

Indulgences

I. A Review of Sin

1. The *Commitment of Sin* (two types):
 - a. Mortal (serious) sin – a break in our relationship with God
 - b. Venial (less serious) sin – a weakening in our relationship with (our attachment to) God

2. The *Removal of Sin* involves:
 - a. Repentance for sin (i.e., sorrow) by the person committing the sin.
 - b. Forgiveness of sin by God.
 - c. Reparation (making amends / giving satisfaction for sin committed / restoring the soul to its original state of purity)
 - 1) Sin (because it leaves its mark, however small) requires some form of reparation.
 - 2) Each sin
 - a) weakens our virtue and attachment to God.
 - b) strengthens our own disordered desires.
 - c) makes committing the next sin easier.
 - d) has consequences that repentance and forgiveness do not alone erase.

II. Some Analogies

1. A child breaks a window:
 - a. There is an apology by the child (repentance)
 - b. Forgiveness by the owner
 - c. Owner expects payment by the child to fix the window (reparation)

2. A wife is hurt by her husband (Their relationship is strained in some way because of the hurt.)
 - a. There is sincere sorrow by the husband (repentance).
 - b. Wife forgives her husband.
 - c. Husband does something to make amends (reparation).

3. An employee steals money from his company
 - a. There is sorrow by the employee (repentance)
 - b. Forgiveness (possibly) by employer.
 - c. Restitution by the employee (reparation):
 - 1) Restoration of the money
 - 2) Or, imprisonment (if true reparation is not possible – imprisonment is “a reparation by way of loss of liberty and the pursuit of the everyday business of living.”)

III. In Regards to Sin

1. There is repentance (sorrow) by the sinner
2. Forgiveness by God (possibly thru Sacrament of Reconciliation)
3. Reparation – giving satisfaction / offering expiation / doing something to make amends
 - a. **Temporal punishment** is another name for reparation
 - b. It can occur in this life or in Purgatory.
 - c. If it occurs in this life, it reduces the amount of temporal punishment necessary in Purgatory.

IV. Reparation / Satisfaction for Sin

1. We (ourselves) can't do anything to satisfy God's infinite justice.
 - a. Jesus came to take sins on himself – to make it possible for us to be purified.
 - b. We are still required to make some effort at reparation (although we are limited and unable to make full restoration).
 - c. The infinite merits of Jesus make our finite acts of reparation meritorious.
2. Forms of reparation (ways to make reparation) for sin:
 - a. Love—"love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pt 4:8)
 - b. Prayers, mortifications, good acts.

V. Indulgences Explained

1. An indulgence is (essentially) a type (or form) of reparation for our sins; it removes temporal punishment due to our sins.
2. Definition: "a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins..."
 - a. Whose guilt has already been forgiven;
 - b. The faithful Christian must be duly disposed to gain it *{i.e., the indulgence}*;
 - c. The faithful Christian must meet certain conditions *{i.e., perform certain acts of love}* prescribed / defined by the Church *{via her authority of binding and loosing}*;
 - d. The Church (as the minister of redemption) dispenses and applies (with authority) the *treasury of the satisfactions* of Christ and the saints." (CCC 1471).
3. The Church (using her authority of binding and loosing) defines some of these acts of love as ways to undo the punishment due to sin / to make atonement and reparation (to lessen our temporal punishment).
4. The reparation / satisfaction comes from the spiritual merits of Jesus and the saints.
5. To receive the indulgence a person;
 - a. Must be in the state of grace;
 - i. Recent reception of the sacraments Reconciliation and the Eucharist may be a condition.
 - b. Must be duly disposed (i.e., have the right attitude; the right intention of the heart).
 - c. Must say the given prayer and / or perform the specified good works prescribed by the Church to gain the indulgence.

6. An indulgence may be:
 - a. Partial (remission of part of the temporal punishment), or
 - b. Plenary (remits all the temporal punishment)

7. Why can indulgences be given?
 - a. The reason is related to the Church's teaching on the Mystical Body of Christ and the communion of saints.
 - i. We are connected to Jesus and the communion of saints via this Mystical Body.
 - ii. There is a treasury of spiritual goods, so to speak, available to the Church to dispense (via its authority to bind and loose) for the reparation of sins.
 - iii. The merits of Jesus and the saints are stored, so to speak, in this "common" treasury of spiritual goods.
 - b. It would be like having a fund for broken windows.
 - i. When a child breaks a window (and sorrow and forgiveness have taken place), the manager of this fund could dispense money from this fund to repair the window for the child.
 - ii. The manager of this fund may require the child to do something (say a prayer, perform a good deed) in order for the money to be given to fix the window.

8. Indulgences can be obtained for those who may be in Purgatory.

9. We can add to the treasury of the Church if we ask for (or accept) sufferings and trials beyond what we need to make reparation for our own sins.



INDULGENCES AND OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Indulgences have been a part of Catholic devotional life for centuries. While often misunderstood, the practice of granting and obtaining indulgences is deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture and Church teaching. Indulgences inspire us to live more fruitful and holy lives, and thereby lead us to a more intimate union with Christ and with his Church.

In 2006, the English edition of the Holy See's 1999 revised *Manual of Indulgences* was published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This bulletin insert provides the opportunity to explain briefly the meaning and importance of indulgences for the spiritual life of the Christian faithful.

WHAT ARE INDULGENCES?¹

Indulgences are a part of the Church's teaching on the forgiveness of sins. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we receive forgiveness for our sins, and all punishment is remitted. Through the Sacrament of Penance, sins are also forgiven, and the *eternal* penalty that is due to sin—namely, damnation, the eternal loss of the presence of God—is taken away. However, consequences still remain that the sinner must bear. This is what is traditionally called the *temporal* punishment for sin.

By its very nature, every sin inevitably causes suffering for the one who has committed it. Every sinful act creates disorder within the soul of the human person. Sin also disrupts one's relationships with God, with the Church, with other people, and with the world as a whole. Those who have received forgiveness for their sins may still have an obligation to undergo a process of purification and to restore these disrupted relationships. The necessary and painful process that brings this reconciliation and purification can take place either in this life or in Purgatory, because whatever part of the process remains unfinished at death must be completed in Purgatory.²

Through an *indulgence*, God grants that through the prayer of the Church the temporal penalty for sin due to someone be reduced (as in the case of a *partial* indulgence) or be eliminated (as in the case of a *plenary* indulgence). By God's grace, participation in a prayer or action that has an indulgence attached to it brings about the necessary reconciliation without the suffering that would normally accompany it. The granting of an indulgence by the Church is "the expression of the Church's full confidence of being heard by the Father when—in view of Christ's merits and, by his gift, those of Our Lady and the saints—she asks him to mitigate or cancel the painful aspect of punishment by fostering its medicinal aspect through other channels of grace."³

HOW CAN INDULGENCES REMOVE SOME OR ALL OF THE TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT OF SIN?

It is because of the Communion of Saints and the graciousness of God, our Father, that some or all of the temporal punishment for sin is removed. Although we always have to face the consequences

of our sins in the form of the temporal punishment for sin, as members of the Body of Christ we are never simply on our own. We are linked with Christ and with the martyrs and saints, and we benefit from their holiness in such a way as to be freed from at least a portion of the temporal punishment for sin. "In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others."⁴

As a result of the communion that exists between Christ and all the members of the Church, the Church has a treasury of inexhaustible benefits that flow from Christ's Passion, death, and Resurrection. Since the martyrs and saints have accomplished all that they have in union with Christ, these benefits also include the value of their prayers and good works. "This treasury also includes the truly immense, unfathomable and ever pristine value before God of the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, who following in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have sanctified their lives and fulfilled the mission entrusted to them by the Father. Thus while attaining their own salvation, they have also cooperated in the salvation of their brothers in the unity of the Mystical Body."⁵

Through her union with Christ, the Church has the authority to dispense these benefits. As a means of encouraging the faithful to perform good works and acts of devotion, and so to grow in holiness, the Church offers indulgences. To receive a *plenary* indulgence, in addition to a good work or act of devotion prescribed by the Church, it is required that we (1) make a sacramental confession, (2) receive Holy Communion, (3) pray for the intentions of the Holy Father, and (4) be completely detached from all sin.⁶ If these conditions are only incompletely fulfilled, the indulgence obtained will be only *partial*.

In receiving indulgences, we should not think that we have *earned* them. Our efforts express our openness to receiving God's mercy. As a result, we grow closer to Jesus and so are able to reap the benefit of his salvation.

HOW DOES ONE GAIN AN INDULGENCE?

Plenary indulgences are attached to certain prayers and to certain devotional or charitable practices that we undertake with the intention of making the needed reparation. Examples of such practices approved by the Church include Eucharistic adoration that lasts at least one half hour, devout recitation of the Marian rosary, prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture, the making of the Way of the Cross, participation in a Eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, and participation in a parish mission.⁷

Besides particular prayers and devotions, the Church also grants partial indulgences connected to the following four general areas of action, which can be undertaken in the more ordinary circumstances of everyday life:

- **Pious invocation.** Recalling St. Paul's exhortation to "rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer" (Rom 12:12), the first general area applies "to the Christian faithful who, while carrying out their duties and enduring the hardships of life, raise their minds in humble trust to God and make, at least mentally, some pious invocation."⁸
- **Gift of self or goods.** St. Paul also teaches, "Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. . . . Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality" (Rom 12:11, 13). This second general area applies "to the faithful who, led by the spirit of faith, give compassionately of themselves or of their goods to serve their brothers [and sisters] in need."⁹
- **Voluntary abstinence.** Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk 9:23). The third general area applies "to the Christian faithful who, in a spirit of penance, voluntarily abstain from something that is licit for and pleasing to them."¹⁰
- **Witness of faith.** Jesus promised, "Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father" (Mt 10:32). The fourth general area applies "to the Christian faithful who, in the particular circumstances of daily life, voluntarily give explicit witness to their faith before others."¹¹

The Church's longstanding tradition of granting and obtaining indulgences inspires within us a desire to live more virtuously as Christian disciples. In drawing closer to Jesus, we renew our hope for reconciliation, and we bear witness to our trust in our merciful Father.

NOTES

1. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), nos. 1471-1479.
2. The pains of Purgatory are, to be sure, "a purification altogether different from the punishment of the damned." Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on Certain Questions Regarding Eschatology—Recentiores Episcoporum Synodi* (*Epistola de Quibusdam Questionibus ad Eschatologiam Spectantibus*) (May 17, 1979): *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 71 (1979), 939-943.
3. Pope John Paul II, General Audience (September 29, 1999), no. 4, www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_29091999_en.html (accessed February 2007).
4. CCC, no. 1475.
5. Pope Paul VI, *Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences* (*Indulgentiarum Doctrina*) (January 1, 1967), no. 5, in United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Manual of Indulgences* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), 119.
6. *Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences*, Norm 7. See also *Manual of Indulgences*, Norm 20.
7. See the *Manual of Indulgences* for a complete list of prayers and devotional practices.
8. *Manual of Indulgences*, 25. See also Mt 7:7-8; 1 Cor 10:31; Eph 6:18; Col 3:17 and 4:2; and 1 Thes 5:17-18.
9. *Manual of Indulgences*, 28. See also Mt 25:35-35, 40; Jn 13:34-35; Gal 6:10; Jas 1:27; 1 Jn 3:17-18.
10. *Manual of Indulgences*, 31. See also Rom 8:13; 1 Cor 9:25-27; 2 Cor 4:10; and Ti 2:12.
11. *Manual of Indulgences*, 34. See also Acts 1:8; Rom 10:9-10; 2 Tm 1:8; and 1 Jn 4:15.

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Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD
General Secretary, USCCB

EXAMPLES OF PRAYERS TO WHICH INDULGENCES ARE ATTACHED

The following prayers are from the *Manual of Indulgences*.

Prayer After Holy Communion (Anima Christi)

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within thy wounds hide me.
Suffer me not to be separated from thee.
From the malicious enemy defend me.
In the hour of my death call me.
And bid me come to thee,
That with thy saints I may praise thee
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Prayer Before the Blessed Sacrament (O sacrum convivium)

O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

Prayer Before Any Work (Actiones nostras)

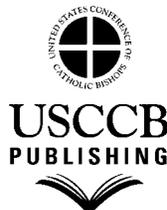
Direct, we beseech thee, O Lord, all our actions by thy holy inspiration, carry them on by thy gracious assistance, that every word and work of ours may always begin from thee and by thee be happily ended. Amen.

Prayer to One's Guardian Angel (Angele Dei)

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom his love entrusts me here, enlighten and guard, rule and guide me. Amen.

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Primer on Indulgences

A Catholic Answers Tract

Those who claim that indulgences are no longer part of Church teaching have the admirable desire to distance themselves from abuses that occurred around the time of the Protestant Reformation. They also want to remove stumbling blocks that prevent non-Catholics from taking a positive view of the Church. As admirable as these motives are, the claim that indulgences are not part of Church teaching today is false.

This is proved by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which states, "An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishment due for their sins." The Church does this not just to aid Christians, "but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity" (CCC 1478).

Indulgences are part of the Church's infallible teaching. This means that no Catholic is at liberty to disbelieve in them. The Council of Trent stated that it "condemns with anathema those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them"(Trent, session 25, *Decree on Indulgences*). Trent's anathema places indulgences in the realm of infallibly defined teaching.

The pious use of indulgences dates back into the early days of the Church, and the principles underlying indulgences extend back into the Bible itself. Catholics who are uncomfortable with indulgences do not realize how biblical they are. The principles behind indulgences are as clear in Scripture as those behind more familiar doctrines, such as the Trinity.

Before looking at those principles more closely, we should define indulgences. In his apostolic constitution on indulgences, Pope Paul VI said: "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 defined conditions through the Church's help when, as a minister of redemption, she dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions won by Christ and the saints" (*Indulgentiarum Doctrina* 1).

This technical definition can be phrased more simply as, "An indulgence is what we receive when the Church lessens the temporal (lasting only for a short time)

penalties to which we may be subject even though our sins have been forgiven." To understand this definition, we need to look at the biblical principles behind indulgences.

Principle 1: Sin Results in Guilt and Punishment

When a person sins, he acquires certain liabilities: the liability of guilt and the liability of punishment. Scripture speaks of the former when it pictures guilt as clinging to our souls, making them discolored and unclean before God: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (Is. 1:18). This idea of guilt clinging to our souls appears in texts that picture forgiveness as a cleansing or washing and the state of our forgiven souls as clean and white (cf. Ps. 51:4, 9).

We incur not just guilt, but liability for punishment when we sin: "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant and lay low the haughtiness of the ruthless" (Is. 13:11). Judgment pertains even to the smallest sins: "For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

Principle 2: Punishments are Both Temporal and Eternal

The Bible indicates some punishments are eternal, lasting forever, but others are temporal. Eternal punishment is mentioned in Daniel 12:2: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

We normally focus on the eternal penalties of sin, because they are the most important, but Scripture indicates temporal penalties are real and go back to the first sin humans committed: "To the woman he said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children (Gen. 3:16).

Principle 3: Temporal Penalties May Remain When a Sin is Forgiven

When someone repents, God removes his guilt (Is. 1:18) and any eternal punishment (Rom. 5:9), but temporal penalties may remain. One passage demonstrating this is 2 Samuel 12, in which Nathan the prophet confronts David over his adultery:

"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan answered David: 'The Lord on his part has forgiven your sin; you shall not die. But since you have utterly spurned the Lord by this deed, the child born to you must surely die'" (2 Sam. 12:13-14). God forgave David but David still had to suffer the loss of his son as well as other temporal punishments (2 Sam. 12:7-12). (For other examples, see: Numbers 14:13-23; 20:12; 27:12-14.)

Protestants realize that, while Jesus paid the price for our sins before God, he did not relieve our obligation to repair what we have done. They fully acknowledge that if you steal someone's car, you have to give it back; it isn't enough just to repent. God's forgiveness (and man's!) does not include letting you keep the stolen car.

Protestants also admit the principle of temporal penalties for sin, in practice, when discussing death. Scripture says death entered the world through original sin (Gen. 3:22-24, Rom. 5:12). When we first come to God we are forgiven, and when we sin later we are able to be forgiven, yet that does not free us from the penalty of physical death. Even the forgiven die; a penalty remains after our sins are forgiven. This is a temporal penalty since physical death is temporary and we will be resurrected (Dan. 12:2).

Principle 4: God Blesses Some People As a Reward to Others

In Matthew 9:1-8, Jesus heals a paralytic and forgives his sins after seeing the faith of his friends. Paul also tells us that "as regards election [the Jews] are beloved for the sake of their forefathers" (Rom. 11:28).

When God blesses one person as a reward to someone else, sometimes the specific blessing he gives is a reduction of the temporal penalties to which the first person is subject. For example, God promised Abraham that, if he could find a certain number of righteous men in Sodom, he was willing to defer the city's temporal destruction for the sake of the righteous (Gen. 18:16-33; cf. 1 Kgs. 11:11-13; Rom. 11:28-29).

Principle 5: God Remits Temporal Punishments through the Church

God uses the Church when he removes temporal penalties. This is the essence of the doctrine of indulgences. Earlier we defined indulgences as "what we receive when the Church lessens the temporal penalties to which we may be subject even though our sins have been forgiven." The members of the Church became aware of this principle through the sacrament of penance. From the beginning, acts of penance were assigned as part of the sacrament because the Church recognized that Christians must deal with temporal penalties, such as God's discipline and the need to compensate those our sins have injured.

In the early Church, penances were sometimes severe. For serious sins, such as apostasy, murder, and abortion,

the penances could stretch over years, but the Church recognized that repentant sinners could shorten their penances by pleasing God through pious or charitable acts that expressed sorrow and a desire to make up for one's sin.

The Church also recognized the duration of temporal punishments could be lessened through the involvement of other persons who had pleased God. Scripture tells us God gave the authority to forgive sins "to men" (Matt. 9:8) and to Christ's ministers in particular. Jesus told them, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. . . . Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:21-23).

If Christ gave his ministers the ability to forgive the eternal penalty of sin, how much more would they be able to remit the temporal penalties of sin! Christ also promised his Church the power to bind and loose on earth, saying, "Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18). As the context makes clear, binding and loosing cover Church discipline, and Church discipline involves administering and removing temporal penalties (such as barring from and readmitting to the sacraments). Therefore, the power of binding and loosing includes the administration of temporal penalties.

Principle 6: God Blesses Dead Christians As a Reward to Living Christians

From the beginning the Church recognized the validity of praying for the dead so that their transition into heaven (via purgatory) might be swift and smooth. This meant praying for the lessening or removal of temporal penalties holding them back from the full glory of heaven. For this reason the Church teaches that "indulgences can always be applied to the dead by way of prayer" (*Indulgentiarum Doctrina* 3). The custom of praying for the dead is not restricted to the Catholic faith. When a Jewish person's loved one dies, he prays a prayer known as the *Mourner's Kaddish* for eleven months after the death for the loved one's purification.

In the Old Testament, Judah Maccabee finds the bodies of soldiers who died wearing superstitious amulets during one of the Lord's battles. Judah and his men "turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out" (2 Macc. 12:42).

The reference to the sin being "wholly blotted out" refers to its temporal penalties. The author of 2 Maccabees tells us that for these men Judah "was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness" (verse 45); he believed that these men fell asleep in godliness, which would not have been the case if they were in mortal sin. If they were not in mortal sin, then they would not have eternal penalties to suffer, and thus the complete blotting out of their sin must refer to temporal penalties for their superstitious actions. Judah "took up a

collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this . . . he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin" (verses 43, 46).

Judah not only prayed for the dead, but he provided for them the then-appropriate ecclesial action for lessening temporal penalties: a sin offering. Accordingly, we may take the now-appropriate ecclesial action for lessening temporal penalties— indulgences—and apply them to the dead by way of prayer.

These six principles, which we have seen to be thoroughly biblical, are the underpinnings of indulgences. But, the question of expiation often remains. Can we expiate our sins—and what does "expiate" mean anyway?

Some criticize indulgences, saying they involve our making "expiation" for our sins, something which only Christ can do. While this sounds like a noble defense of Christ's sufficiency, this criticism is unfounded, and most who make it do not know what the word "expiation" means or how indulgences work.

Protestant Scripture scholar Leon Morris comments on the confusion around the word "expiate": "[M]ost of us . . . don't understand 'expiation' very well. . . . [E]xpiation is . . . making amends for a wrong. . . . Expiation is an impersonal word; one expiates a sin or a crime" (*The Atonement* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983], 151). The *Wycliff Bible Encyclopedia* gives a similar definition: "The basic idea of expiation has to do with reparation for a

wrong, the satisfaction of the demands of justice through paying a penalty."

Certainly when it comes to the eternal effects of our sins, only Christ can make amends or reparation. Only he was able to pay the infinite price necessary to cover our sins. We are completely unable to do so, not only because we are finite creatures incapable of making an infinite satisfaction, but because everything we have was given to us by God. For us to try to satisfy God's eternal justice would be like using money we had borrowed from someone to repay what we had stolen from him. No actual satisfaction would be made (cf. Ps. 49:7-9, Rom. 11:35). This does not mean we can't make amends or reparation for the temporal effects of our sins. If someone steals an item, he can return it. If someone damages another's reputation, he can publicly correct the slander. When someone destroys a piece of property, he can compensate the owner for its loss. All these are ways in which one can make at least partial amends (expiation) for what he has done.

An excellent biblical illustration of this principle is given in Proverbs 16:6, which states: "By loving kindness and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil" (cf. Lev. 6:1-7; Num. 5:5-8). Here we are told that a person makes temporal atonement (though never eternal atonement, which only Christ is capable of doing) for his sins through acts of loving kindness and faithfulness.

NIHIL OBSTAT: I have concluded that the materials presented in this work are free of doctrinal or moral errors.
Bernadeane Carr, STL, Censor Librorum, August 10, 2004

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