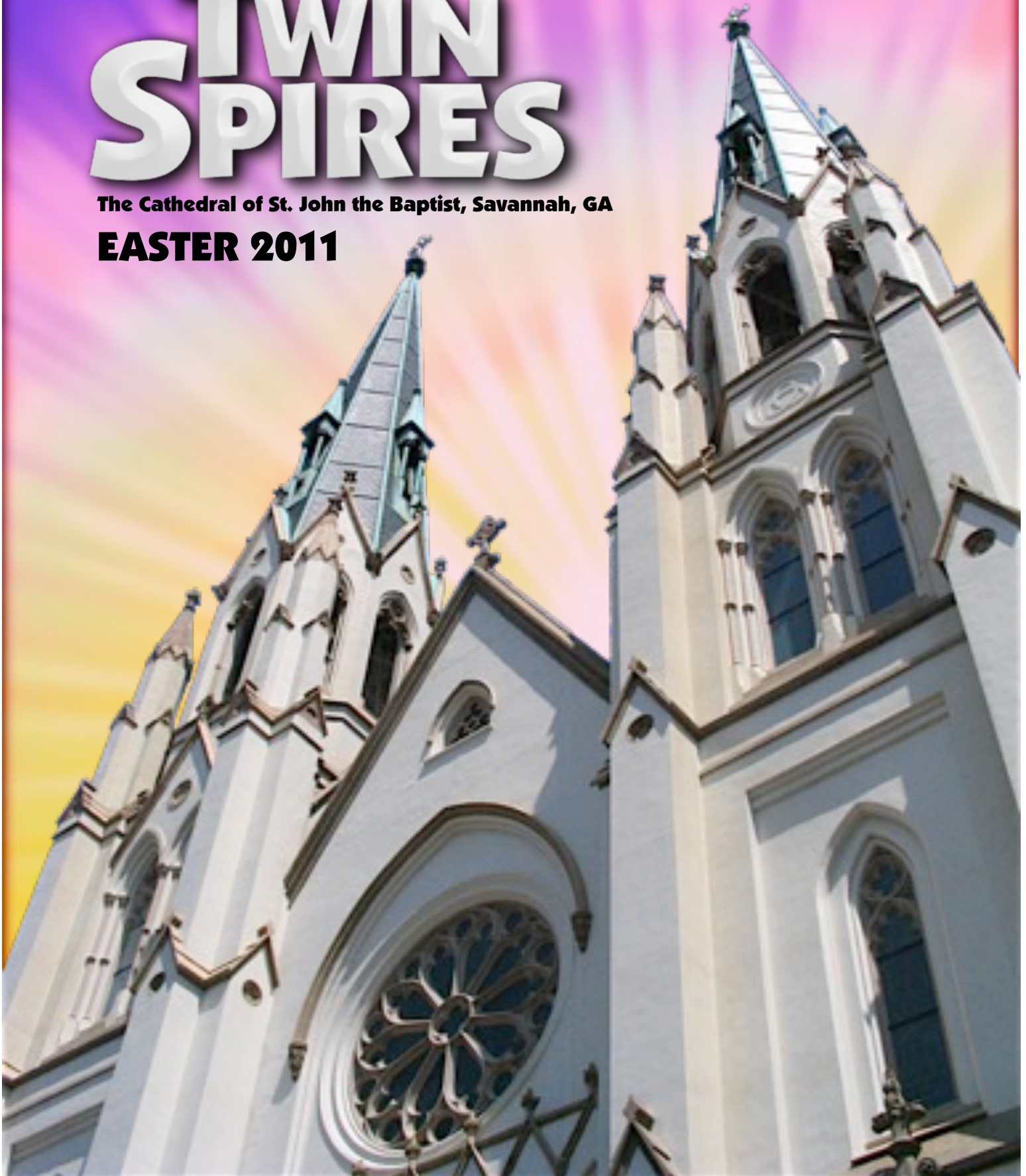


THE TWIN SPIRES

The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, GA

EASTER 2011

He is Risen



Pope Benedict's XVI Message for 48th World Day of Prayer for Vocations

The 48th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, to be celebrated on 15 May 2011, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, invites us to reflect on the theme: *Proposing Vocations in the Local Church*. Priests and members of the lay faithful are urged to respond to the call of the Good Shepherd who said “The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest!” (*Mt* 9:36-38).

The work of carefully encouraging and supporting vocations finds a source of inspiration in those places in the Gospel where Jesus calls his disciples to follow him and trains them with love and care. Before Jesus called his closest associates to proclaim the Kingdom of God (cf. *Lk* 10:9) He prayed for them. Before calling them, Jesus spent the night alone in prayer, listening to the will of the Father (cf. *Lk* 6:12).

It is Jesus' intimate conversation with the Father which results in the calling of his disciples. Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life are first and foremost the fruit of constant contact with the living God and insistent prayer lifted up to the “Lord of the harvest”, whether in parish communities, in Christian families or in groups specifically devoted to prayer for vocations.

The Church is “called to safeguard this gift of the ordained ministry and, in the consecrated life, to esteem it and love it. She is responsible for the birth and development of priestly vocations” (John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 41).



Particularly in these times, when the voice of the Lord seems to be drowned out by “other voices,” and his invitation to follow him by the gift of one's own life may seem too difficult, every Christian community, every member of the Church, needs consciously to feel responsibility for promoting vocations. It is important to encourage and support those who show clear signs of a call to priestly life and religious consecration, and to enable them to feel the warmth of the whole community as they respond “yes” to God and the Church.

It is essential that every local Church become more sensitive and attentive to the pastoral care of vocations, helping children and young people in particular at every level of family, parish and associations — as Jesus did with his disciples — to grow into a genuine and affectionate friendship with the Lord, cultivated through personal and liturgical prayer. “Proposing Vocations in the Local Church” means having the courage, through an attentive and suitable concern for vocations, to point out this challenging way of following Christ which,

because it is so rich in meaning, is capable of engaging the whole of one's life.

The Second Vatican Council explicitly reminded us that the duty of fostering vocations pertains to the whole Christian community, which should exercise it above all by a fully Christian life. I wish to say a special word of acknowledgment and encouragement to those who work closely in various ways with the priests in their parishes. In particular, I turn to those who can offer a specific contribution to the pastoral care of vocations: to priests, families, catechists and leaders of parish groups. I ask priests to testify to their communion with their bishop and their fellow priests, and thus to provide a rich soil for the seeds of a priestly vocation. May families be animated by the spirit of faith and love and by the sense of duty, which is capable of helping children to welcome generously the call to priesthood and to religious life. May catechists and leaders of Catholic groups and ecclesial movements, convinced of their educational mission, seek to guide the young people entrusted to them so that these will recognize and freely accept a divine vocation.

The ability to foster vocations is a hallmark of the vitality of a local Church. With trust and perseverance let us invoke the aid of the Virgin Mary, that by the example of her own acceptance of God's saving plan and her powerful intercession, every community will be more and more open to saying “yes” to the Lord who is constantly calling new laborers to his harvest.

EASTER JOY A VICTORY OVER EVIL

The resurrection of Jesus Christ should remind us all that however dark the horizon may seem, on Easter we will celebrate the radiant triumph of Easter joy. The lesson of Christ's resurrection should lead to a new life and a new encouraging service. The triumph of Jesus over sin and the evils that humans learned, as well as over death itself, means that after the resurrection, it can never be business as usual.

The resurrection announced a new way of behaving, a new way of loving, a new way of serving and how we could all be bound by peace. Christ's rising from death and destruction should make us all realize that change must start within ourselves. The victory of Jesus concerns the victory of the world over all evil—sin, injustice, violence, war and death—but this victory must first and foremost begin in us.

When we pick up the paper or turn on the television each day, we are bombarded by many problems, throughout the country and the world, which may seem insurmountable. But despite these problems, we should not despair and fear for the future, because good and hope will triumph in the end. We should take courage and inspiration from Christ's resurrection.

Let no one yield to dismay and lack of trust. By His death, Jesus has crushed and triumphed over the iron-clad law of death, eliminating its poisonous root forever. When our Lord suffered and made the supreme sacrifice of giving His life for us in the dark hours of Good Friday, He also brought forth our salvation and the possibility of our rebirth to life eternal by vanquishing death when He rose from the grave three days later.

May this wonderful story of our Lord's triumph over death, inspire us again to embrace the endless truths of our faith. Easter Sunday should be an occasion to celebrate redemption, restoration and renewal.

(Abstracted from last year's Easter Message by the Filipino Bishops to their faithful, which seems particularly uplifting in these troubled times.)—CathNews Philippines



How did the fire start?

By Peter Paolucci

As a tour guide, I have been asked many times, how did the fire, which destroyed the Cathedral back in 1898, really begin?

Even though the booklet, *The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, GA 1799-1902* claims that “No assignable cause for the fire has ever been given, and no one will probably ever know how it commenced,” I recently posed this question to Monsignor O’Neill who proceeded to take me down into the bowels of the Cathedral, to view the site of the old boiler pit, below the floor of the sanctuary, the presumed origin of the fire. Although it was never definitively confirmed by the Fire Department, Monsignor O’Neill says that they are pretty sure the fire started in the boiler pit.

Attendees at Mass on Sunday evening February 6, 1898 reported that the church was extremely hot during the service. Viewing the site of the old boiler with Monsignor O’Neill, it seems very likely that an overheated boiler ignited the wooden timbers in the sanctuary floor above and started the fire which consumed the Cathedral.

However, in doing research for this story, I ran across the following article from the *New York Times*, datelined Savannah, Ga., February 6, which proclaimed, “The Cathedral of St John the Baptist, the seat of the Catholic Diocese of Georgia, burned to the ground tonight. The shower of sparks that was carried up in the heat for an hour or more made a grand spectacle. The fire started in the organ loft and spread rapidly through the church.” Clearly their view of the cause of the fire is in conflict with Monsignor O’Neill’s opinion, which I am inclined to accept. Perhaps the *New*



York Times didn’t check their facts back then either.

In the local press, the *Savannah Morning News* reported: “Between 10 and 11 PM, the Cathedral caught fire and was almost totally destroyed.

“The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, one of the most magnificent and imposing structures of Savannah, upon which years of toil and thousands of dollars have been spent, is a mass of ruin and nothing remains but its four walls and indestructible parts of its two tall spires.

“The conflagration that swept it away before the hour of midnight was frightful in its grandeur and pitiable in its magnificence. It seemed to blot out in a moment, the work of years. The fire was discovered about ten minutes before 11 o’ clock by a motorman of the City and Suburban Railway, who was coming through the square with his car. The cry of fire attracted the

attention of others at once and the alarm was turned in very quickly from box No. 27 at Price and Harris streets.”

While the *Savannah Press* stated, “Years of work by scores of men burned in the presence of thousands in less than two hours. It was as though God had wanted to test the mettle of His Cathedral flock. City firemen, dog tired after battling the Traub fire Saturday night, were then engaged in fighting a great riverfront fire along River and Williamson Streets. The entire department was there.

“Evening services had concluded a short while before and Reverend Benjamin J. Keiley, Rector, had boarded the Central of Georgia night train for a business trip to Atlanta. When the alarm

came there was no apparatus of any moment at any of the engine houses to respond. Two or three hose wagons answered at once and the hoses were attached to the neighboring plugs. The pressure from the plugs however, due to the heavy use of the

water at the other fire, was scarcely sufficient to throw a stream across the street. Firemen holding one of the streams stood on the Harris Street sidewalk, just outside the fence surrounding the Cathedral and found it barely strong enough to reach the first window sill. The already worn out firemen let the flames satisfy their hunger in the church. Thousands watched in horror and shock.



Fortunately the Bishop's residence was spared."

Gillian Brown and the diocesan archives' volunteers recently uncovered this news report from the Savannah Morning News, dated Tuesday, February 8, 1898 which should put the fire origin matter to rest, "There seems to be a well-founded theory now that the fire really started in the basement of the building, and not in the organ loft as previously stated. Mr. L. Putzel, who lives just across the street, first saw the blaze in the basement when his attention was attracted to it.

"Between the tiers of steps there are two small windows and the flames were apparent through these. From the basement, it would appear, the fire wound its way around up into the organ loft through a staircase which acted as a flue. These facts lead to the belief now that the fire was due to some defect in the furnaces, which were in the basement, and that it found its way at once up toward the organ loft as the easiest outlet from that part of the building. This seems now to be the more frequently accepted theory of its origin, especially since no lighted candle is ever kept in the organ loft, there being no need for it."

Father Keiley, later to become Bishop, received a wire on the train advising him of the destruction. He left the train at Millen and returned to Savannah, arriving at dawn to behold the sad spectacle of the smoking ruin, where the mighty Cathedral had once stood.

Catholics had sustained the loss of a church edifice, which with its contents represented an expenditure of \$175,000 to \$200,000. Insurance was only \$60,000, out of which a parish debt of \$18,000 had to be paid, leaving only \$42,000 for rebuilding the Cathedral. Against the gloomy background and

with the embers still smoldering, Bishop Thomas Becker declared, "The Cathedral must be rebuilt and as soon as possible." Thus the Savannah Catholics threw themselves into the momentous task of rebuilding another St. John the Baptist, as beautiful as its predecessor. Bishop Becker solicited funds from his brother bishops throughout the country and E. Francis Baldwin rebuilt the Cathedral, within the framework of the original walls, at a cost of \$150,000.

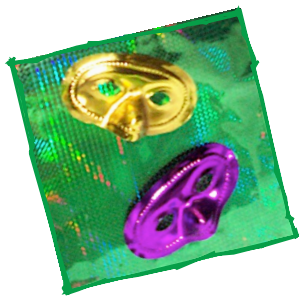
The inscription at the base of the Blessed Sacrament Altar in the Sacred Heart Chapel, "From His priests to the Great High Priest" is in honor of the bishops and priests in the USA who responded to Bishop Becker's plea for funds to help rebuild the Cathedral after the fire. Young Fitzhugh Lee White, six year old son of Rev. Robb White, Rector of Christ Church, was the first to contribute, donating \$5, the entire contents of his piggy bank.

The rebuilt Cathedral was dedicated on Sunday morning October 28, 1900, a fitting celebration for the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Savannah.

True or False? All the décor elements in the Cathedral were destroyed by the fire in 1898 except for the stained glass window in the front of The Blessed Virgin Chapel. Tune in next issue for the answer

PARISH SUPPER WHETS APPETITE FOR MORE

The February Parish Supper sponsored by the CCW was a wonderful success with over seventy parishioners attending. As always, the Parish provided two meats while the parishioners brought covered dishes and desserts. Pat Cook and Joyce Piersanti decorated with an inviting “Mardi Gras” theme. What made this parish supper so enjoyable, was that everyone stayed and talked. True fellowship and great food made for a fun Wednesday night. Plan to attend the next Parish Supper. Dates will be posted in the bulletin.



Mary Downs and Carol Letcher set the table



Peter Paolucci (right) welcomes new neighbors Traci Nelson and Louis D'Angelo

Thank You, Sister Pauline

Like most of you, I read with sadness that Sister Pauline O'Brien will be retiring as Director of the Social Apostolate. She has been a blessing to the Diocese of Savannah and has motivated all of us to care more about our less fortunate brethren. As St. Matthew said, “As long as you did it for my least brothers, you did it for me.” Matthew 25:40. Christians are called to live lives of love in response to the Lord’s love on Calvary. Helping the poor gives us the opportunity love Jesus every day.

In her recent talk to the Serra Club, Sister Pauline reflected on the lessons she learned from her mother, who prayed to God for her daily needs, trusting that the Lord would provide. She certainly took those lessons to heart, gaining a sense of gratitude for her gifts, a responsibility for using them well and resourcefulness for working hard and trusting that God would provide.

Bishop Boland remarked upon her unique qualities which enabled her to be successful in directing the Social Apostolate for the past 12 years. “She had an innate respect for the human

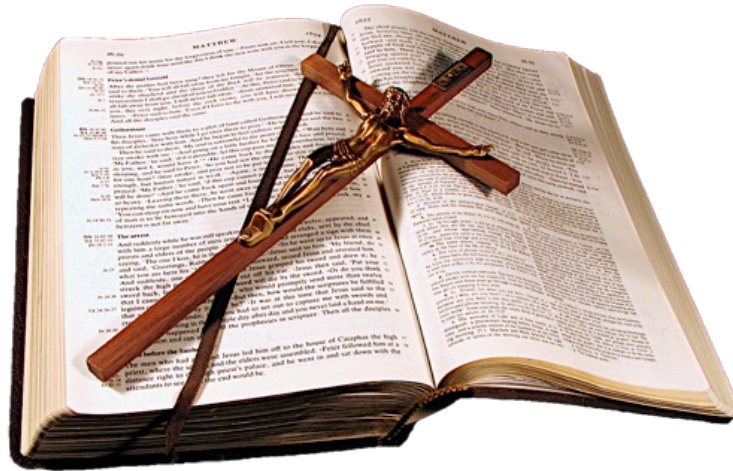


person, especially those who were in spiritual and material need. She was a skillful administrator who, in her own inimitable way, found the resources to answer that need. Our community has been blessed by her presence.”

The Cathedral Parish as always responded to Sister Pauline’s requests for help. The Annual Food Drive for the Social Apostolate, which enabled them to provide over 200 food baskets a month, has been a long term outreach project for our parish. The Cathedral Classic, a golf tournament that was initiated by this parish to help raise funds to finish the renovation of their facilities, has become an annual Social Apostolate fundraiser. We also put together Personal Hygiene Packets each month, containing individual size soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush and a washcloth, which according to Sister Pauline, are much needed by the people they serve.

Sister Pauline has given us many opportunities to show our love for Jesus and for that we are eternally grateful. We wish her the best in the next phase of her life’s journey.

—Peter Paolucci



What is an Indulgence?

The logic of indulgences may be hard for us to understand today, but in reality they make a great deal of sense. The concept of an indulgence is based on Catholic doctrine that sinners must not only repent of the sins that they have committed by confessing these sins, but must also pay some sort of retribution. Sins that have not been properly expiated with temporal punishment could land the sinner in purgatory, a place of temporal punishment. At the conclusion of this punishment, the individual soul passes into heaven.

An indulgence then is the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment due, in God's justice, to sin that has been forgiven, which remission is granted by the Church in the exercise of the power of the keys, through the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, and for some just and reasonable motive.

In the Sacrament of Baptism, not only is the guilt of sin remitted, but also all the penalties attached to sin. In the Sacrament of Penance the guilt of sin is removed, and with it the eternal punishment due to mortal sin; but there still remains the temporal punishment required by Divine justice, and this requirement must be fulfilled either in the present life or in the world to come, i.e., in Purgatory. An indulgence offers the penitent sinner the means of discharging this debt during his life on earth.

The satisfaction, usually called the "penance," imposed by the confessor when he gives absolution is an integral part of the Sacrament of Penance; an indulgence is extra-sacramental;

it presupposes the effects obtained by confession, contrition, and sacramental satisfaction. It differs also from the penitential works undertaken of his own accord by the repentant sinner — prayer, fasting, alms-giving — in that these are personal and get their value from the merit of him who performs them, whereas an indulgence places at the penitent's disposal the merits of Christ and of the saints, which form the "Treasury" of the Church.

An indulgence not only releases the penitent from his indebtedness to the Church or from the obligation of performing penance, but also from the temporal punishment which he has incurred in the sight of God and which, without the indulgence, he would have to undergo in order to satisfy Divine justice.

A plenary indulgence is the remission of the entire temporal punishment due to sin so that no further expiation is required in Purgatory. A partial indulgence commutes only a certain portion of the penalty.

Although the word indulgence may conjure up some concerns about past excesses that led Martin Luther to challenge the practice and set off the Reformation, it is still a valid form of forgiveness for temporal punishment due to sin.

God alone knows what penalty remains to be paid and what its precise amount is in severity and duration. Needless to say, a plenary indulgence will go a long way to expiating one's penalty.

Calling All Catholics!

The Feast of Divine Mercy will be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter Sunday, May 1, 2011. On that day all Catholics can avail themselves of God's Divine Mercy by obtaining a plenary indulgence, the forgiveness of all temporal punishment resulting from sins that have already been confessed.

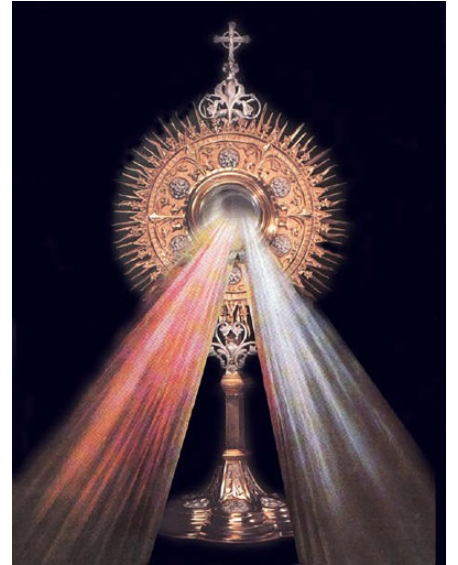
To fittingly observe the Feast of Mercy, we should:

1. Celebrate the Feast on the Sunday after Easter;
2. Sincerely repent of all our sins;
3. Place our complete trust in Jesus;
4. Go to Confession, preferably before that Sunday;
5. Receive Holy Communion on the day of the Feast;
6. Venerate the Image of the Divine Mercy;
7. Be merciful to others, through our actions, words, and prayers on their behalf.

Make sure you attend the Penance Service which will be held on Palm Sunday, April 17, 2011 at 2:30 PM and go to confession so that when you fulfill the other requirements, you can receive the total forgiveness of your sins and punishment. It is like receiving a brand new start in life!

The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive. Learn to trust in Jesus, and live your life as merciful to others, as Christ is merciful to you.

Jesus we trust in you.



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