

Passing through the Holy Door and the Jubilee Plenary Indulgence

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 Archdiocese of Boston, there is only one officially designated Holy Door, which is at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston (Union Park St. side of the church).

To Gain the Jubilee Plenary Indulgence

All members of the Christian Faithful of the Archdiocese of Boston who are truly contrite and moved by the spirit of charity, who wish to seek this indulgence must:

- Be baptized;**
- Be in the state of grace;**
- Have the intention of gaining the indulgence, which includes sorrow for sin;**
- Perform the indulgenced act of passing through a Holy Door of Mercy with devotion and reverence;**
- Be free from all attachment to sin—even venial sin;**
- Make a profession of faith by reciting the Apostles Creed or Nicene Creed;**
- Observe the usual conditions:**
 - 1. Sacramentally confess their sins;**
 - 2. Participate in the celebration of, and receive, the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy;**
 - 3. Pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff, the Pope.**

While these three conditions may be fulfilled several days before or after the performance of the indulgenced work, it is fitting that Communion be received, the prayer for the intention of the Holy Father, and the profession of faith be said on the same day.

Sacramental Confession: A single sacramental confession suffices for several plenary indulgences, but receiving Communion and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father are required for each indulgence. Please note that one can only receive a single plenary indulgence per day.

Prayer for the Pope: Prayer for the Pope's intentions is left to the choice of the faithful, but an *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary* are suggested.

Offering Indulgences for the Holy Souls: Indulgences can always be applied either to oneself or to the souls of the deceased, but they cannot be applied to other persons living on earth.

To schedule a pilgrimage to the Cathedral, please go to <http://holycrossboston.com/jubilee-year/>

To read the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed, please go to http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm

To read the Indulgence Letter from His Holiness Pope Francis, please go to https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150901_lettera-indulgenza-giubileo-misericordia.html

Holy Doors of Mercy in other dioceses include: LaSalette Shrine (Attleboro, MA) and Sacred Heart (Milford, MA).

The Holy Door of Mercy

During the *Holy Year of Mercy*, doors are to be opened in the Cathedrals of the world, *doors of mercy*.

God has been opening doors throughout all of history: He opened the door of Noah's ark, to save mankind from the waters of the flood (Gn 6:16); the doorposts of the houses of the Israelites, to free them from slavery (Ex 12:22); the door of the Temple in Jerusalem, to enter into God's glory and worship (Ez 43:4); the prison door of Peter's cell, to save him from impending death. All these moments in the Bible point to the truth that Jesus himself is the door to our salvation. Christ said, "I am the door" (Jn 10:9). The Wood of the Cross was watered by the Blood of Christ and burst forth as the Tree of Life. When Christ opened wide his arms on the Cross, he opened the door to our salvation. When his disciples went to the tomb on Easter morning, they found an open door—the stone had been rolled away.

During this *Holy Year of Mercy*, God invites us not simply to pass through a door, but to "pass-over" from sin to mercy, from darkness to light, from isolation to communion with God and his Church. **When we "pass-over" this threshold, we encounter Christ who is the merciful face of the Father.** Just as when we turn the doorknob in order to enter the door of a house or a room, when we enter the Holy Door, it is Christ's hand that we take; He leads us. It is his voice we hear, inviting us to be *Merciful like the Father*.

A holy door or *porta sancta* has been used since the fifteenth century as a ritual expression of conversion during jubilee years. Pilgrims and penitents pass through it as a gesture of leaving the past behind and crossing the threshold from sin to grace, from slavery to freedom, and from darkness to light. But the door only finds meaning when we associate the door with Christ. In the words of Pope Francis, "There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God: this is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation. To him alone can the words of the Psalmist be applied in full truth: 'This is the door of the Lord where the just may enter' (Ps 118:20)."

Pope Francis has decreed that those of the Christian Faithful for whom it is impossible to enter the Holy Door:

- **The sick, the elderly, and those confined to their homes**, by living with faith and joyful hope during their trials, may obtain the Jubilee Indulgence by receiving Communion or attending the Holy Mass and community prayer, even through the various forms of media;
- **Those incarcerated** may obtain the Jubilee Indulgence by chapels of the prisons. May the gesture of directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell, signify for them the passage through the Holy Door, because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts, and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom;
- **Those who perform the Spiritual and Corporal works of Mercy.** The Holy Father states, "Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence. Hence the commitment to live by mercy so as to obtain the grace of complete and exhaustive forgiveness by the power of the love of the Father who excludes no one;" and
- **The deceased.** The Holy Father reminds us that we may gain the Jubilee Indulgence not only for ourselves, but for the deceased as well. He states: "...as we remember them in the Eucharistic celebration, thus we can, in the great mystery of the Communion of Saints, pray for them, that the merciful Face of the Father free them of every remnant of fault and strongly embrace them in the unending beatitude."

What is an indulgence? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church (#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."

The *US Catholic Catechism for Adults (p. 244)*: "Every sin has consequences. It disrupts our communion with God and the Church, weakens our ability to resist temptation, and hurts others. The necessity of healing these consequences, once the sin itself has been forgiven, is called temporal punishment. Prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other works of charity can take away entirely or diminish this temporal punishment. Because of the fullness of redemption obtained for us by Christ, the Church attaches to certain prayers and actions an indulgence or pardon, that is, the full or partial remission of temporal punishment due to sin. Christ, acting through the Church, brings about the healing of the consequences of sin when an individual uses such a prayer or engages in such an action."