blessed Mother at this critical time. The decree closes with these words and prayer:

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of the Church, Health of the Sick and Help of Christians, our Advocate, help suffering humanity, saving us from the evil of this pandemic and obtaining for us every good necessary for our salvation and sanctification.

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