

*An
Indulgence
Primer*



*Cathedral Basilica
of Saint Peter in Chains
Cincinnati, Ohio*

The Title of “Minor Basilica”

With the decree dated June 29, 2020, Pope Francis bestowed on the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Chains the title of “Minor Basilica” as an honor recognizing the historical significance, architectural beauty, and liturgical renown of our Cathedral Church. By virtue of this designation, a minor basilica shares a special relationship with the See of Rome and with the Holy Father. The traditional symbols of a basilica, the *crossed keys*, the *tintinnabulum*, and the *umbraculum*, are visible reminders of this spiritual bond with the universal Church and the Pope.

The Crossed Keys



Jesus entrusted the “keys of the Kingdom of Heaven” to Peter and said to him, “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). The papal emblem of two crossed keys, one silver and the other gold represent the Church’s jurisdiction over heaven and earth and Her twofold power to both bind and loose.

The Tintinnabulum



Traditionally, a small bell mounted on a pole was carried at the beginning of papal processions to announce the coming of the Pope and to summon the faithful to worship. In addition to the bells, the other papal symbols of the tiara and the crossed keys are evident; the chains which are proper to our Cathedral are also present. The union of all these symbols shows the link between our Cathedral and the Holy Father.

The Umbraculum



The umbraculum (sometimes called the ombrellino or pavilion) was used in processions to shelter the Holy Father from the elements. It is a partially closed umbrella made of red and yellow cloth and embroidered with various symbols significant to each basilica. The symbols on our umbraculum are the Coat of Arms of Pope Francis; the Coat of Arms of the Archdiocese, which are based on Bishop Fenwick’s coat of arms; the Coat of Arms of Bishop Purcell, who first built this Cathedral; the Coat of Arms of Archbishop Alter, who renovated and restored the Cathedral in the 1950s; the Coat of Arms of our current Archbishop, Dennis M. Schnurr; the Coat of Arms of the basilica itself; and the seals of the State of Ohio and of the United States.



Dear Parishioners and Visitors to the Cathedral Basilica,

When I first announced to you in my *Rector's Ramblings*, several months ago that our beloved cathedral had been honored with the distinction of being named a Minor Basilica I mentioned that I would take the time at a later date to provide some informative information on privileges granted to this community and all who visit that were gained in the concession. And so today, I wanted to present to you an important element in this grant, that of the Plenary Indulgence ...

Our Church has blessed us with so many tools on our journey to Heaven, we're blessed with an overabundance of riches. So much so, that I think we often forget the riches we have at our disposal. One of these tools is indulgences. So, in an effort to remind all of the treasures of our Church, I hope you enjoy this Indulgence Primer!

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fr. Jan Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the text "Kindest regards,".

Fr. Jan Schmidt
Rector of the Cathedral Basilica



Let us begin with a few quotes from our Code of Canon Law:

What Is an Indulgence?

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. An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead."

Why Do We Need Indulgences?

1472 To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has a double consequence. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the "eternal punishment" of sin. On the other hand, every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the "temporal punishment" of sin. These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain.

1473 The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains. While patiently bearing sufferings and trials of all kinds and, when the day comes, serenely facing death, the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace. He should strive by works of mercy and charity, as well as by prayer and the various practices of penance, to put off completely the "old man" and to put on the "new man."

What Does this Mean?

When we sin, there are two consequences of our sin: the spiritual and temporal. While Confession cleanses us of the spiritual part of our sin, we still need to deal with the temporal consequences of it.

For example, if I break my sister's crystal vase, I must apologize to her for having done so. That's like the spiritual aspect of my sin, which is taken care of in Confession. After I do that and am forgiven, however, there remains the fact that my sister's vase is broken. I need to fix that. That's the temporal consequence of my sin. I have to remedy that situation by either giving her money to buy another vase or by buying her the vase myself.

Each one of our sins has both dimensions. When we steal something, we need to return it. When we gossip or preform the sin of detraction, we need to remedy the damage we've done to that person's reputation. And so on. For some sins, fixing the damage we've done isn't so easy—murder, abortion—or sometimes we just never thought to do it (like with all that gossiping some of us might have done in high school... ahem!). That's where Purgatory comes in. AND Indulgences.

*Note at the end of #1472, "A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain." So, a perfect confession can cleanse both parts of sin

What Is Perfect Contrition?

Perfect Contrition comes from our love for God above all else. We confess and are sorry for our sins purely because they offend God, and not for any other reason.

An Imperfect Contrition, which is also a gift of the Holy Spirit, comes more from a fear of sin's consequences than love for God.

While we all might be thinking, "Don't I always do a perfect contrition?!" we're all much more complicated creatures than we think, and while we may think our motives are pure, there often remain specks of impurities that only God can see. At the end of the day, it's better to be safe than sorry, and this is why Indulgences are such a gift. We can't presume we're making perfect contrition.

How Can I Get An Indulgence?

There are two kinds of Indulgences: Plenary and Partial. A Partial Indulgence remits *part* of the temporal punishment due; a Plenary Indulgence remits *all of it*.

REQUIREMENTS

In order to obtain an Indulgence, we **MUST** do the following things:

- **DESIRE** to obtain the Indulgence: I usually just say before I begin, "Jesus, I'm doing this to obtain a Plenary Indulgence." You can also pray this morning prayer and it should cover you for the day:

O my God, in union with the Immaculate Heart of Mary (*kiss your scapular*), I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus from all the altars throughout the world, joining with it the offering of my every thought, word, and action of this day. O my Jesus, I desire today to gain every indulgence and merit I can and I offer them, together with myself, to Mary Immaculate, that she may best apply them in the interests of Thy Most Sacred Heart. Precious Blood of Jesus, save us! Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us! Amen.

- **CONFESS.** You have to go to confession "several" days before or after you perform the indulgenced act. Traditionally, this was 8-10 days, although in the Great Jubilee Year of 2000, the amount of days was increased to 20, and that decision remains intact. Note: You must be in a state of grace to obtain a plenary indulgence. This means, at the time you perform the indulgenced act, you must be free from all attachment to sin. You can't be mad at people, hold grudges, hate anyone, etc. Confess it all and let it go!
- **COMMUNION.** Receive Holy Communion. During Mass is preferable, although otherwise is allowed. The day of the indulgenced act is also preferred, but not required.
- **PAPAL INTENTIONS.** You must pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. This is not praying for the Pope, himself, but for his intentions, which he releases each month. You don't need to know what they are—God knows. An Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be suffice.

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- We can only obtain one plenary indulgence a day. EXCEPT on the day we die, when we can get two.
- We can only offer indulgences for our own sins or for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. (See below about the Heroic Act of Charity.)
- If you strive to gain a Plenary Indulgence, but fail to fulfill all the requirements, the indulgence will be only partial.
- For the sake of those legitimately impeded, confessors can commute both the work prescribed and the conditions required (except detachment from even venial sin).

INDULGENCED ACTS

There are many acts to which our Holy Mother Church has attached indulgences. Here are a few easy ones. Feel free to add more in the com box!

- 1. ADORATION.** Spend at least 30 minutes in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It needn't be exposed, as it is in a Monstrance. Jesus can be residing in the Tabernacle as you spend time with Him. But exposition is ok, too.
- 2. SCRIPTURE.** Spend at least 30 minutes reading Sacred Scripture, as spiritual reading, with the veneration due to the Word of God.
- 3. STATIONS.** Do the Stations of the Cross. This requires that you walk from Station to Station in Church. No specific prayers are required, but devout meditation on the Passion and Death of Our Lord is required.
- 4. ROSARY.** Pray the Rosary (at least 5 decades), with devout meditation on the Mysteries, in addition to the vocal recitation. There are conditions to this: you must be in a church or chapel, or else praying with your family, a religious community or a pious association (like the Rosary Confraternity). The five decades must be prayed without interruption; meditation on the mysteries must be added to the vocal recitation; and in public recitation the mysteries must be announced according to approved local custom.

Other Indulgenced acts include:

- Performing spiritual exercises of at least three days.
- Those who make their first Communion or who assist at another's first Communion.
- Celebrating or assisting at a priest's first solemn Mass, or at his 25th, 50th or 60th anniversary Mass.
- Visiting a church or altar on the day of its dedication and praying an Our Father and a Creed.
- Renewing your baptismal promises during the Easter Vigil or on the anniversary of our baptism.
- Devoutly receiving a papal blessing in person or through live transmission by radio, television or Internet. (Thanks, EWTN!)
- Each Friday during Lent, we can obtain a plenary indulgence by piously reciting the prayer "Look down Upon Me, Good and Gentle Jesus" after Communion, before an image of Christ crucified.

An important note: "Apart from the plenary indulgences, Catholics do well to be aware that **most of their habitual prayers, sacrifices and habitual service to others, from the sign of the cross to the Hail Mary, are endowed with partial indulgences** which increase their weight before God and give them an opportunity to exercise selfless charity in offering their prayers in benefit of the souls in purgatory."

*The norms given here are from the official Enchiridion of Indulgences (1968) and the Apostolic Constitution The Doctrine of Indulgences (1967).

How Does One Receive An Indulgence at the Cathedral Basilica?

By devoutly visiting the cathedral basilica on one of the following days and within it participate in any sacred rite or at least recite the *Lord's Prayer* and the *Profession of Faith* (the Creed), the faithful may obtain a Plenary Indulgence under the usual conditions of sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff, all as previously described above.

The days upon which one may receive the Plenary Indulgence are as follows:

1. On the anniversary of the first dedication of the basilica,
November 2
2. On the anniversary of the re-dedication of the basilica;
November 3
3. On the day of the liturgical celebration of the title,
August 1
4. On the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles, the same day as the anniversary of the granting of the basilica title,
June 29
5. Once a year on a day to be determined by the local bishop,
January 24
*Feast of St. Francis de Sales,
Principal Patron of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati*
6. Once a year on a day freely chosen by each of the faithful.

I hope this is a help, now go get some indulgences!

Liturgical Schedule

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil at 3:00pm
Sunday at 9:00am, 11:00am & 5:00pm

WEEKDAY MASS

Monday through Friday at 7:00am, 11:30am & 5:15pm
Saturday at 11:30am

CONFESSION TIMES

Monday through Friday 7:30-7:45am;
12noon-12:30pm; 4:30-5:00pm
Saturday: 12noon - 2:00pm

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Fridays: 12noon - 5:00pm ending with Benediction



The present **Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains** is the third for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Built in 1845, this cathedral, which honors the imprisoned St. Peter, was extensively renovated and enlarged in 1957.

Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati intended to build a cathedral in Greek Revival style. The architect copied details from several classical Greek buildings, including Horologium (the Tower of the Winds) of Adronikos Cyrrhestes, and the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates at Athens.

The original building extended only as far as the west side of the present transepts. The renovation, completed in 1957, saw the addition of two transepts, sanctuary, sacristies, convent, rectory and parish offices. The pattern of the transepts follows that of the Athenian Erechtheion with its North and Caryatid porches. The exterior of the cathedral is Dayton Limestone. The great tower, surrounded on three sides by a colonnade of 12 columns, reaches 221 feet above the atrium.

Within the cathedral, Imperial black marble, cream Tavernelle and green Verte Issorie marble are found. In the narthex, the carved screen is Honduras mahogany and hollow relief carved glass. The six panels have figures of the four evangelists, St. Jude and St. James the Less. To the left is a bronze figure of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; to the right, a relief of St. Joseph. In renovating the third cathedral, then-Archbishop Karl J. Alter used local artists as much as possible.

The nave is dominated by the figures of the Way of the Cross on the side walls. These reflect the style of the painted vases of the Greek Archaic period. With each panel, the Tree of Life rises to give form to the scene.

The stone tracery of the windows is formed by two symbols of St. Peter: the crossed keys and the cross. Stylized angels and classical Greek designs in white, black, gold and terra cotta ornament the entablature above the columns. The nave is 72 feet wide, 120 feet long and 50 feet high. Seating capacity in the cathedral is 1200.

The sanctuary is dominated by a golden mosaic of Christ seated in glory. With His hand raised in blessing, He gives the keys of authority to Peter. To the left, Peter is shown imprisoned in chains in Jerusalem; to the right, he is imprisoned at the Mamertine prison in Rome with Paul. In the center is a quotation from the Acts of the Apostles:

“Peter was being kept in prison...bound with chains” (12:5,6). As a complete architectural unit, the mosaic is one of the largest in the United States.

To the left of the altar is the archbishop’s cathedra or chair, the sign of his teaching authority in the archdiocese. It is because the archbishop’s cathedra is here that the building gets its designation as cathedral.

The sanctuary carpet has a central design of the coat of arms of Archbishop Alter, who restored the cathedral. At either side of the sanctuary are pulpits of Tavernelle marble, ornamented with bronze symbols of the Evangelists. The Eighth Street entrance is surmounted by a figure of St. Peter. Inside, the baptistry window is a rainbow of color dominating the chapel, measuring 47 feet wide, 28 feet long and 37 feet high.

The Blessed Sacrament chapel’s dominant colors come from the black marble and gold leaf of the altar. The Latin text above the reredos says, “Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us.” Placed in the inset are the Greek symbols for “Jesus Christ, the Victor.” To the left of the sanctuary is a bronze relief of St. Pius X, and to the right, one of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Built in 1957, the cathedral basilica organ has two consoles and more than 3,000 pipes located in the front and rear galleries.

Bishop Joseph Binzer was the 25th bishop to be consecrated in the cathedral. Archbishop John Baptist Lamy was ordained a bishop here on November 24, 1850. He was immortalized in Willa Cather’s novel, “Death Comes for the Archbishop” and in Paul Horgan’s “Lamy of Santa Fe.”

St. John Neumann was a co-consecrator at the cathedral for his successor as bishop of Philadelphia. Bishop Neumann was canonized in 1977, and a figure of him hangs in the baptistry.

In September, 1976, then-Archbishop Joseph Bernardin welcomed Cardinal Karol Wojtyla to the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains. Two years later, the cardinal became Pope John Paul II. He was canonized a saint in April, 2014.

June 29, 2020, Pope Francis designated the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains a minor basilica.

Coat of Arms of the Cathedral Basilica

The coat of arms of the cathedral church of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati evokes its dedication to God in honor of Saint Peter in Chains.



The crossed keys represent Saint Peter, alluding to the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18-19: "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ... I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven." The chains recall Peter's imprisonments, first in Jerusalem (Acts 4, 5, and 12) and finally in Rome. Keys and chains are found as decorative motifs throughout the cathedral.

The colors of the arms, red and gold, are the ancient colors of the church of Rome, "the See of Peter," and of the coat of arms of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The red and gold processional canopy or umbraculum above the shield indicates that on June 29, 2020, the solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Pope Francis designated this historic church a "minor basilica." The umbraculum is a canopy formerly carried over the pope, now used as an emblem of the Holy See and of churches honored with the title of "basilica," a term originally used for the major churches of Rome.

The gold and silver keys crossed and joined by a red cord are one of the oldest heraldic emblems of the pope who, as successor of Saint Peter, holds the keys of authority to bind and loose on earth and in heaven (Matthew 16:19). Placed behind the shield of the cathedral, the keys indicate that the dignity of a minor basilica was conferred upon this church by the authority of the Holy See.

Below the shield is the motto of the cathedral: "IN VINCULIS VINCO," "In chains, I conquer!" The motto expresses the confidence, inspired by the example of Saint Peter, that, even when bound with chains and condemned to death, in Christ we are victorious.

In the technical language of heraldry, the arms of the cathedral are described as: *Or two Keys in saltire wards upward and outward within an orle of Chains Gules the ecu ensigned by a basilical Pavilion proper and two Keys in saltire wards upward and outward Or and Argent corded Gules.*