



THE JUBILEE OF MERCY

Passing through the Holy Door & the Plenary Indulgence



*“I wish that the Jubilee Indulgence may reach each one
as a genuine experience of God’s mercy,
which comes to meet each person in the Face of the Father
who welcomes and forgives, forgetting completely the sin committed.”*

– Pope Francis, Letter to Abp. Fisichella, Sept. 1, 2015.

One of the many graces of the Jubilee Year of Mercy is a special plenary indulgence, which is the complete remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. One of the ways to obtain the plenary indulgence this year is to make a pilgrimage to a Church that has a designated Holy Door of Mercy. In the Diocese of Galway Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, there is only one officially designated Holy Door, which is at the Cathedral of Our Lady Assumed into Heaven and St Nicholas, Galway. Please note that this is an interior door.

God’s forgiveness knows no bounds. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God makes even more evident his love and its power to destroy all human sin. Reconciliation with God is made possible through the paschal mystery and the mediation of the Church. Thus God is always ready to forgive, and he never tires of forgiving in ways that are continually new and surprising. Nevertheless, all of us know well the experience of sin. We know that we are called to perfection (cf. Mt 5:48), yet we feel the heavy burden of sin. Though we feel the transforming power of grace, we also feel the effects of sin typical of our fallen state. Despite being forgiven, the conflicting consequences of our sins remain. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives our sins, which he truly blots out; and yet sin leaves a negative effect on the way we think and act. But the mercy of God is stronger even than this. It becomes indulgence on the part of the Father who, through the Bride of Christ, his Church, reaches the pardoned sinner and frees him from every residue left by the consequences of sin, enabling him to act with charity, to grow in love rather than to fall back into sin.

WHAT IS AN INDULGENCE

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 1471): “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." Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead.

OBTAINING A JUBILEE OF MERCY INDULGENCE

Pope Francis wishes that everyone will be able to make a pilgrimage through a Holy Door and receive the Jubilee Indulgence. He writes: "I wish that the Jubilee Indulgence may reach each one as a genuine experience of God's mercy, which comes to meet each person in the Face of the Father who welcomes and forgives, forgetting completely the sin committed."

Obtaining a Jubilee Indulgence requires the completion of three conditions:

1. A brief pilgrimage to a Holy Door, as a sign of the deep desire for true conversion;
2. Participation in the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy;
3. The accompaniment of these celebrations with the profession of faith and with prayer for the Pope and for the intentions that the Pope bears in his heart for the good of the Church and of the entire world.

The Pope also offers another means of obtaining a Jubilee indulgence when he writes about the significance in this year on rediscovering "the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us. Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence."

The Pope also says that prisoners can obtain the Jubilee Indulgence in the prison chapel, while "directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell", welcoming "the mercy of God [that] is able to transform hearts and to transform bars into an experience of freedom." The sick, and those who are confined to the home and cannot reach the Holy Door, will be granted the indulgence through "living with faith and joyful hope this moment of trial, receiving communion or attending Holy Mass and community prayer, even through the various means of communication." The Jubilee Indulgence can also be obtained for the deceased by "remembering them in the Eucharistic celebration...and praying for them that the merciful Face of the Father free them of every remnant of fault and strongly embrace them in the unending beatitude."