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Indulgences for members, relatives, and cooperators of Opus Dei

On certain dates related to the history of the Work and its patrons, members of Opus Dei, their families, and Catholic cooperators can gain plenary and partial indulgences. In this article, we explain how and when.

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1. What is an indulgence?

“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” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1471).

An indulgence is **partial or plenary**, depending on whether it frees the person from the temporal punishment due for sins partially or completely.^[1]

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2. How to obtain a plenary indulgence

Three conditions must be met to gain the plenary indulgence assigned to a particular date, on top of the desire to avoid any mortal or venial sin:

- Sacramental confession
- Eucharistic communion
- Prayer for the Pope’s intentions

These three conditions can be met a few days before or after the designated date, but it is advisable to receive communion and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father on the day enriched with the indulgence. It is only possible to gain one plenary indulgence per day.

Several plenary indulgences can be gained with a single sacramental confession, but only one plenary indulgence is gained with one reception of the Eucharist and prayer for the Holy Father's intentions.^[2]

Indulgences can be applied to oneself or to the souls of the deceased as suffrage, but not to other living persons on earth.

3. Prayers and pious practices that grant indulgences

Likewise, there are many other indulgences granted to all Christian faithful by praying certain prayers and engaging in other pious practices (cf. *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*).

Many of them are included in the spiritual plan of life and customs of the Work. Some of them grant plenary indulgences, including:

- Adoration or prayer before the Tabernacle for at least half an hour;
- Recitating of the Stations of the Cross;
- Praying the Holy Rosary as a family or in a church or oratory, and in general, whenever several faithful gather for a good purpose;
- Reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour.

4. Obtaining indulgences on some feast days and anniversaries

Those faithful of to the Work (provided they fulfill the conditions established by the Church, devoutly renewing their commitments with Opus Dei), and cooperators (if they also, out of devotion, renew their decision to be cooperators), can obtain a plenary indulgence on the following occasions:

- February 14: anniversary of the beginning of the apostolate of Opus Dei with women and of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross;^[3]
- March 19: Solemnity of Saint Joseph;
- June 29: Solemnity of the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul;

- September 14: Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross;
- September 29: Feast of Saint Michael, Saint Gabriel, and Saint Raphael, archangels;
- October 2: anniversary of the foundation of Opus Dei and feast of the Holy Guardian Angels;
- December 27: Feast of Saint John, apostle and evangelist.

In addition, the faithful of Opus Dei can gain a plenary indulgence on the day of their admission, incorporation, and fidelity, as well as on the 25th, 50th, 60th, and 75th anniversaries of admission.

Likewise, cooperators can also gain a plenary indulgence on the day of their enrollment as a cooperator.

5. Plenary indulgences for relatives of Opus Dei faithful^[4] and other people close to the Work

- **On the Feast of the Holy Family:** parents, brothers, and sisters of faithful of Opus Dei, as well as the spouses, children of supernumerary faithful, who participate in a sacred function.
 - **In the Triduum before the solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord and of Easter:** any of the faithful who participate in the liturgical celebrations the Prelature usually organizes on those dates.
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6. Partial indulgences

To obtain partial indulgences, only the general conditions to gain any indulgence are necessary: to be capable (baptized, not excommunicated, and in a state of grace at least at the end of the prescribed works), to have the intention of gaining them (if only in a general way), to fulfill the prescribed works within the established time and in the proper manner, according to the grant, and interior repentance (cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum*, *Normae de indulgentias*, nos. 4 and 17).

In order to imbue daily actions with a Christian spirit, the Church prescribes the works the faithful need to earn partial indulgences in the **four general grants**. A partial

indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who:

- While carrying out their duties and enduring the hardships of life, raise their minds in humble trust to God and make, at least mentally, some pious invocation;
- Led by the spirit of faith, give compassionately of themselves or of their goods to serve their brothers and sisters in need;
- In a spirit of penance, voluntarily abstain from something that is lawful for and pleasing to them;
- In the particular circumstances of daily life, voluntarily give explicit witness to their faith before others.

There are many other specific concessions of partial indulgence for all the faithful, including teaching or receiving Christian doctrine,

attentively and devoutly attending the preaching of the Word of God, participating in a monthly retreat, and devoutly engaging in mental prayer.

It is also possible to obtain a partial indulgence by reciting a short prayer while kissing the wooden cross in Opus Dei oratories, offering one's works to God, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, saying the *Angelus* or *Regina Coeli*, reciting a Marian antiphon on Saturdays, saying the *Adoro te devote*, making a spiritual communion, praying many of the prayers that form part of the *Preces* of the Work, and so on.

Moreover, members of the Work and cooperators enjoy other spiritual benefits from the Prelature, including the petitions made for them daily in the *Preces* and, after their death, the suffrages offered by

the faithful of Opus Dei for the deceased.

[1] Cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum, Normae de indulgentias*, no. 2.

[2] Cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum, Normae de indulgentias*, no. 20.

[3] In April 2014, the Apostolic Penitentiary (the Tribunal of the Holy See responsible, among other things, for the administration of indulgences), by mandate of the Holy Father Francis, indicated that on February 14 and October 2, Opus Dei cooperators can also obtain plenary indulgences, like as the faithful of the Work, who were already able to do.

[4] *Indulgences granted by the Holy See.*

Bibliography

- *Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary Prot. No. 1118/22/I (22 December 2022)* updating the decree *Prot. No. 682/07/I (14th May 2008)*.
- Rescript no. 34/14, dated 28 April 2014.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Two, Article 4: Indulgences.
- *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum Normæ et concesiones, 1999.*
- Rescript no. 17/75 of the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary (12th February 1975).