



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

How to experience the liberating joy of a Jubilee Indulgence?



The Major Penitentiary of the Catholic Church encourages us to rediscover the virtue of hope during the Holy Year 2025, notwithstanding the current global circumstances.

The Order's international Jubilee pilgrimage will bring together 3,000 Knights and Dames, pre-registered*, in Rome from October 21 to 23, 2025, with a scheduled crossing of the Holy Door at the four Papal Basilicas and an audience with the Holy Father. As part of the preparation for this spiritual event, Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, Member of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and Major Penitentiary of the Catholic Church, explains what the 'indulgence' associated with this 2025 Jubilee centred on the theme of hope represents.

Your Eminence, what is the Apostolic Penitentiary's mission, of which you are responsible on behalf of the Pope?

The Apostolic Penitentiary is the body of the Roman Curia that is responsible for administering God's mercy on behalf of and in the name of the Holy Father.

Legally, it is configured like a tribunal; however, it is a very special one. Here, no one is convicted, for the only sentence that can be issued is forgiveness, dispensation, or grace. Furthermore, it has another unique characteristic: its jurisdiction extends exclusively to the internal forum, which pertains to the intimate sphere of the relationship between the faithful and God. In this realm, the Church's mediation does not aim to regulate the social consequences of such relationships but rather to ensure the good of the faithful and the restoration of their state of grace. For this reason, those who turn to the Penitentiary usually do so through their confessor, and everything is protected by absolute and inviolable confidentiality.

Specifically, the Penitentiary is responsible for: the granting of absolution from reserved censures; dispensation from irregularities in receiving or exercising Holy Orders; the grace of the root cure of an invalidly contracted marriage; and, the reduction of obligations for unfulfilled Mass intentions. More generally, the Penitentiary examines and resolves all moral doubts and cases of conscience submitted to it. The Apostolic Penitentiary is also tasked with overseeing the clergy who serve as confessors in the Papal Basilicas of Rome, known as Minor Penitentiaries.

Finally, the Penitentiary is entrusted with all matters concerning the granting and use of indulgences.



What does the “indulgence” offered by the Church to the faithful represent?

We could define indulgence as the total and fullest gift of God's mercy, which, in a sense, crowns the forgiveness of sins that we receive through absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. While confession grants us the remission of sin, indulgence removes all the “residue” we carry with us as consequences of the sins we have committed.

These are what the Church calls the “temporal punishments” for sins. In practice, when a person of faith receives an indulgence, it is at that precise moment they are emerging anew from the baptismal font, and returning to the original state of grace of Baptism. It is a true miracle of grace!

Thus, we can understand that we should approach this opportunity, offered to us through the Church, with sincere enthusiasm and deep gratitude. The practice of indulgences, far from being a mere relic of the Middle Ages, represents a true treasure rooted in the very mystery of Christ's Redemption. Moreover, the works required to obtain indulgence – whether that be prayers and devotional practices, acts of penance, or deeds of charity – are themselves signs and instruments that inspire and realize the call to personal and communal conversion and enable progress on the path toward holiness.

In short, I like to think of indulgences as the instrument that fully and perfectly manifests and accomplishes the tenderness of God's love for each of us.

On May 13, 2024, the Norms for the Granting of Indulgences during the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025 were published. What do they entail?

The Holy Year represents an extraordinary opportunity for conversion and renewal to achieve full reconciliation with God and with others. Through the Jubilee, the Church, for its part, seeks to fully express its desire to intercede and to do everything within what is granted by the “power of the keys” to help its children in need of purification and forgiveness.

The Norms published by the Penitentiary for obtaining the Jubilee Indulgence outline the methods, practices, and places where this gift of God’s mercy can be received.

To sum everything up briefly, with further details available in the full text, during the upcoming Holy Year, the faithful can obtain a plenary indulgence by fulfilling the conditions required for all plenary indulgences (detachment from all sin, sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayers for the Pope’s intentions) and by performing specific acts aligned with the spirit and theme of the upcoming Jubilee, Peregrinantes in spe (Pilgrims of Hope):

- By making a pilgrimage to Rome, to at least one of the four Papal Basilicas; to the Holy Land; or to one of the Jubilee sacred places designated by bishops in their dioceses.
- By performing works of mercy, that reveal the Church’s maternal care for those in need.
- By engaging in penitential practices.

Hope is the theme of the 2025 Jubilee. How can Members of the Order who participate in this spiritual event rediscover this virtue?

If the granting of indulgences, and more broadly, conversion, spiritual renewal, and the advancement of society in justice and charity, are the goals that move popes to proclaim Holy Years, each Jubilee takes on a specific character through its bull of indiction. This document links these general objectives to the particular needs of the Church and society at the time.

During the Holy Year, Pope Francis seeks to invite the faithful to rediscover, in particular, the virtue of hope and to ‘become pilgrims of hope.’ This is because the political and social events we are experiencing on a global level – such as the many wars, both near and far, which seem to expand their reach daily, the violence inflicted on innocent victims, and the economic difficulties caused by exploitation and social injustice – seem to contradict and stifle, in every way, the yearning for hope that resides in every human heart. On a personal level as well, many of us are weighed down by various worries, unemployment, emotional and family difficulties, to the point where, in some cases, we have lost the hope of rising again.

The Holy Year can be a year of grace and profound renewal, both personal and communal, for everyone. However, this renewal is only achievable when we experience in our lives the encounter with “Christ Jesus, our hope” (1 Tim 1:1). A different world is possible if Christ is in our hearts, if He becomes the compass guiding our lives, and the cornerstone on which we build our hope.

** Registration for this Pilgrimage is closed*

Interview by François Vayne

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