



SPECIAL INDULGENCES FOR THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

December 8, 2020 – December 8, 2021

The Year of St. Joseph (Dec. 8, 2020–Dec. 8, 2021)—proclaimed by Pope Francis on December 8, 2020—comes with the opportunity to gain special indulgences attached to particular practices with devotion to St. Joseph. The Apostolic Penitentiary (the department of the Roman Curia that oversees indulgences) released a [decree](#), approved by Pope Francis, which contains those special indulgences; they are listed outright in this document [below](#).

What are indulgences?

An indulgence is one way that God, in His mercy, has given to the Church for us to be free of the temporal punishment gained by sin. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven...partial or plenary according as it removes either part of all of the temporal punishment due to sin. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead (CCC, 1471).

Requirements to Gain an Indulgence

The Christian faithful who are rightly disposed and observe the definite, prescribed conditions gain this remission through the effective assistance of the Church, which, as the minister of redemption, authoritatively distributes and applies the treasury of the expiatory works of Christ and the saints (*Indulgentiarum doctrina*, “Apostolic Constitution for Indulgences”, N1).

Requirements for gaining a plenary indulgence (*ID*, N7):

1. Performance of the indulgenced work
2. Sacramental Confession
3. Eucharistic Communion
4. Prayer for the Pope’s intentions
 - Praying one *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* will suffice (*ID*, N10)
5. Being free from all attachment to sin, even venial sin

Indulgences are not magical remedies to be gained by merely checking off boxes. In God’s infinite love for us, He is always concerned with the state of our soul and desires true conversion of heart above all. Therefore, it is important that in all we do we are striving for a more perfect

love of God and neighbor rather than acting out of fear of punishment. This is why *Indulgentiarum doctrina* rightly says that the faithful must be “rightly disposed” (*ID*, N1). However, God knows that we are imperfect, and we should trust that God blesses our sincere efforts to grow in holiness through our prayers and works of charity. Thus, when we do not perfectly meet the requirements above to gain a plenary indulgence—especially of being free from all attachment to sin—a partial indulgence may still be granted (*ID*, N7).

Special Indulgences for the Year of St. Joseph

Plenary Indulgences:

- Meditating on the Lord’s Prayer for at least 30 minutes
- Participating in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on Saint Joseph
- Performing a corporal or spiritual work of mercy
- Praying the Holy Rosary in families and between spouses
- Entrusting daily activity to the protection of St. Joseph
- Invoking the intercession of St. Joseph for those seeking work
- Praying the Litany of Saint Joseph or some other prayer to Saint Joseph, for the Church persecuted and for the relief of all Christians who suffer any form of persecution
- Praying any legitimately approved prayer or act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, for example, “To you, O blessed Joseph” especially on “19 March, on 1 May, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, on St. Joseph’s Sunday (according to the Byzantine tradition) on the 19th of each month and every Wednesday, a day dedicated to the memory of the saint according to the Latin tradition.”

Special Note: In the current context of health emergency, the gift of plenary indulgence is particularly extended to the elderly, the sick, the dying and all those who for legitimate reasons cannot leave their home, who, with the spirit detached from any sin and with the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions, in your own home or wherever the impediment holds you, pray an act of piety in honor of Saint Joseph, consolation of the sick and patron of good death, confidently offering God the pains and difficulties of his life.