



THE DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD–CAPE GIRARDEAU

Office
of the
Bishop

December 25, 2008

Dear Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau,

Earlier this year, Pope Benedict XVI led the Church in the beginning of the celebration of the Jubilee Year of St. Paul with First Vespers on June 28, 2008. Among the many ways we can participate in the Jubilee Year and open ourselves to the graces of this special time, the Church offers the special gift of a Plenary Indulgence. The gift of an indulgence is offered by God through the Church so that the Christian faithful may grow in holiness of life. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that an indulgence is “a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sin whose guilt has already been forgiven” (CCC, 1471). When the guilt of our sins is forgiven in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, the effects and wounds those sins have caused remain. The practice of obtaining an indulgence is one of the ways the faithful can heal the effects of these sins and grow in holiness. The graces of an indulgence flow from the Church’s treasury of mercy, and can be applied to both the living and the faithful departed.

As Bishop, I wish to make this special indulgence available to the faithful of our diocese. In accordance with the decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Plenary Indulgence may be obtained by joining in a celebration of the Mass in any of our parish or mission churches on any of the major feasts of St. Paul during the Jubilee Year, namely,

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

and by also fulfilling the following conditions:

- ✓ Sacramental confession within a week of the celebration
- ✓ Reception of Holy Communion
- ✓ Prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father
- ✓ Prayers before the Blessed Sacrament, including the “Our Father” and the “Creed,” adding pious invocations of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Paul, while closely united to the memory of the prince of the apostles, St. Peter
- ✓ Detachment from any inclination to sin
- ✓ Desire to join spiritually in the Jubilee in honor of St. Paul

For the faithful who are prevented by illness or other legitimate and important causes, 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.

May this be an occasion for all of us to imitate St. Paul the Apostle in his love for Christ, his evangelical fervor, and his desire to grow in holiness of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James V. Johnston, Jr." with a small cross symbol to the left of the name.

+ Most Rev. James V. Johnston, Jr.
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau