



December 20, 2017

Dear Brother Bishops,

In virtue of the authority granted by our Holy Father, Pope Francis, to Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the Major Penitentiary of the Catholic Church, a *plenary Indulgence* can “be obtained under the usual conditions (sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff) by the Christian faithful who are truly penitential and compelled by charity, which indeed they can apply to the souls of the faithful held in Purgatory, by way of suffrage, if they take part in the sacred celebrations, along with the great assembly of people, throughout the whole course of the annual event that is called “March for Life,” which will be carried out on the eighteenth and nineteenth days of January 2018” in the entire “Diocese of Arlington” and “the Archdiocese of Washington.”

The decree goes on to note that “the aged, sick and all those who due to grave reason are not able to leave home will be equally able to obtain a *plenary Indulgence*, having the disposition of detachment from any kind of sin with the intention of fulfilling, as soon as one is able, the three customary conditions if they spiritually join themselves to the holy ceremonies, while also having offered prayers and their sufferings or the ailments of their own life to the merciful God.”

The decree further requests that “in order that easier access unto the attaining of this divine favor through the keys of the Church might go forth, for the sake of pastoral charity, this Penitentiary earnestly asks that Pastors and priests, those provided with suitable faculties to hear confessions, with a willing and generous spirit, might make themselves available for the celebration of Penance.”

We bring this to your attention in the hope that you will share this information with those entrusted to your pastoral care, and who may be traveling to Washington, D.C. to participate in March for Life activities this January.

May the efforts of all across this great nation to lift up the value and dignity of each human life continue to bear fruit, and may we all experience God’s blessings in this noble undertaking.

With every good wish, we are

Fraternally Yours in Christ,

*Michael F. Burbidge*

Bishop of Arlington

*Donald Cardinal Leavelle*

Archbishop of Washington