



A Holy Door in the diocese

A short walk through an earthly door that has eternal consequences . . . read on

Let's lay some groundwork, first.

Indulgence

You don't hear about indulgences much today, at least not in Catholic circles. If it could be said that at one time they were overemphasized, it's surely true that today they're underemphasized.

Many Catholics simply don't know what indulgences are, and when challenged they're at a loss to explain the Church's position on indulgences.

The Enchiridion of Indulgences is the Church's official handbook on what acts and prayers carry indulgences and what indulgences actually are.

An indulgence is defined as "*the remission before God of the temporal punishment due for sins already forgiven, as far as their guilt is concerned* ." The first thing

to note is that forgiveness of a sin is separate from punishment for the sin. Through sacramental confession we obtain forgiveness, but we aren't let off the hook as far as punishment goes.

It's a bit like a bank robbery that takes place. Later, in a state of remorse, one of the gang goes to a priest to confess the sin and obtains absolution. Finally, the police catch up, he is charged with the crime, tried and sentenced to a term in prison. The sin has indeed been forgiven by God but there is a punishment still due (to society, in this example).

Indulgences are of two kinds: partial and plenary. A **partial indulgence** removes part of the temporal punishment due for sins. A

plenary indulgence

removes all of it. This punishment may come either in this life, in the form of various sufferings, or in the next life, in purgatory. What we don't get rid of here we suffer there.

The Year of Mercy



A Jubilee Year, or Holy Year, usually occurs only every 25 years, and is traditionally a year of forgiveness of sins and of the punishment merited by one's sins. It is a year for reconciliation between enemies, conversion and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

However, an extraordinary Jubilee can be called for a special occasion or for an event that has a particular importance. Pope Francis declared during Lent last, "I have decided to declare an Extraordinary Jubilee that has the mercy of God at its centre. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy."

The Holy Year commenced on 8th December 2015 and ends on the last day of the church year

in November 2016.

The Holy Door in Rome



Each of the four papal basilicas in Rome has a holy door, which is normally sealed shut from the inside so that it cannot be opened. The doors are only opened during Jubilee years so that pilgrims can enter through them in order to gain the plenary indulgence that is connected with the Jubilee.

and in your diocese . . .

Each diocese in the world has the authority to designate at least one such door for people to pass through, rather than travel to Rome. The Meath Diocese, for example, has two, one in the Cathedral in Mullingar, the other in St Mary's Church, Navan.

Standing inside at the back of the church, in St Mary's Navan, facing the main altar, look to your left. There, at the back left corner of the church, resembling the door in the Vatican, is the Door of Mercy, the Jubilee Door.

Completing the walk

Having passed through the door, in order to obtain the important Plenary Indulgence, some conditions are then required: have a firm purpose of amendment of life and go to the Sacrament of Confession ; receive Holy Communion and pray for the Pope's intentions (include a profession of faith, the Creed). These conditions need be fulfilled within a reasonable period of time on either side of passing through the door (about 20 days).

"I [will](#) give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: whatever you bind on earth [will](#) be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth [will](#) be loosed in heaven." (Jesus to Peter)

Matthew 16: 19

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