



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

March 27, 2020

Instructions for the Diocese of Sacramento regarding the Special Indulgences to the Faithful during the current pandemic.

On March 19, 2020, the Apostolic Penitentiary of the Holy See issued a decree, *ex auctoritate Summi Pontificis*, granting special indulgences to the Faithful who are suffering from COVID-19, commonly known as coronavirus, and are subject to quarantine by the health authorities in hospitals or in their own homes. The granting of special indulgences also includes those who are health workers, first-responders, family members, all those who in any capacity -- including prayer -- care for them, as well as all members of the Faithful who join with the Church in imploring from our merciful God the end of the epidemic and relief for all afflicted.

Hoping to slow the rate of infection caused by COVID-19 and protect vulnerable members of our community, government officials have enacted necessary and prudent measures. I have cooperated with these measures for the good of the Faithful and clergy as well as the common good of all. The decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary serves the mission of the Church to provide care for the afflicted and the salvation of souls.

An indulgence is “the expression of the Church’s confidence of being heard by the Father when in view of Christ’s merits and, by His gift, Our Lady and the saints, she asks Him to mitigate or cancel the painful aspect of punishment by fostering its medicinal aspect through the channels of grace.” (*John Paul II, General Audience, September 29, 1999*) A plenary indulgence is the remission before God of the temporal punishment for sin whose guilt is already forgiven. (c. 992) It removes all the temporal punishment due to sin. (CCC 1471)

In order to obtain the plenary indulgence, individuals, with a spirit detached from any sin, unite spiritually through media to one of the following ways:

- The celebration of the Holy Mass
- The recitation of the Holy Rosary
- The pious practice of the Way of the Cross and other forms of devotion
- At least recite the Creed, the Lord’s prayer, and a pious invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters

These are to be done with the willful intention to fulfill the usual conditions of receiving a plenary indulgence (sacramental confessions, Eucharistic communion, and prayer according to the Holy Father’s intention) as soon as possible.

Please provide catechesis and counseling to the Faithful regarding obtaining the benefits of this special indulgence. More resources regarding this and other pastoral assistance will be available on the diocesan website.

Join me in prayer as we journey in Faith through the dark valley of this global pandemic. We place our trust in the divine, tender mercy of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. May the intercession of the Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Joseph and all the Saints bring healing to the afflicted, patient perseverance and protection to those who care for them, eternal rest to our beloved deceased, and comfort to all those who mourn.

Respectfully,

+Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento