

## **Portiuncula Indulgence**

### **History**

The Portiuncula (small portion) refers to the land in Assisi, Italy, that belonged to the Benedictines. On this land was an old church dedicated to the Virgin Mother of God but abandoned.

The great St. Francis had great devotion to the Queen of the world and when he saw that the church was deserted, he began to live there constantly and repair it. He heard that the angels often visited it, so that it was called St. Mary of the Angels.

The Benedictines wanted to give Francis the church but in order to remain faithful to lady Poverty, Francis rented it from them with the annual compensation of a basket of fish from the Tescio River. Here is where Francis began his service to Christ and His Church.

Here Francis founded his Order, received Clare as his spiritual daughter, and where he died commending this spot above all others to the friars.

St. Francis had great love and compassion for everyone.

On a night in July, 1216, Francis was praying in the little church of the Portiuncula devoured by love for God and a thirst to save souls. He prayed for the forgiveness of sins of mankind.

Suddenly a brilliant light shone all around. In great splendor Jesus and Mary appeared in the midst of a dazzling cloud surrounded by a multitude of radiant angels.

Out of fear and reverence, St. Francis adored Our Lord prostrate upon the ground.

Then Jesus said to him: Francis you are very zealous for the good of souls. Ask me what you want for their salvation. St. Francis was wrapped in ecstasy before Jesus.

When he regained his courage he said: "Lord, I a miserable sinner beg You to concede an indulgence to all those who enter this church, who are truly contrite and have confessed their sins. And I beg Blessed Mary, your Mother, intercessor of man that she intercede on behalf of this grace."

Our Lady at once began to beseech her Son on behalf of Francis. Jesus answered: "It is a very great thing that which you ask me; but you are worthy of even greater things, Friar Francis, and greater things you will have. So I accept your request, but I want you to go to my Vicar, to whom I have given the power to bind and loose in Heaven and on earth, to ask him on my behalf for this indulgence." (ed. Note: Matthew 16: 19).

With one of his companions, Francis hastened to Pope Honorius III and prostrate implored him to proclaim that everyone visiting the church and confessing their sins with a contrite heart would be as pure from all sin and punishments as he was immediately after baptism. The Pope granted this petition. This indulgence has been extended to all parish churches throughout the world.

The date was set from vespers of the first of August until sundown on the second of August, the Feast of Our Lady of the Angels. It is said that St. Francis was given this day by Our Lord because the Feast of the Chains of St. Peter celebrated on August first is the day Peter was released from prison and his chains removed.

This is an extraordinary demonstration of God's mercy in removing the chains of sin from those who devoutly and faithfully seek to gain the indulgence by completing its requirements.

### **Conditions**

The conditions to obtain the Plenary Indulgence of the Forgiveness of Assisi is (for oneself or for a departed soul) is as follows:

- Sacramental Confession to be in God's grace (during eight days before or after.)
- Participation in the Holy Mass and Eucharist
- Recitation of The Apostles Creed, Our Father and also a prayer for the Pope's Intention (such as an Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.).

The Portiuncula Indulgence is a grace not to be missed—not only for yourself but for the many suffering souls in Purgatory. Mark your calendar for the Feast of Our Lady of the Angels beginning at Vespers (Noon) on the First of August to August 2nd at Midnight.

Tell everyone of the magnitude of this gift. Once again, we see the unfathomable Divine Mercy of God.

### **Distinguishing this Indulgence from Others: \***

On the day (August 2nd) on which it is granted, it can be gained not only once, but oftener. You can gain other indulgences only once on the same day, but the Portiuncula indulgence you can gain on the first Sunday of August, and that, too, as often as on that day you visit a church of the Franciscans, or the parish church, (you may go out of the church and re-enter as many times as you wish) and there pray according to the intention of the Holy Father. The Congregation of the Council has twice confirmed the indulgence on July 17, 1700 and again on December 4, 1723. Again, the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences on February 22, 1847 reaffirmed the indulgence and noted that Communion did not have to be received only in a Franciscan Church. Pope Pius IX confirmed these decisions by a decree dated July 12, 1849. It is indeed true that on one day we can gain a plenary indulgence for ourselves only once, but this does not interfere with the doctrine that the Portiuncula indulgence can be gained more than once on the same day, for we may apply it to the souls in purgatory, if we gain it the second and the third time, etc. A question arose if a visit was made on the second Sunday if the indulgence still applies, and the visit repeated the answer by the Congregation of Indulgences on Feb. 22, 1847 was in the affirmative.

\*(excerpted from: <http://friarsminor.org/sermons/portiuncula.html>)

NOTE: A review of the meaning of the above with a retired provincial of the Holy Name Province, of the Franciscan Order, and in consultation with the Franciscan Ordo, states that this Indulgence may only be transferred to Sunday as a special concession to remote areas of the

world where Mission Chapels are not usually open during the week. Otherwise, the normal rules for August 2nd apply.

As we honor Our Lady of the Angels, may we find inspiration for our own growth and development in the Gospel way of life that Saint Francis embraced and lived so completely.