

Decree extends indulgence for the faithful departed throughout November

The Apostolic Penitentiary announces modifications to the Plenary Indulgence for the deceased during the month of November.

By Sr Bernadette Mary Reis, fsp

Many of the Church's pastors have requested an adaptation to the requirements to obtain the Plenary Indulgence for the deceased in the month of November. Thus, "by the special mandate of His Holiness Pope Francis", the Apostolic Penitentiary released on Friday some changes to the normal practice. The Decree containing these modifications was signed on 22 October, the liturgical memorial of Pope St John Paul II.

Plenary Indulgence during month of November

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the need to avoid large groups from forming where prohibited, the Plenary Indulgence applicable to the deceased by those who visit a cemetery has been extended beyond the normal dates of 1 to 8 November. This year, the indulgence can be obtained by anyone who visits a cemetery, even if only mentally, on any day in November, and devoutly prays for the faithful departed.

Plenary Indulgence for Feast of All Souls' Day

Regarding the Plenary Indulgence attached to All Souls' Day, 2 November, this year, it can be obtained not only on the preceding or succeeding Sunday, or on the actual Feast day, but on any other day of the month chosen by each member of the faithful. In this case, the indulgence is obtained by "devoutly visiting a church or an oratory", along with the recitation of the Our Father and the Creed, and the other requirements associated with a Plenary Indulgence.

The homebound

For anyone who cannot leave their home for various reasons, including anti-Covid restrictions, they too can obtain the Plenary Indulgence by "uniting themselves spiritually to other members of the faithful". In this case, the condition of being "completely detached from sin" and the

intention of completing the other requirements for obtaining a Plenary Indulgence remain. These conditions are Sacramental Confession, reception of Holy Communion and a prayer for the Holy Father's intentions.

The Decree suggests that such prayer take place before an "image of Jesus or the Blessed Virgin Mary". Among the various prayers that are recommended are "prayers for the deceased, Morning or Evening Prayer from the Office of the Dead, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, meditating on various Gospel passages proposed for the liturgy of the Dead, or completing a work of mercy by offering to God the suffering and discomforts of one's own life".

Invitation to Priests

Directing a word to priests, the Decree asks that they make the Sacrament of Confession generously available and that they make Holy Communion available to the sick. In addition, all priests are invited to offer three Masses on All Souls' Day.