

PREFACE

This Catechism aims at combining the old with the new. Of the old, it retains the text of the Revised Baltimore Catechism, Number Two. This is still the standard text for the middle and upper grades of grammar school in most dioceses.

But there is much that is new. In addition to the recent Supplement added to the Official Text by the Episcopal Committee, there are abundant explanations given to help the children understand the difficult parts of each lesson. It is usually the practice to have the children memorize the answers in the text, but this is of comparatively little value if the children do not understand well what they are memorizing. The explanatory material has been adapted to the age and general intelligence of children in the upper grades of grammar school.

Pictures have been used profusely throughout to aid the children both in understanding each lesson and in the memory work involved, since pictures always help the memory process.

To give life to the formulas in which the doctrine is expressed, Sacred Scripture has been used extensively, since in the Scriptures we find presented to us by the Holy Spirit the living figure of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Heart and Center of the Catechism, besides being its invisible Author.

To help the children use what they have learned in their relationship with God, constant use has been made of the Sacred Liturgy. The Catholic Faith can be better understood only when it is lived and expressed.

The primary law of Christ, His new law of charity, is the keynote of the whole Catechism.

It is hoped that with the aid of this New St. Joseph Edition of the Baltimore Catechism the teacher will find it easier to present to the children not only the verbal expression of the teachings of our Faith, but the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14, 6).

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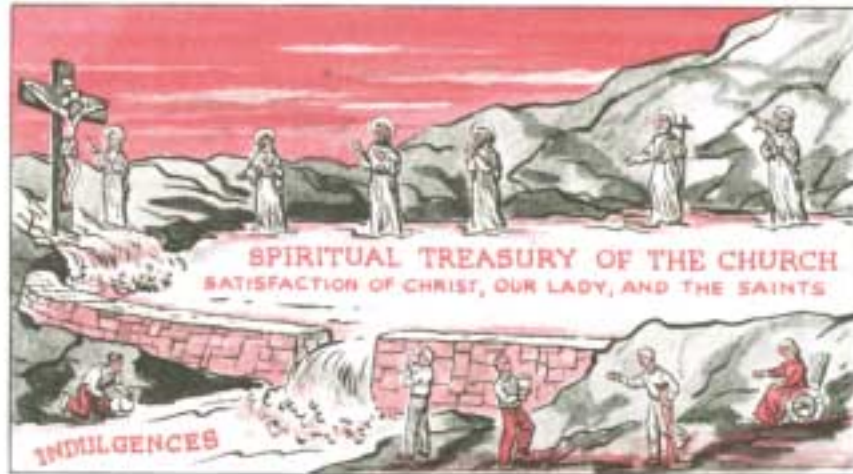
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LESSON 33 — Temporal Punishment and Indulgences



435. What is an indulgence?

An indulgence is the remission granted by the Church of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.

After sin has been healed by the medicine of the sacrament of Penance, the wounds left by sin must be healed by the further medicine of temporal punishment (See page 200.)

An indulgence remits punishment. In other words it removes the need for the bitter medicine of suffering and substitutes an easier but more effective one to assist and even complete the healing process.

As a medicine to heal the soul, indulgences are better than our own acts of self-denial and the acceptance of suffering. But as fuel to make the fires of love grow — which is much more important than mere healing — suffering is much better.

436. How many kinds of indulgences are there?

There are two kinds of indulgences, plenary and partial.

437. What is a plenary indulgence?

A plenary indulgence is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to our sins.

A plenary indulgence heals completely the damage to the soul done by sin so that there is no longer any need of temporal punishment.

438. What is a partial indulgence?

A partial indulgence is the remission of part of the temporal punishment due to our sins.

A partial indulgence hastens the healing process. A 300 days indulgence, for example, has the healing power of 300 days of great bodily penance, such as was customary in the early church.

439. How does the Church by means of indulgences remit the temporal punishment due to sin?

The Church by means of indulgences remits the temporal punishment due to sin by applying to us from her spiritual treasury part of the infinite satisfaction of Jesus Christ and of the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints.

The satisfaction of Jesus Christ means the power of His Precious Blood to make up for our sins and to heal all the wounds left by sin. It is like a great reservoir of medicine He has left for us to draw on as we need it. This is the spiritual treasury of the Church.

440. What is the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints?

The superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints is that which they gained during their lifetime but did not need, and which the Church applies to their fellow members of the communion of saints.

Mingled with the Precious Blood of Christ in the treasury of the Church are the sorrows of Mary and the sufferings of the saints as they bore their crosses after Christ. These were the healthy members of the Mystical Body of Christ who were able to help sinners, the sick members. We can draw on this treasury and we can also contribute to it. The sufferings we bear through love can help others.

441. What must we do to gain an indulgence for ourselves?

To gain an indulgence for ourselves we must be in the state of grace, have at least a general intention of gaining the indulgence, and perform the works required by the Church.

To gain a plenary indulgence we must be free from all sin, since an indulgence applies only to the healing of wounds left by sin, not to the healing of sin itself. We must also be free from any intention to commit sin or to stay in an occasion of sin.

442. Can we gain indulgences for others?

We cannot gain indulgences for other living persons, but we can gain them for the souls in purgatory, since the Church makes most indulgences applicable to them.

Living persons are in a position to help themselves, but the souls in purgatory are not. (See Lesson 13.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is temporal punishment?
2. What is the spiritual treasury of the Church?
3. Why must we be in the state of grace to gain an indulgence?
4. What is the satisfaction of Jesus Christ?
5. Why cannot those in venial sin gain a plenary indulgence?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER:

1. Indulgences take away: (a) sins (b) penance (c) temporal punishment. ☐
2. Indulgences act on the soul like: (a) medicine (b) confession (c) penance. ☐
3. Indulgences complete the process of: (a) healing (b) suffering (c) loving. ☐
4. One in mortal sin can gain: (a) plenary (b) partial (c) no indulgences. ☐
5. We can gain indulgences for others: (a) on earth (b) in purgatory (c) in heaven. ☐

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

1. There are two kinds of indulgences: and
2. We can gain indulgences only for ourselves and for
.....
3. The satisfactions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the other saints can be applied to our souls because of that circulation of graces through the Mystical Body of Christ which we call
4. When we gain an indulgence, we draw on the
of the Church.
5. Indulgences are granted by

READ FROM THE BIBLE:

Heb. 12, 1-13; 1 Pet. 1, 3-7. Here suffering is shown as a purification of the effects of sin (temporal punishment).

CLASS PROJECT:

Find prayers or actions to which indulgences are attached, especially plenary indulgences.

PRAYER:

I wish to gain all the indulgences attached to the prayers I shall say and to the good works I shall perform this day. (Recommended to be said after the morning offering.)