



## Guidelines for Indulgences offered to Members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

### What is an indulgence?

According to the Doctrine of Indulgences ([Indulgentiarum Doctrina](#)), issued by Pope Saint Paul VI on January 1, 1967, “An indulgence is the remission before God of the temporal punishment due sins already forgiven as far as their guilt is concerned, which the follower of Christ with the proper dispositions and under certain determined conditions acquires through the intervention of the Church which, as minister of the Redemption, authoritatively dispenses and applies the treasury of the satisfaction won by Christ and the saints.”

An indulgence may be either partial or plenary, the former removing part, and the latter removing all of the temporal punishment for sins. Gaining an indulgence requires re-establishing one's friendship with God by making a confession, receiving Communion, and praying for the intentions of the Pope. In addition, it requires one to perform the work to which the indulgence is attached.

### Indulgences Granted to Members of the Society

Pope Gregory XVI in 1845, and also Blessed Pope Pius IX in 1853 both enriched the Society with Indulgences, which were later modified and extended through rescripts by themselves and several later Popes. Active or Associate Members of the Society may gain a plenary indulgence on the day of their admission to the Society, and when participating in a Festival Meeting. In each case, in addition to fully and faithfully participating in these events, the Member must:

- Make their Confession
- Receive Holy Communion
- Pray for the intentions of the Pope
- Promise to observe faithfully the Rule of the Society

According to the original Rule and the Society's tradition, Vincentians celebrate Festival Meetings and Conference Masses. The Rule, Part III: Statute 9, clarifies:

Conferences and Councils, celebrate liturgical ceremonies, particularly Vincentian ceremonies throughout the year, endeavoring to maintain a spirit of friendship among the members. The Council of the United States has designated six days for religious observances. On these occasions the members of Conferences and Councils demonstrate the spiritual nature of the Society by attending the Eucharist together:

- Ozanam Sunday (the last Sunday of April)
- The feast day of Blessed Frederic Ozanam (September 9)
- The feast day of St. Vincent de Paul (September 27)
- The Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the Society (December 8)
- A Conference Mass celebrated at least once a year for all members, including spouses and children. During this Mass, it is most appropriate to commission new members into the Conference, pray for those we have visited, pray for our benefactors, pray for the poor, pray for deceased members, and for continued good work.
- Another feast day of local custom, e.g. the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12)