

## URBIS ET ORBIS

### DECREE

#### **Enriched by the Gift of Sacred Indulgences Special Exercises of Piety to Be Undertaken during the *Year of Faith***

On the day of the 50th anniversary of the solemn opening of the Ecumenical Council Vatican II, to which Blessed John XXIII “assigned as main task to guard and present better the precious deposit of the Christian Doctrine, to make it more accessible to Christ’s faithful and to all men of good will” (John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*, October 11, 1992: AAS 86 [1994] 113), the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI has established the beginning of a Year dedicated particularly to the profession of the true faith and to its correct interpretation, with the reading, or better, with the pious meditation of the *Acts of the Council* and of the Articles of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published by Blessed John Paul II, thirty years after the beginning of the Council, with the precise intention to “induce the faithful to adhere better to it and to promote knowledge of it and its implementation” (*Ibid.*, 114).

Already in the year of the Lord 1967, to recall the 19th centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul, a similar *Year of Faith*” was proclaimed by the Servant of God Paul VI, “to attest in a solemn profession of Faith, in as much as the essential contents that for centuries have constituted the patrimony of all believers, are in need of being confirmed, comprehended and deepened in an ever new way, in order to give coherent witness in historical conditions that are different from the past” (Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*, no. 4).

In this time of profound changes, to which humanity is subjected, the Holy Father Benedict XVI, with the proclamation of this second *Year of Faith*, intends to invite the People of God, of whom he is the universal Pastor, as well as brother Bishops of the whole world “to join the Successor of Peter, in the time of spiritual grace that the Lord offers us, in recalling the precious gift of the faith” (*Ibid.*, no. 8).

To all faithful will be given “the opportunity to confess their faith in the Risen Lord [...] in the cathedrals and churches of the whole world; in [their] homes and with [their] families, so that everyone will feel strongly the need to know better and to transmit to future generations the everlasting faith. Religious as well as parish communities, and all the ancient and new ecclesial realities, will find the way in this *Year* to make public profession of the *Creed*” (*Ibid.*).

Moreover, all the faithful, individually and in community, will be called to give open witness of their faith before others in the particular circumstances of daily life: “Man’s social nature itself exacts that he express externally the acts of religion, that he communicate with others in religious matters, profess his religion in a communal way” (Declaration, *Dignitatishumanae*, December 7, 1965: AAS 58 [1966], 932).

Because it is above all a question of developing to the highest degree -- in so far as it is possible on this earth -- holiness of life and hence of obtaining, in the highest degree, purity of soul, very useful will be the great gift of Indulgences, which the Church, in virtue of the power conferred on her by Christ, offers to all those who with the proper dispositions fulfil the special prescriptions to obtain them. “With the Indulgence -- Paul VI taught -- the Church, making use of her power of minister of the Redemption wrought by Christ the Lord, communicates to the faithful the participation of this fullness of Christ in the communion of Saints, furnishing them in very large measure the means to attain salvation” (Apostolic Letter *Apostolorum Limina*, May 23, 1974: AAS 66 [1974] 2898). Manifested thus is the “treasure of the Church,” “of which also the merits of the Holy Mother of

God and of all the elect, from the first to the last righteous” constitute “a further increase” (Clement VI, Bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, January 27, 1343).

The Apostolic Penitentiary, which has the task of regulating what concerns the concession and use of Indulgences, and of stimulating the spirit of the faithful to conceive correctly and to nourish the pious desire to obtain them -- solicited by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, in attentive consideration of the *Note with pastoral indications for the Year of Faith* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in order to obtain the gift of the Indulgences during the *Year of Faith* --, has established the following dispositions, issued in conformity with the mind of the August Pontiff, so that the faithful will be greatly stimulated to know and love the Doctrine of the Catholic Church and obtain more abundant spiritual fruits.

During the whole span of the *Year of Faith*, proclaimed from October 11, 2012 to the whole of November 24, 2013, all individual faithful truly repentant, duly confessed, communing sacramentally, and who pray according to the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff, will be able to acquire a *Plenary Indulgence* from the temporal punishment for their sins imparted by God’s mercy, applicable in suffrage to the souls of the deceased faithful.

a.- Every time they take part in at least three instances of preaching during the Sacred Missions, or at least three lessons on the *Acts of Vatican Council II* and on the Articles of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in any church or ideal place;

b.- Every time they visit by way of pilgrimage a Papal Basilica, a Christian catacomb, a Cathedral; Church, a sacred place designated by the Ordinary of the place for the *Year of Faith* (for example between the Minor Basilicas and the Shrines dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Holy Apostles and to Patron Saints) and take part there in some sacred function or at least pause for an apt time of recollection with pious meditations, concluding with the recitation of the Our Father, the Profession of Faith in any legitimate form, invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary and, according to the case, to Holy Apostles or Patrons;

c.- Every time, in days determined by the Ordinary of the place for the *Year of Faith* (for example on the solemnities of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the feast s of the Holy Apostles and Patrons, on the Chair of Saint Peter), in any sacred place they participate in a solemn Eucharistic celebration or the Liturgy of the Hours, adding the Profession of Faith in any legitimate form;

d.- A day freely chosen, during the *Year of Faith*, for the pious visit of the baptistery or other place, in which they received the sacrament of Baptism, renewing the baptismal promises in any legitimate formula.

Diocesan or Eparchial bishops, and those who in law are equivalent to them, in the most appropriate day of this time, on the occasion of the main celebration (for example November 24, 2013, on the solemnity of Jesus Christ King of the Universe, with which the *Year of Faith* will close) will be able to impart the *Papal Blessing* with the Plenary Indulgence, to be gained by all the faithful who receive this *Blessing* devoutly.

The truly repentant faithful, who cannot take part in solemn celebrations for serious reasons (as, first of all, nuns that live in convents of perpetual cloister, anchorites and hermits, prisoners, the elderly, the sick, as well as those that, in hospitals or other nursing places, give continuous service to the sick ...), will obtain the *Plenary Indulgence* in the same conditions if, united in spirit and thought to the faithful present, particularly in moments in which the Words of the Supreme Pontiff

or of the Diocesan Bishops are broadcast on television or radio, recite in their own home or where the impediment keeps them (for example in the chapel of the convent, of the hospital, of the nursing home, of the prison ...) the Our Father, the Profession of Faith in any legitimate form, and other prayers in keeping with the objective of the *Year of Faith*, offering the sufferings or discomforts of their life.

In order that access to the sacrament of Penance and the obtaining of divine forgiveness through the power of the Keys is pastorally facilitated, the Ordinaries of the places are invited to grant to canons and priests -- who in the Cathedrals and in the designated Churches for the *Year of Faith* are able to hear the confessions of the faithful --, the faculties limited to the internal forum, of which, for the faithful of the Eastern Churches is canon 728, paragraph 2 of the *CCEO*, and in the case of an eventual reserve, those for canon 727, excluding, as is evident, cases considered in canon 728, paragraph 1; for the faithful of the Latin Church, the faculties of which are in canon 508, paragraph 1 of the *CIC*.

The confessors, after having admonished the faithful on the gravity of sins to which is annexed a reserve or a censure, will determine appropriate sacramental penances, such as to lead them to the most possible stable repentance and, according to the nature of the cases, to impose on them the reparation of eventual scandals and damages.

Finally, the Penitentiary warmly invites the Most Excellent Bishops, in as much as holders of the threefold *munus* of teaching, guiding and sanctifying, to take care in explaining clearly the principles and dispositions proposed here for the sanctification of the faithful, taking into account in a particular way the circumstance of place, culture and traditions. A catechesis adapted to the nature of each people, will be able to propose more clearly and with greater vivacity to the intelligence and root more firmly and profoundly in hearts the desire for this unique gift, obtained in virtue of the mediation of the Church.

The present Decree is valid only for the *Year of Faith*, any contrary disposition notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at the Headquarters of the Apostolic Penitentiary,  
14 September 2012,  
Feast of The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Manuel Cardinal Monteiro de Castro  
*Major Penitentiary*

Monsignor Krzysztof Nykiel  
*Regent*