

SACRAMENTALS AND INDULGENCES

What is a sacramental?

“Holy Mother Church has ... instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy.’¹⁷³

Sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, certain states of life, a great variety of circumstances in Christian life, and the use of many things helpful to man. In accordance with bishops' pastoral decisions, they can also respond to the needs, culture, and special history of the Christian people of a particular region or time. They always include a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water (which recalls Baptism).

Sacramentals derive from the baptismal priesthood: every baptized person is called to be a ‘blessing,’ and to bless.¹⁷⁴ Hence lay people may preside at certain blessings; the more a blessing concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is its administration reserved to the ordained ministry (bishops, priests, or deacons).¹⁷⁵” *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1667-1669*

¹⁷³ SC 60; cf. CIC, can. 1166; CCEO, can. 867.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *Gen* 12:2; *Lk* 6:28; *Rom* 12:14; *1 Pet* 3:9.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. SC 79; CIC, can. 1168; *De Ben* 16, 18.

“What is an indulgence?

‘An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.’⁸¹

‘An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.’⁸² The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.⁸³” *CCC 1471*

⁸¹ Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, Norm 1.

⁸² *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, Norm 2; cf. Norm 3.

⁸³ CIC, can. 994.

What Did You Learn About Sacramentals and Indulgences?

for younger saints

True or False

1. Sacramentals and sacraments (like Reconciliation, Confirmation, etc.) are the same.
2. All sacramentals include a blessing.
3. Blessing our homes is an example of a sacramental which is in the *blessings* category.
4. For many years, indulgences were not understood by Catholics and were often used in the wrong way.
5. An example of a sacramental *action* is
 - a. genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament.
 - b. smiling at a priest.
 - c. both a and b
 - d. none of the above
6. In order to receive an indulgence, you have to do which of the following things?
 - a. Go to Mass every single day of the year.
 - b. Give lots of money in the collection basket.
 - c. Pray for the Pope.
 - d. all of the above
7. Recite your memory verse.

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True or False

Quiz Answers

1. Sacramentals and sacraments (like Reconciliation, Confirmation, etc.) are the same.

False

2. All sacramentals include a blessing.

True

3. Blessing our homes is an example of a sacramental which is in the *blessings* category.

True

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“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” John 20:29

What Did You Learn About Sacramentals and Indulgences?

for older saints

1. Sacramentals dispose us to receive
 - a. prayers.
 - b. sacramental grace.
 - c. religious articles.
 - d. none of the above

2. When we *genuflect* before the Blessed Sacrament, we are performing a sacramental
 - a. action.
 - b. blessing.
 - c. "good work."
 - d. all of the above

3. Which of the following are examples of a sacramental *object*?
 - a. a Bible
 - b. relics
 - c. holy water
 - d. all of the above

4. Indulgences help free us from the _____ of sins which have already been forgiven.
 - a. eternal anxiety
 - b. major guilt
 - c. temporal punishment
 - d. big repercussions

5. To receive an indulgence, one must perform the action asked and also follow the formula of sacramental confession, prayers for the Pope, and reception of the Eucharist.

true false

7. Recite the five Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

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true false

7. Recite the five Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

The Baptism in the Jordan. The Wedding Feast at Cana. The Proclamation of the Kingdom.
The Transfiguration. The Institution of the Eucharist.