

20th century Catholic Encyclopaedia stated: *“Here, evidently, the reckoning makes no claim to absolute exactness; it has only a relative value.”* In January 1967 Pope Paul VI issued ‘Indulgentarium Doctrina’ which abolished indulgences for a fixed period of time. He also simplified the rules on indulgences and redrafted the list of works and prayers that might lead to one. The *Enchiridion of Indulgences* – the collection of works and prayers to which indulgences may be attached – was revised, most recently in 1999. In 2022 Pope Francis granted a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions (Sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer in accordance with the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, motivated by a true spirit of penance and charity, participated on 24 July 2022, in the occasion of the Second World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly. The indulgence extended to others who did certain works of charity and mercy that day. Indulgences are very much part of our Catholic faith. Professor Peters, author of “A Modern Guide to Indulgences” (2008), wrote: *“Further study of the Church’s carefully developed doctrine on indulgences can be rewarding and should be encouraged. But ...any Christian who, in a spirit of penitence for sins, asks God for the deeper share in the infinite merits of Jesus Christ that indulgences offer can use them to move ever closer to God — who wants nothing else than for us to be happy with Him forever.”* (Next week: *Whatever Happened to Limbo?*) **-Stephen S.**

Entrance antiphon: O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you; of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face; hide not your face from me, alleluia.

First Reading: Acts 1: 12-14

Psalm 26: Response: I am sure I shall see the Lord’s goodness in the land of the living.

Second Reading: 1Peter 4:13-16

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy. Alleluia!

Gospel: John 17: 1-11

Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: Father, I pray that they may be one as we also are one, alleluia.



Seventh Sunday of Easter

Cycle A, 2023 Weekly Reflection:

Whatever Happened to? (2)

Indulgences: Little is now heard about indulgences. Yet indulgences were a regular part of prayers prior to Vatican II. What is the present position? The

answer is that indulgences remain an essential element of Catholic doctrine. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) tells us that an indulgence is *“...a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven.”* When we go to Confession the guilt of sin is removed, but the temporal punishment required by the sin remains. This temporal punishment must be satisfied after death in Purgatory, but an indulgence gives us the opportunity to satisfy it during our lifetime. The temporal punishment is a purification of the consequences of sin and must not be seen as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God. Further, *“...since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them....”* The roots of spiritual indulgences may be traced to the second century. Famously, in 1095 Pope Urban II granted an indulgence to all who fought in the Crusades. Subsequently, they were extended to those who, unable to become Crusaders, contributed financially to their cause. Undoubtedly there were practices which amounted to an abuse of the granting of indulgences. There were also misconceptions. In 1517 Pope Leo X needed funds to complete the building of St Peter’s Rome. He agreed essentially to franchise indulgences, whereby the franchisee could retain half the price and account to Rome for the other half. This practice contributed to giving indulgences a ‘bad press’. Nevertheless, in the mid-16th century, the Council of Trent declared: *“... the holy synod teaches and ordains that the use of indulgences, ..., shall be retained in the Church; and it further pronounces anathema against those who either declare that indulgences are useless or deny that the Church has the power to grant them ”.* The Second Vatican Council made recommendations for change. One problem was prayers which bestowed, say, 300 days’ indulgence. As the early