

When she grants an indulgence *to the living*, this is what happens.

You owe, I suppose, 100 years of temporal penalties to divine justice. Holy Church takes from her treasury a payment strictly equal to your debt ; she offers it to God in your name and, in virtue of her divine authority as a supreme judge, she declares that you are discharged before God of 100 years expiation.

When the Church grants indulgences *applicable to the dead*, she does so by way of *suffrage*. This means that she offers to God a portion of the atonements of Our Lord or of the Saints and begs Him to accept them in exchange for the penalties due by poor souls. And there is no reason to say that God ever refuses them.

This conduct of the Church *does not interfere with the infinite atonements of Jesus Christ for us*, for although Christ has *super-abundantly atoned for all*, such atonements are profitable only in so far as they are applied to each of us personally. This is precisely what is done by Holy Church in granting us indulgences.

The conditions to be fulfilled for gaining indulgences are, besides baptism and the absence of excommunication, a state of grace, the intention to gain them and the performance of the prescribed works.

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A pertinent Argument

In answering a question about « Predestination, » after demonstrating the teaching of the Church, Rvd. Father Nolan related this pertinent anecdote : « A carpenter, a catholic, refused to go to confession, because, as he said, he would either be saved or damned anyhow, God knew what would be his ultimate end and nothing he could do would avert it. The priest to whom he addressed himself, after a pause, said : « You are a carpenter. Suppose, on Monday morning, you refuse to go to work, because either your wages will or will not be paid to you on Saturday night. If they will be paid or unpaid, why should you bother yourself about doing anything to earn them ? » The man was silent. He went to confession. » Why should we excite ourselves about the foreknowledge of God as concerns our actions from free will ? Suffice it for us that men who are damned, damn themselves ; that our Lord « willeth not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live ; » and that he who perseveres to the end will be saved. If we strive faithfully and humbly to the end, the blessed wage will be waiting for us at the conclusion of our pilgrimage.