

Plenary Indulgence for the Sick with Coronavirus, Health Agents, Caregivers, and Faithful

Decree of Pope Francis

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The Holy Father is granting a Plenary Indulgence to the faithful sick with coronavirus, to health agents, relatives and all those taking care of the sick, who expose themselves to the risk of infection.

On Friday, March 20, 2020, the Holy See published the Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, regarding special indulgences for the faithful in the present pandemic crisis. Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, Major Penitentiary, and Krzysztof Nykiel, Regent, signed the Decree on March 19.

The persons that will benefit from the Plenary Indulgence are the sick at home or in hospital, in quarantine by order of the Health Authority, “if, with a spirit detached from any sin, join spiritually through the media in the celebration of Holy Mass, the prayer of the Rosary, the pious practice of the *Via Crucis* or other forms of devotion, or if at least they pray the Creed, the Our Father and an invocation to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, offering this trial with a spirit of faith in God and charity to brethren.”

Always “with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (Sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father, as soon as it is possible,” states the Decree.

Health Agents and Carers

The Plenary Indulgence can be obtained by health agents, their relatives and all those that, “following the example of the Good Samaritan, expose themselves to the risk of infection, by caring for the sick with Coronavirus, and fulfilling the same conditions.

Given the present global epidemic, the Apostolic Penitentiary also grants the Plenary Indulgence, with the same conditions, to “those faithful that visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, engage in Eucharistic Adoration, or read Sacred Scripture for at least half an hour, or pray the Holy Rosary, or do the pious exercise of the *Via Crucis*, or pray the Divine Mercy chaplet, to implore Almighty God for an end to the epidemic, relief for the afflicted and eternal salvation for those the Lord has called to Himself.”

Here is a translation of the unabridged Decree.

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APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY DECREE

The gift of special indulgences is granted to the faithful suffering from the COVID-19 sickness, commonly known as Coronavirus, as well as to health workers, their relatives and all those that take care of them in any capacity.

“Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer” (*Romans* 12:12. The words written by Saint Paul to the Church of Rome resound throughout the history of the Church and orient the judgment of the faithful in face of every suffering, sickness, and calamity.

The present moment that the whole of humanity is going through, threatened by an invisible and insidious sickness, which for some time has entered arrogantly to form part of everyone’s life, is marked out day after day by anguished fears, new uncertainties and, above all, generalized physical and moral suffering.

Following the example of her Divine Teacher, the Church has always been concerned to take care of the sick. As Saint John Paul II pointed out, the value of human suffering is twofold: “Supernatural and, at the same time, human. It is supernatural, because it is rooted in the divine mystery of the world’s Redemption, and it is also

profoundly human, because in it man finds himself, his own humanity, his own dignity, and his own mission.” (Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris*, 31).

In these last days, Pope Francis has also manifested his paternal closeness and renewed his invitation to pray incessantly for the sick with Coronavirus.

So that all those suffering from COVID-19, precisely in the mystery of this suffering, may be able to rediscover “the same redeeming suffering of Christ: (*Ibid.*, 30), this Apostolic Penitentiary, *ex auctoritate Summi Pontificis*, trusting in the word of Christ the Lord and considering with a spirit of faith the present epidemic underway, to live it with a spirit of personal conversion, grants the gift of the Indulgences in accordance with the following disposition.

A Plenary Indulgence is granted to the faithful sick with Coronavirus, subjected to quarantine by order of the Health Authority in hospital or in their own homes, if, with a spirit detached from any sin, united spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the prayer of the Holy Rosary, the pious practice of the *Via Crucis* or other forms of devotion, or if at least they pray the Creed, the Our Father and a pious invocation to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, offering this trial with a spirit of faith in God and of charity to brethren, and with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (Sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father), as soon as it is possible for them.

Health agents, their relatives and all those that, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of infection, take care of the sick with Coronavirus, according to the words of the Divine Redeemer: “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (*John* 15:13), will obtain the same gift of the Plenary Indulgence in the same conditions.

Moreover, this Apostolic Penitentiary willingly grants also, with the same conditions, the Plenary Indulgence on the occasion of the present global epidemic, to those faithful that offer to visit the Most Blessed Sacrament or Eucharistic Adoration, or the praying of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the *Via Crucis*, or the praying of the Divine Mercy chaplet, to implore Almighty God for an end to the epidemic, the relief of the afflicted, and the eternal salvation of those that the Lord has called to Himself.

The Church prays for those unable to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and the *Viaticum*, entrusting each and all of them to Divine Mercy, in virtue of the Communion of Saints, and grants a Plenary Indulgence at the point of death so long as they are duly disposed and have prayed some prayers during their life (in this case, the Church supplies the three usual required conditions). To obtain this indulgence, the use of a crucifix or of a cross is recommended (Cf. *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*, n. 12).

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

The present Decree is valid regardless of any disposition to the contrary.

Given in Rome, from the headquarters of the Apostolic Penitentiary, on March 19, 2020.

Mauro Cardinal Piacenza

Major Penitentiary

Krzysztof Nykiel

Regent