



OFFICE
OF THE
BISHOP

DIOCESE OF FARGO

5201 Bishops Blvd, Suite A
Fargo, ND 58104
(701) 356-7944
FAX (701) 356-7999

Pastoral letter:

Church offers plenary indulgence for observance of Year of St. Paul

Dear Priests, Religious, and all the faithful of the Diocese of Fargo,

On June 29th of this year, the universal Church, led by our Holy Father, Benedict XVI, has begun its celebration of the Jubilee Year of St. Paul. This celebration marks the two-thousandth year since the traditional year of the birth of this great Apostle to the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church has reason to celebrate, for St. Paul exemplifies many Christian virtues that are needed in our time. As the Church of Eastern North Dakota joins the Universal Church in this Jubilee Year, I want to encourage you to participate in order to enter more fully in the graces of this special time.

The Church has given us the special gift of a plenary indulgence for the observance of this Jubilee Year of St. Paul. This gift of an indulgence is offered by God through the Church so that the Christian faithful may attain purity of heart and holiness of life. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us that an indulgence is “the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sin whose guilt has already been forgiven” (CCC 1471). Even when the guilt of sin is forgiven in the sacrament of reconciliation, its effects and wounds in human nature remain. The practice of obtaining an indulgence involves the healing of these effects of sin and helps us grow in our relationship with God. These graces which flow from the Church’s treasury of mercy can be applied to both the living and the faithful departed. Therefore, as your Bishop, I am making available the following means of obtaining this indulgence.

The ways of obtaining the indulgence are outlined in a decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary. Basically, one can obtain this indulgence either by making a pilgrimage to a designated sacred place or participating in a designated feast, along with fulfilling the usual conditions involved with plenary indulgences. The Roman Decree states in part:

"The Christian faithful of the various local churches, having fulfilled the required conditions (sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, prayers for the Supreme Pontiff's intentions) and in a spirit of total detachment from any inclination to sin, may benefit from the *Plenary Indulgence* if they take part devoutly in a sacred function or in a pious public exercise in honor of the Apostle to the Gentiles; on the days of the solemn opening and closure of the Pauline Year, in all the sacred places; on other days specified by the local Ordinary, in holy places dedicated to St. Paul and, for the convenience of the faithful, in other places designated by the same Ordinary."

In accord with the Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, in addition to making a pilgrimage to the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, the faithful in the Diocese of Fargo may take part in this Pauline celebration and obtain a *Plenary Indulgence* by making a pilgrimage to the following Churches:

- Cathedral Church of St. Mary

- St. Paul's Newman Center in Fargo
- St. Paul's in Tappen, N.D.
- Sts. Peter and Paul parishes in Bechyne, Cayuga, Karlsruhe, Mantador and McHenry, N.D.

Pilgrims to these churches, having fulfilled the required conditions, must go before the Altar and recite the *Our Father* and the *Creed*, adding pious invocations or other prayers in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Paul, always closely uniting their thoughts and prayers to the memory of the Prince of the Apostles, St. Peter.

A Plenary Indulgence may also be obtained by joining in the celebration of the major feasts of St. Paul, namely,

- January 25, 2009, Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
- June 28-29, Vigil and Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul

The Conditions required for obtaining the plenary indulgence are the following:

1. Make a specific pilgrimage or participate in a specific sacred function
2. Sacramental Confession within a week of the pilgrimage or celebration
3. Reception of Holy Communion
4. Prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father
5. Detachment from any inclination to sin
6. A desire to join spiritually in the Jubilee in honor of St. Paul

The faithful prevented by illness or another legitimate and important cause, always in a spirit of detachment from any inclination to sin, with the intention of fulfilling the usual conditions as soon as possible, will also be able to obtain the *Plenary Indulgence*, as long as they spiritually join in a Jubilee celebration in honor of St Paul, offering their prayers and sufferings to God for Christian unity.

There are also many other ways in which you can promote and celebrate this year. Some ideas are for priests to offer a votive Mass of St. Paul periodically during the year, parishes offering bible studies on the letters of St. Paul and participating in special hours of adoration. A special section is available for you on the diocesan website with resources.

This year of St. Paul is a great gift to us as we continually, by the help of grace, strive for holiness in our life and world. Let us joyfully join the Holy Father and the universal Church throughout the world in this Jubilee year. May our prayer bear fruit in our life as we imitate St. Paul's evangelical zeal and grow in our love of the Father, Son and Holy with singularity and purity of heart.

†Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila
Bishop of Fargo

Very Rev. Luke D. Meyer
Chancellor/Notary