

The Benefits of the Practice of Indulgences

One of the richest sources of grace in the Church, but also at the same time, one of the most misunderstood and neglected sources of grace, is that of Indulgences. In fact, it would appear that in the Church today a veil of silence has been cast over this ancient, yet ever new and modern practice of Indulgences. And this is a great tragedy because this veil of silence and misunderstanding has prevented many Catholics from taking full advantage of one of the greatest treasures in the Church next to the Sacraments.

There are several reasons, though, that can help to explain the cause for this widespread misunderstanding, ignorance, and neglect of the practice of gaining Indulgences. First of all, there is still some prejudice left over from the Indulgence scandals that took place in the fifteen hundreds, and which were partly responsible for the split in the Church caused by Martin Luther's rebellion. What's more, even the word "indulgence" itself is part of the problem. For it has come to have a slightly unfavorable connotation. For example, we would call a parent "indulgent" if he or she always let their children do whatever they wanted to do. And so, the word "indulgence" has now come to be associated with being weak-willed and unprincipled.

Nevertheless, despite all this bad press, the practice of gaining and granting Indulgences is deeply rooted in the Bible and in the teachings of the Church. Further, the use of an Indulgence can inspire us to live more fruitful lives, as well as to lead us to a closer union with Jesus Christ and His Church.

So what, then, are Indulgences? How can we get them? How can they help us to grow in holiness? And what was the cause of the scandal that resulted in so much misunderstanding and neglect of the practice of Indulgences?

Well, first of all, an Indulgence can be defined as the removal of part or all—of the temporal punishment that is due for the sins that we have committed—but which have been forgiven in Confession, or through a good act of contrition. For us to understand this teaching properly, though, it is necessary to realize the fact that sin has a double consequence, namely, guilt and punishment. For when we go to Confession or make a good act of contrition the guilt of our sins is always forgiven and removed, as well as the eternal punishment of Hell, if we have committed a mortal sin. However, there often times remains what is called "temporal punishment" for our sins, especially if we may have committed many deliberate venial sins, or even some mortal sins.

For every sin is an offense against Almighty God—either directly or indirectly. So there is no sin, then, that is solely a sin against just our neighbor or ourselves or the community at large. For this reason, every sin that is committed "drags down the whole world," as Pope St. John Paul once put it. For every sin cause a disturbance in the order of the universe. A disturbance that must somehow be reestablished, either by penance imposed upon ourselves, or by the punishment imposed upon us by God Himself. And so, this penance and punishment due to our sins, then, has to be worked off, either in this life

through our prayers, sacrifices, fasting, or other forms of penance, or in the next life in Purgatory—before we can enter Heaven.

It is very important, then, that we are aware of this truth about the reality and existence of temporal punishment. For there is a mistaken belief, which can be found even among some devote persons, that maintains if we confess all the sins that we are aware of, then any all punishment that might be due for those sins, would be automatically and immediately taken away in Confession. But this is not the case. In fact, it is rarely the case. We must be prepared, then, to punish ourselves with penance in this life, even for our forgiven sins, or God in His justice may be forced to punish for them in the next life in Purgatory.

To explain further: The reason that temporal punishment is not always removed in the Sacrament of Confession is because when we commit a sin, it is in a way like hammering a nail into a plaster wall. And so, when we ask for and receive God's forgiveness in Confession, it is like removing the nail from the plaster wall with a pair of pliers. Although the nail of guilt and the eternal punishment of Hell are removed, the hole caused by our sins still remains. For this reason, the bigger and the more numerous the sins that we may have committed, then the bigger and the more numerous will be the holes that will have to be filled in with the plaster of penance and punishment.

Now one of the most powerful and effective ways, as well as one of the simplest, shortest, and painless ways of removing the temporal punishment due to sin is to gain an Indulgence, especially a Plenary Indulgence. For the Church teaches us that if we fulfill all the conditions necessary for gaining one, then all the temporal punishment due to our sins that we may have accumulated over years of sinful living can be immediately and totally wiped away in an instant. For this reason, if we were to gain a Plenary Indulgence, and then were to die immediately afterward, we would go straight to Heaven—without having to spend a second in Purgatory. And so, the importance of gaining as many Plenary Indulgences simply cannot be overestimated for anyone who wants to make speedy progress in the spiritual life. In fact, St. Alphonsus Liguori has gone so far as to state that all we have to do in order to become a saint is to gain as many Indulgences as we can.

Further, the Church teaches that we can gain a Plenary Indulgence every day. And so, what this means in practice, then, is that every day we can wipe our slate clean, so to speak. Every day, we can start life over again with the past burden of our sins wiped away. Every day, we can be ready to enter Heaven immediately after death. Every day, then, can be like another Mercy Sunday for us. Just think, then, of the extra spiritual energy that we can receive when the weight of our past sins has been lifted from our shoulders by a Plenary Indulgence.

So what are the requirements, then, for gaining one of these precious Plenary Indulgences? What price do we have to pay for getting one of these tickets to Heaven? Well, there are seven things that we have to do. Seven requirements that have to be fulfilled in order for us to purchase our ticket to Heaven. What are they?

First, we must be a baptized member of the Catholic Church, and in the state of grace, at least by the end of the prescribed work. Second, we must make the intention of gaining a particular Plenary Indulgence. And this intention to be valid must include, not only the knowledge that a particular prayer or act of devotion has a Plenary Indulgence attached to its performance, but also the decision to perform the particular prayer or act of devotion at the appointed time and in an appropriate manner according to the general sense of the granted Indulgence and the mind of the Church. Third, we must actually pray the particular prayer, for example, the Rosary, or perform the particular act of devotion, for example, the Stations of the Cross, that has a Plenary Indulgence attached to it by the Church. Fourth, we must receive Holy Communion. It is recommended that we received Holy Communion on the day that we pray the prayer, or perform the act of devotion that has the Indulgence attached to it. Fifth, we must go to Confession at least twenty days before or after we have done the prescribed prayer or act of devotion. Sixth, we must pray a prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father, which is normally understood to be at least one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be. Nevertheless, we are free to recite any other prayer of our own choosing, according to our own personal piety and devotion. Seventh, we must be detached from all sin, even venial sin.

Now a question that often comes up whenever the subject of Plenary Indulgences is discussed is: What exactly does it mean to be detached from all sin, even venial sin? For we would think, upon first hearing of this requirement, that only a saint, or someone of above average holiness would be able to fulfill this requirement. And so, this question has sparked debate for many years, and has caused many people to wonder, not only whether they have ever fulfilled the necessary conditions for gaining a Plenary Indulgence, but also whether it is even possible for the average Catholic to gain one.

Well, a helpful answer was given to this question by Fr. Brian Mullady, the Dominican priest who frequently speaks on EWTN. For he stated a few years ago in an article published in the "Homiletic and Pastoral Review" magazine, that the condition of being detached from all sin "does not refer to a psychological attachment that would be hard to gauge of some past enjoyment of sins." Instead, as he went on to explain, "The condition is more strictly and clearly referring to a venial sin which is not yet forgiven." Therefore, "A person may be morally certain he does not have these [that is, venial sins on his soul], if he has recently confessed. Absolute certainty is not necessary, but only the psychological certainty a person would have after examining his conscience" (cf. "Homiletic and Pastoral Review," March 2007).

So in other words, if we have confessed all the venial and mortal sins that we are aware of, then, we could be certain that we would be able to gain the full benefits of a Plenary Indulgence. If for some reason, however, we still had some venial sins that we did not have true contrition for, then, the Indulgence would be partial and not plenary. Nevertheless, we can be sure that if we have performed all the other requirements necessary for gaining a Plenary Indulgence, then a large portion of the temporal punishment due to our sins would be removed invariably.

We should be aware, then, that there are several ways by which we can easily gain a Plenary Indulgence, not only every day, but also at certain specific times during the year. First of all, we should be aware that there are four ways by which we can gain a Plenary Indulgence every day. And these are: one, the praying of five decades of the Rosary, either in a church or in a group, that is, with two or more persons, if the Rosary is prayed outside of a church; two, the making of the Stations of the Cross; three, praying before the Blessed Sacrament for at least one-half hour; and four, the reading of and meditating on the Bible for one-half hour.

So in other words, what all of this means in practice, then, is that for anyone who is not only going to Mass and Communion every day, but also going to Confession at least every three weeks, then you can gain a Plenary Indulgence every day, just by doing one of the four most common works that have Plenary Indulgence attached to them.

However, we must be aware of the fact that in order to gain one of these four Plenary Indulgences, we must have first made the required intention of gaining of one. And so, for anyone who has been going to Mass and Communion regularly, and has been praying the Rosary regularly either before or after Mass, but has not made the necessary and required intention to gain the Plenary Indulgence, then unfortunately, you have not gained the full benefits that you could have received from your prayers. This is not to say, of course, that you have not received many graces and blessings from praying the Rosary without making the intention of gaining a Plenary Indulgence. It is just to say that you have not received the full benefit of the graces and gifts that you could have received from your prayers.

It is, of course, important not to take a too legalistic approach to the gaining of Indulgences. But at the same time, we must keep in mind that the Church has not established and published all these rules and regulations for the gaining of Indulgences, just so that we could ignore them. Further, we should be aware of the fact that there are several other ways that we can gain a Plenary Indulgence besides the four most common ones just mentioned above. And a sampling of the twelve most common ones are given in the hand out. For the most part, as you can see, the granting of one these Indulgences is keyed either to some important event in our spiritual life, for example, the day of our First Holy Communion, or to some important day in the Liturgical Year, like the Friday's of Lent, Holy Thursday, Corpus Christi, Pentecost, or the Feast Day of our parish church.

Further, we can see that the Church wants to encourage us to develop our spiritual life by granting a Plenary Indulgence to anyone who attends a parish mission or a three day spiritual retreat. And the list goes on. In fact, this is but a sampling of the many ways that we can gain, not only Plenary Indulgences, but also Partial Indulgences as well.

Now these different ways by which we can gain both Plenary and Partial Indulgences are written out and explained for us in a little book called the "Enchiridion of Indulgences" or "Handbook of Indulgences." For "enchiridion" is a Greek word that means handbook in English. The "Handbook" is available in an English translation from several different publishers, and even from Barnes and Noble, which publishes it in paperback. In fact, this

is a book that every Catholic home should have. And it should be placed right next to our Bible and our copy of the New Catechism of the Catholic Church. It is interesting and significant to note, then, that Pope St. John Paul, in order to stress the importance of Indulgences in general, and of knowing how to obtain them in particular, sent a copy of the Third Edition of the Handbook to every bishop in the world, when it was republished in 1986.

The importance of getting a copy of the “Handbook of Indulgences” and becoming familiar with it cannot be overestimated, because it gives a summary, we could say, of the most powerful devotions and prayers in the Church’s arsenal—next to the Mass. And so, it is as if the Church is telling us, by giving us this book of approved prayers and Indulgences, what prayers we need to say, and what kinds of devotions we need to practice and focus on in order to grow rapidly in holiness.

For we have only so much time and energy at our disposal. And so, we need to know, then, in the midst of our busy and hectic lives where to direct our attention without getting distracted. And so, the “Handbook of Indulgences,” then, can be an invaluable resource that can help us to more efficiently and effectively organize our spiritual lives in the most fitting way possible according to our state in life.

Three more things must be noted about Plenary Indulgences before we move on to an explanation of Partial Indulgences. The first is that we are limited by the Church to gaining only one Plenary Indulgence on a given day. So for example, if we pray two Rosaries in a church, only the first one can gain a Plenary Indulgence for us under the usual conditions. The second Rosary that we pray, then, will only be able to earn for a Partial Indulgence.

We can, of course, do as many devotions as we like on a given day that could earn for us a Plenary Indulgence. But only the first devotion of the day that we make which has a Plenary Indulgence attached to it will be able to gain for us its full benefits. All of the other prayers and devotions that we make during the rest of the day will only be able to earn for us the benefits of a Partial Indulgence.

There is one exception to this rule, though, namely, when we are at the point of death. For the Church has granted that we can obtain a Plenary Indulgence when we are in danger of death—even if another Plenary Indulgence had been acquired by us on the same day. It is very important for us to be aware of the fact, then, that we can gain a Plenary Indulgence when we are in danger of dying—even if a priest is not available to hear our Confession and assist us with the Last Rites of the Church. For knowledge of this fact can significantly reduce—if not eliminate altogether—the time that we may have to spend in Purgatory.

The second point that we should be aware of is the fact that we can apply the Indulgences that we earn—either Partial or Plenary—to the Poor Souls in Purgatory. And this can be done for one particular Poor Soul; for a particular group of Poor Souls, for example, all the Poor Souls in our family; or for all the Poor Souls who are now suffering in

Purgatory. It does not follow automatically, though, that if we apply the full merits of a Plenary Indulgence to a particular Poor Soul, then that soul would then be immediately freed from Purgatory. For the Church can apply Indulgences to the Poor Souls in Purgatory only by means of intercession, and not by way of absolution. In other words, all we can do is to request that the merits of our Indulgence will be applied to the Poor Soul(s), who may be the object of our concern, and then let God in His mercy and justice, determine how much punishment should be removed. For the Church itself does not have any authority whatsoever over Purgatory: this is solely God's domain. Nevertheless, we can be confident that if we apply the merits of a Plenary Indulgence to a particular Poor Soul, to a particular group of Poor Souls, or to all the Poor Souls together, then at least some of their suffering will be reduced and their pain alleviated in some way.

Finally, we should be aware that we cannot apply the merits of our Indulgences—be they Partial or Plenary—to any person who may still be living.

Now besides granting us a large store of Plenary Indulgences, the Church also provides us with the means of gaining many Partial Indulgences as well. And the first thing that should be noted and stressed here before we go any further is the fact that there is no limit to the number of Partial Indulgences that we can gain on in a given day. In other words, we can be continually earning Partial Indulgences throughout every hour of the day that we are awake and conscious.

There are two main ways that we can gain Partial Indulgences. The first is through the Four General Grants of Indulgences, and second is by means of several special grants which are attached to several prayers, devotions, holy objects, and litanies.

Let us look now at these Four General Grants of Indulgences. The First General Grant gives us an easy way of putting into practice the command of Christ to pray always. For the Church gives us, through this Grant, a Partial Indulgence to anyone, "Who in the faithful performance of their duties and bearing the trials of life raises their mind with humble confidence to God adding, even if only mentally, some pious invocation," for example, like 'My Lord and My God,' or 'Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation.'" It should be mentioned here, then, that the "Handbook of Indulgences" provides us with some thirty-five of the most common pious invocations that we can adopt for our use in order to help us more efficaciously fulfill the requirements of this Grant. And this is a real treasure that we should take advantage of to the best of our ability.

It is important to be aware of the fact, then, that an invocation or ejaculation, as far as Indulgences are concerned is no longer considered a work complete in itself that can gain for us a Partial Indulgence, like it could before Vatican II. But rather, invocations and ejaculations are now to be understood as something that can compliment, and add to the action by which we raise our hearts and minds to God, while at the same time as we perform the duties of our state in life, or bear the trials of life. Invocations and ejaculations, then, can be a powerful means to help us perfect and purify our daily duties while we try to raise our hearts and mind to God. For this reason, as the "Handbook of Indulgences" puts it so beautifully, "Invocations can not only adorn our ordinary actions

like precious jewels, but they can also season them like salt, so that they will be more pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.”

The Second Grant of Indulgence is intended to serve as an incentive to obey the command of Christ to perform frequent acts of charity and mercy. For a Partial Indulgence is given in this Grant to anyone, who, “in a spirit of faith and mercy gives themselves, or their goods, to their brothers and sisters in need.” So in other words, a Partial Indulgence is granted to us every time that we help a needy person by giving them either food and clothing for their body, or comfort and consolation for their soul.

The Third General Grant is something altogether new in the history of Indulgences. For by this Grant, the Church urges us to put into practice the Lord’s command in the Gospel to deny ourselves, pick up our Cross every day, and then to try to follow in His steps. This command, of course, is not new. But what is new is the fact that we can now receive a Partial Indulgence every time that we make an effort to comply with it.

The Fourth General Grant gives a Partial Indulgence to all of the Christian Faithful who, in the particular circumstances of daily life, voluntarily give explicit witness to their faith before others.

From this brief discussion of the Four General Grants of Partial Indulgence, we can readily see that the faithful daily practice of striving to gain Indulgences can be a speedy means of making great progress in our spiritual life. For by the practice of these Four Grants, we can at one and the same time, turn to God when we: 1.) offer up our sufferings to Him; 2.) care for the poor and the needy; 3.) perform acts of penance and self-denial; and 4.) give witness to our faith before others.

To receive the full benefit of these Four General Grants of Partial Indulgence, however, we should not only make the intention of fulfilling the requirements connected with them; but she should also write down in our daily journal or record book, the date that we made the decision to do this. For remember: in order to gain the full merit of an Indulgence we must not only be aware that a particular prayer or spiritual practice has an Indulgence attached to it, but also we must make an informed decision to gain the merits connected with the performance of that prayer or spiritual practice.

Years of suffering in Purgatory, then, which we have deserved because of our sins can be almost effortlessly wiped away, if we but take the time needed to make the intention to fulfill the minimal requirements of the Four Grants. What’s more, besides the General Grants of Indulgence, the Pope has also attached Partial Indulgences to many prayers. Among the prayers listed in the Handbook, the following may be of special interest to members of the Work of the Holy Angels: The Sign of the Cross, the Angel of God Prayer, the Act of Spiritual Communion, the Memorare, the Magnificat, the Salve Regina, the Litany of the Sacred Heart, the Litany of St. Joseph, and even the practice of spending “some time” in mental prayer.

This goes to show us, then, that many, if not most of the prayers that we have prayed and will be praying during the retreat have an Indulgence attached to them, which adds to their power and intercessory value. For an Indulgence is something that the Church adds on to the merit of certain good works and prayers, over and above to what is already gained by the person performing the approved prayers and devotions. Another way to express this truth, then, is to say that the amount of temporal punishment removed by a prayer, or devotion, or good work is doubled when that prayer, devotion, or good work has an Indulgence attached to it. And so, doing something as simple, then, as making the Sign of the Cross is enough to gain for a Partial Indulgence, which will remove some of the temporal punishment due to our sins, and invariably shorten our time in Purgatory. However, we must remember that in order to gain the full benefit of these prayers and devotions, we must have at least a general intention of gaining the Indulgences that are attached to them.

Finally, we should be aware of the fact that some articles of devotion, such as a Crucifix, or Cross, or a Rosary, or a Scapular, or a medal can, if properly blessed by a priest or deacon, be the occasion for acquiring, not only a Partial Indulgence every time we merely carry them with us, but also a Plenary Indulgence on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, which falls on June 29th. This is another wonderful example, then, of how the Church gently urges us to pay attention to certain days of the year that have special graces attached to them. Graces, which unfortunately often go unnoticed and uncollected, simply because so few people are aware of the treasure trove of graces that are hidden inside of the “Handbook of Indulgences.” A careful reading of this book, then, from cover to cover cannot be recommended too highly.

We have to be careful, though, not to concentrate only on Indulgenced prayers and good works, while at the same time neglecting other prayers and devotions that are not indulgenced. Further, we must be aware that an Indulgence is not, as Pope St. Paul VI once stressed, not just some “easy way” by which we can escape the necessity of doing penance for our sins.

At this point, though, we might be curious to know both how the Church is able to pay the debt of the temporal punishment that is due for our sins, and where the Church gets the spiritual money, so to speak, to do this. Well, first of all, we must be aware that the Pope has received from Jesus Christ Himself, through St. Peter, the first Pope, the “Power of the Keys,” that is, the power to bind and loose sins and the punishment due to sins. For remember, Jesus gave this power to St. Peter when He told Him: “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven; and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven.” And so, the Pope, then, has the authority to, in effect, write off the debt of punishment owed to God for our sins. And he does this through the rules and regulations that he has approved and promulgated for the practice of gaining Plenary and Partial Indulgences.

But this raises the question, though, where does the Pope get the spiritual money that is used to pay off the debt owed to God for our sins, when we gain an Indulgence? The Pope gets this spiritual money from what is called the “Treasury of the Church.” And this

consists of all the graces that have been won for the salvation of all the men and women in the world until the end of time, not only by Jesus Christ Himself by His Passion and Death on the Cross, but also by all the good works done by Mary and the saints.

Now to understand more clearly how this whole process works the following analogy may prove helpful. Suppose, for example, a son is entrusted with managing the estate of his elderly and wealthy father. Suppose further, that the son decides to embezzle some of the money from the estate. However, shortly before he commits this crime, he is caught red-handed, arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to a year in prison for the theft. While the son is serving time in prison, though, he repents, begs his father's forgiveness, and promises to pay back all the money that he stole. The father, then, is so touched by his son's apology that he writes to the judge, and asks him to commute the prison sentence of his son. The judge decides, then, not only because of the petition of the father, but also because of the good behavior of the son while he was in prison, to release him after he had served only four weeks of the one year sentence.

And so, in this little story, then, the guilty son represents a contrite sinner, the prison sentence represents temporal punishment due to sin, the offended father represents God Himself, the judge represents the Pope, and the reduction of the prison sentence represents the removal of the temporal punishment by means of an Indulgence.

For this reason, we can consider, then, each prayer and good work that has an Indulgence attached to it, to be like a kind of check that the Church places in our hands. For with this special check we can make a withdrawal from the spiritual bank account in the Church's treasury, and then pay off the debt of the temporal punishment that we own to God for our sins.

Now no discussion about the granting of and receiving of Indulgences would be complete without some mention of the accusation made by some Protestants that the Church sells, or has sold Indulgences in the past, especially during the time of Martin Luther. For this scandal has given the use of Indulgences a bad name, which persists to the present day. Therefore, it has had the unhappy effect of discouraging some people of taking advantage of the priceless benefits that can be received from the gaining of Indulgences. For the general Protestant notion of an Indulgence is the direct opposite of what an Indulgence truly is. For some Protestants still believe that Catholics sell Indulgences. Further, some believe that an Indulgence is the purchase of a pardon: not only for any and sins that we might have committed in the past, but also for any sins that we might commit in the future. Therefore, some Protestants believe that an Indulgence is the purchase of a pardon that can guarantee our salvation.

Abuses, of course, do happen in almost every sphere of life, even in holy things. And so, it is not surprising to learn, then, that there were abuses connected with the practice of Indulgences in times past. But the Church, it must be stressed, has always corrected these abuses. When we speak of abuses in the practice of Indulgences, though, we must first of all keep in mind that the power to grant Indulgences always must come from the Pope himself. He, however, can also grant to bishops the power to grant certain specified

Indulgences in their diocese. Further, the Pope can grant to certain religious orders the power to grant certain Indulgences as well.

In the fifteen hundreds, then, abuses sometimes took place when these Papal Grants of Indulgence were not used properly; but were used by certain bishops and priests to make money for themselves. For example, among the good works that were indulgenced at the time was that of almsgiving for the poor. And so, sometimes the Indulgenced money that was meant for the poor never got to them, but was rather retained by the priests and bishops to whom it was originally given. In short, without going into all the details of this scandal, abuses did indeed occur, and Indulgences were sold for money. However, it must be stressed, that these abuses were corrected by the Church. And so, there have not been any more scandals connected with the sale of Indulgences in centuries.

Further, we should be aware that the whole system of granting and administering Indulgences was completely revised after the Second Vatican Council by Pope Paul VI. The major revisions made at this time were not only to establish the special Grants of Indulgence, but also to eliminate the practice of attaching a certain number of years or days to the granting of certain Indulgences. For example, we can often find in old prayer books and missals the granting of a three hundred days Indulgence for the praying of a certain litany or the making of a certain devotion. In short, there are now, after the revision made by Pope Paul VI only two kinds of Indulgence, namely, Plenary and Partial. Specifically, then, in regards to Partial Indulgences, their measurement by days and years has now been abolished: only the term “Partial Indulgence” is used at this time.

For this reason, the new standard of measurement depends now on the disposition of the person performing the work attached to the Indulgence—and not on some time span established independently by the Church. So in other words, the amount of temporal punishment due to sin that is removed by a Partial Indulgence depends now—not on the measurement pre-established by the Church, but rather by the actions and intentions of the person performing the work or making the prayer. Or to put it another way, the more zealously, the more lovingly, and the more devoutly that we perform a prayer or action connected with a Partial Indulgence, then the more temporal punishment will be removed by the Lord.

As we can see, then, from this brief summary, there are several benefits that we can gain from the use of Indulgences. For not only can they be the means of removing the temporal punishment due to sin, but they can also, at the same time, give us a greater sense of the seriousness of sin. Further, the practice of gaining Indulgences can give us a clearer understanding of the Church’s teaching on the Mystical Body of Christ, and the Communion of Saints. Finally, the use of Indulgences can lead us to practice more frequent Confession and Communion. In short, Indulgenced prayers and actions are intended to encourage us to continue our spiritual growth, deepen our faith, and profess it in deed, as well as in word, with trust in the mercy and love of God, as we seek to heal the consequences of sin and grow in holiness. And so, let us resolve to gain as many Indulgences as we can every day, so that we will be able to make steady, speedy, and sure progress in our love for God and our neighbor.