

Apostolic Pardon

The Apostolic Pardon (or blessing) is an indulgence given in situations of danger of death, usually after the absolution of the sacrament of penance. The focus is on the remission of temporal punishment due to sin. The words of the prayer explain the meaning of the act: “Through the holy mysteries of our redemption may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.” Or “By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me, I grant you a full pardon and the remission of all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

The Handbook of Indulgences #28 states: “Priests who minister the sacraments to the Christian faithful who are in a life-and-death situation should not neglect to impart to them the apostolic blessing, with its attached indulgence. But if a priest cannot be present, holy mother Church lovingly grants such persons who are rightly disposed a plenary indulgence to be obtained in articulo mortis, at the approach of death, provided they regularly prayed in some way during their lifetime. The use of a crucifix or a cross is recommended in obtaining this plenary indulgence. In such a situation the three usual conditions required in order to gain a plenary indulgence are substituted for by the condition 'provided they regularly prayed in some way.'”

Rev. Mark J. Gantley, JCL
December 17, 2007