

Vatican announces plenary indulgence, papal blessing for Walk for Life West Coast

The Vatican has granted a plenary indulgence and a papal blessing for those who participate in the Walk for Life West Coast, including those who are sick and infirm and praying along with the participants in the January 26 rally and walk along Market Street.

All those present at the Walk for Life rally will receive a papal blessing, conveyed by San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, and with that a plenary indulgence, according to a letter from Vatican. Those who participate in "sacred celebrations" associated with the Walk throughout the dioceses of the area will also receive the plenary indulgence.

"The Apostolic Penitentiary...graciously grants to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone...the faculty to impart the Papal Blessing with the accompanying Plenary Indulgence on the 26th day of January, 2019, the day of the annual event called Walk for Life West Coast, after the Divine Sacrifice has been offered at the Cathedral, to all Christ's faithful who are present, who are truly penitent and compelled by charity, and who participated in the same sacred rites," according to a December 21 letter signed by Mauro Cardinal Piacenza, Major Penitentiary, of the Apostolic Penitentiary, and received this week in San Francisco.

The Walk for Life, which is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, draws more than 50,000 people to San Francisco's Civic Center. The day officially begins with a Walk for Life Mass at 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary's Cathedral. The rally is at 12:30 p.m. and the walk along Market Street begins at 1:30 p.m.

A plenary indulgence is the expiation of temporal punishment for sins already forgiven, and can be applied to souls in Purgatory, to oneself, or to another person still living. It is a free gift of God's mercy, and theologically demonstrates the Church as a communion of those living, as well as those in purgatory and the saints and angels in heaven.

"We are delighted with this news—what a wonderful gift and opportunity for all Catholics!" said Eva Muntean, co-founder and chair of the Walk for Life West Coast. "The Walk for Life West Coast and its surrounding events are true corporal and spiritual works of mercy to those who have been unjustly deprived of life and to those women who suffer so much from the pain of abortion."

A plenary indulgence removes the temporal punishment of already forgiven sin. The Walk for Life plenary or complete indulgence is granted with the three usual conditions of sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and prayer for the intentions of the pope, which should be completed within several days of the actual event of participation in Walk for Life.

The Vatican granted the plenary indulgence at the request of Archbishop Cordileone. A similar indulgence was bestowed on the March for Life in Washington, D.C., this year. This is the first time a plenary indulgence was given to the Walk for Life West Coast.

"We are inexpressibly grateful that the church has recognized this and we hope the news spreads far and wide," Muntean said, noting that a plenary indulgence for the Walk is an act of mercy for all participants in the Walk.

The Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption will be livestreamed at sfarch.org.

For more information: sfarch.org/walk-for-life-west-coast

For more information about the Walk for Life: walkforlifewc.com