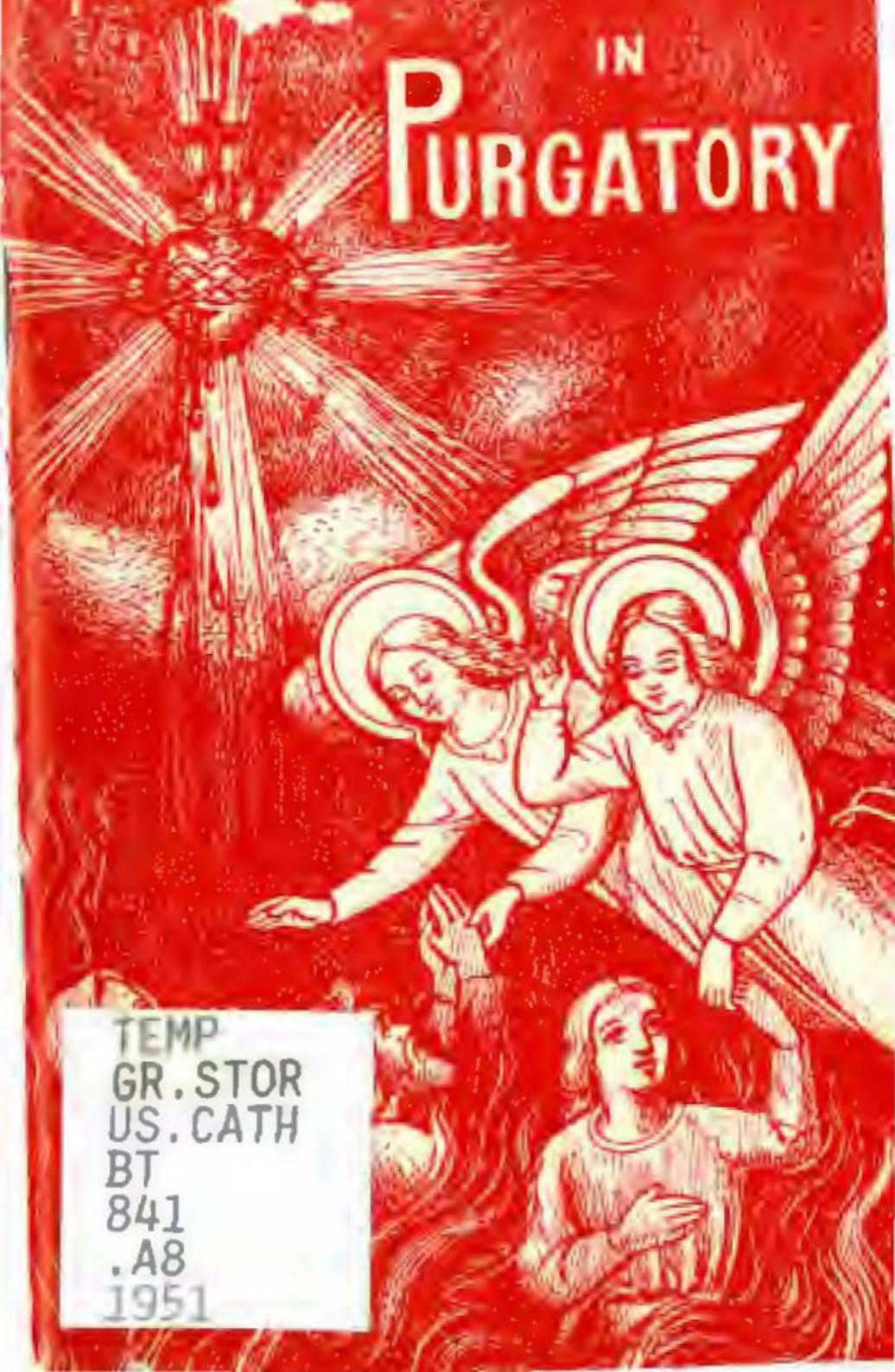


# ASSIST THE SOULS IN PURGATORY



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# Assist the Souls in Purgatory

An Excellent Means to Obtain Aid  
in All Our Needs

“That in all things



God may be glorified.”

Holy Rule of St. Benedict.

Nihil Obstat ✠ Stephanus Schappler, O.S.B.  
Abbas Coadjutor Im. Conceptionis

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Episcopus Sancti Josephi

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279,000

PRICE, 10¢

Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration  
Clyde, Missouri



The Precious Blood, once offered upon the Cross and now daily offered upon our altars, is a most efficacious means of bringing relief to the poor souls.

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*Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration  
Clyde, Missouri*



## PART I

## God's Masterpiece of Pity



**I**NNUMERABLE are the manifestations Almighty God has made of His paternal pity for His children. The visible world is replete with evidences of His goodness and fatherly care. But we must contemplate the world beyond to find the masterpiece of God's pity for the children of men. It is that merciful place of expiation known as purgatory, to which are consigned the souls who depart this life justified, but still in need of purification.

Purgatory is truly an invention of God's all-merciful, condescending love, for had not God created purgatory as a place of expiation of offenses not atoned for during life, doubtless the greater part of mankind would be excluded from the Beatific Vision. In the purifying flames of purgatory souls are made worthy to take their places in the court of heaven before the throne of the King of kings. In

purgatory they are prepared to enter the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of peace, whose inhabitants are ever bathed in the radiant light of eternal love.

Both Holy Scripture and the Doctors of the Church teach that there is a purgatory. Reason also tells us this. No one who reflects a moment will doubt that there are persons who during their lives never commit mortal sin, or persons who at death are not in the state of mortal sin, but who are, nevertheless, not free from faults and imperfections when they enter eternity. Reason tells us that such souls would not be worthy to enter at once into heaven, where "nothing defiled may enter," and that, on the other hand, they could not be consigned by God to eternal torments, for this would be contrary to His infinite and perfect justice. Hence, we must conclude that there is a middle state where souls can be purified from their stains, where they can expiate the debts due to sins forgiven but not atoned for, and where they are clothed in the spotless wedding garment of perfect purity before being admitted to the eternal nuptials with the all-pure, all-holy God. This place is purgatory.

It is not to be understood, however, that all souls are excluded from the Beatific Vision of God until they have passed through the fiery furnace of purgatory. There are many heroic souls, who, having

been purified in the furnace of love and suffering, are admitted to the presence of God immediately after death. Moreover, the fact that a soul is sentenced to chastisement in purgatory, does not justify the conclusion that it will be inferior in heavenly glory to souls admitted to heaven without undergoing purification by fire. The most precious stones and metals sometimes require longer and more thorough polishing than less valuable ones. The degree of their value depends upon their interior worth. So, too, the degree of glory of each saint in heaven depends upon the merit of each particular life.

### **Location of Purgatory**

Holy Scripture does not reveal to us the location of purgatory. But it is the general opinion of theologians that purgatory is located in the interior of the earth, very near to the place of eternal perdition. This is also the common belief of the faithful and is confirmed by the liturgical prayers of the Church and the testimony of Holy Scripture. The vast prison of pain known as purgatory is, according to some spiritual writers, divided into many parts wherein souls suffer in different degrees of intensity according to the faults they may have to expiate or the debts they have yet to pay.

We must not, however, view purgatory

as being confined to a particular location. The writings of many saintly persons mention various places where the holy souls are purified and are made to suffer their purgatory. Father Faber observes: "Some souls undergo their punishment in the air, or near their graves, or near the altars of the Blessed Sacrament, or in the rooms of those praying for them, or amid the scenes of former sins or frivolities."

### **Torments of Purgatory**

Purgatory punishes, by tortures unknown to earth, the slightest stains of sin remaining upon the soul after death, and while punishing, purifies the soul from those stains. No human tongue can describe the intense pain which the suffering souls must endure in the process of purification. The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, says: "The least pain in purgatory is greater than the greatest suffering in this world." And elsewhere he adds: "The same fire torments the reprobate in hell and the just in purgatory."

St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, who in spirit beheld this realm of suffering, said: "All the torments and tortures of the martyrs and the most intense fire on earth are like a pleasure-garden compared to purgatory." The holy Bishop, St. Cyril, makes this astounding assertion: "A man ought rather to suffer all earthly torments simultaneously until the end of the world

than to spend a single day in purgatory."

The exact nature of these sufferings, and the manner in which souls separated from their bodies can suffer pains which have the same effect as though the soul were still united with the body, has not been revealed to us. But it is the teaching of the holy Fathers and theologians that the souls in purgatory do suffer pain of **physical sensation**. In addition to the punishment of physical pain prepared by Divine Justice for those who have sinned by the misuse of their senses, those who have sinned by the misuse of their mental faculties must likewise endure a special kind of pain.

**But the greatest suffering of the holy souls consists in their being deprived of the sight of God.** Man is created for God alone. The highest and most noble powers of his soul long for the Eternal Truth, thirst for the Sovereign Good. The soul which has departed this world in a state of grace, but is detained by Divine Justice in purgatory, loves God above all things, for His sake alone. She has already had a glimpse of heaven; she has, for a moment, beheld Jesus in the splendor of His glory and majesty, surrounded by resplendent hosts of angels and saints, and has heard from His gracious lips the blessed and joyful sentence of eternal salvation. But now her eyes look for Him in vain in the depths of the dark prison. In vain she

sighs for Him. This intense longing constitutes the greatest of the pains of purgatory.

### **Helplessness of the Poor Souls**

Holy Church teaches that during the pilgrimage of our earthly life we can, by the performance of good works, obtain the remission of punishment due to sin and merit an everlasting reward in the kingdom of heaven. But once a soul has taken the great step from time to eternity, the ability to acquire merit for heaven ceases. The poor souls in the place of purification can no longer gain any merit. For them, the time has come of which the Divine Master says: "Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4). Their love for God may be ever so burning, their repentance ever so sincere, their resignation to the will of God most heroic, their patience most touching, their longing after God most intense, their prayers ever so devout, yet they cannot thereby make atonement for their sins nor acquire any merit for heaven. What these souls still owe to Eternal Justice must be paid through **expiatory sufferings**, through the endurance of pain, **unless satisfaction is offered in their behalf by someone upon earth.**

From the depths of purgatory, day and night, resound the plaintive cries of the poor souls: "Have pity on us, have pity on us, at least you, our friends, for the

hand of the Lord hath touched us! Look at our distress; great as the ocean is our misery! Do not delay to aid us, for we are helpless and forsaken! Hasten to assist us, for we cannot help ourselves! Hasten, for we suffer unspeakable pain!"

### **Duration of Purgatory**

Holy Church tells us nothing concerning the duration of purgatory, except that it is not a place of eternal pain, but will end at the last judgment. Neither are we informed of the length of time required for the purification of a soul. We know only that souls must remain there until they are perfectly purified, either by their pains or by the suffrages of the faithful upon earth. It is evident, therefore, that some must suffer a longer and others a shorter time, according to the amount of punishment to be expiated.

According to Venerable Marina of Escobar, some souls are sentenced to punishment for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty years, and even longer. Numerous souls who had been in purgatory for twenty, forty and fifty years, appeared to the Venerable Sister Frances of the Blessed Sacrament and implored her assistance. The Venerable Anna Catherine Emmerich had a vision of a soul that had been in purgatory for centuries. The learned St. Robert Bellarmine and others held the opinion

that there are some souls who will have to suffer in purgatory until the end of time. Intensified pain will probably supply the want of time for souls who have not rendered full satisfaction at the time of the last judgment.

In purgatory, however, the passage of time is not reckoned as it is by us here upon earth. To the suffering souls, hours seem as years, and years as centuries. This has been revealed by the apparitions of many souls. A religious who appeared after death to one of his brethren said that three days in purgatory had seemed to him longer than a thousand years. Another, having experienced the sufferings of purgatory for only a few hours, was convinced that he had suffered a hundred and fifty years.

A certain priest who had lived a very holy and penitential life was warned of his approaching death and informed that he would have to suffer in purgatory until a Holy Mass had been offered up in his behalf. He told an intimate friend of the warning, and the latter promised to offer a Mass for him as soon as possible after his death. No sooner had the good priest breathed his last than his friend hastened to fulfil his promise. With utmost fervor he offered up the Holy Sacrifice, beseeching God in the name of the Victim of the altar to have pity on the soul of his departed friend.

While the priest was making his thanksgiving after Mass, the soul of the deceased appeared to him, radiant with holy joy, but with a sad voice reproached him, saying: "O brother, how badly you kept your promise! You left me in purgatory a whole year, and during all that time neither you nor any of the Fathers said a Holy Mass for me!" Astounded by these words, the Father replied that he had just finished the Mass which he had commenced directly after the priest's death, and that the remains were still awaiting burial. The soul exclaimed in astonishment: "Oh, how dreadful are the sufferings of purgatory, that such a short time should appear to be a year!" He then thanked God for His mercy and goodness in shortening the time of His purgation, and with inexpressible joy took his flight to heaven.

### **The Poor Souls Aided through the Communion of Saints**

We know from the consoling doctrine of the Communion of Saints that the members of the Church Triumphant in heaven are given power to assist the members of the Church Militant on earth as well as the members of the Church Suffering in purgatory; and that the members of the Church Militant are likewise enabled to assist their suffering brethren in purgatory. The lives of nearly all the saints reveal

that they practiced great charity towards the poor souls. But how much greater must be their sympathy for these poor sufferers now that they look down upon them from the realms of glory, having themselves, in many instances, experienced the rigors of Divine Justice in the flames of purgatory? They exercise this ardent charity in behalf of the poor souls by interceding for them at the throne of God and imploring Divine Mercy to shorten the time of their purgation.

The souls in purgatory can expiate their sins only through excruciating sufferings, but the Church Militant can take their place in the work of atonement and offer up suffrages to the merciful and just Judge, imploring Him to accept such works in expiation of the poor souls' delinquencies. The justice of God demands the payment of their debts, but His mercy is appeased by the atonement and intercession made by the living in their behalf. Had these souls in purgatory during their mortal life been more fervent in prayer, in self-denial and good works, in fasting, laboring and suffering, they might have entered heaven immediately after death. Now unless others do in their stead what they neglected to do, they must expiate their faults by suffering. But the indebtedness of the suffering souls is canceled more speedily by means of the suffrages offered for them on earth.

## PART II

# Motives for Assisting the Poor Souls



**T**HE Church has at all times taught that prayer for the dead is most salutary, and she bases this tradition of faith upon Divine revelation. There are many motives which should impel us to assist the souls in purgatory. Catholic theologians enumerate three classes of such motives: those relating to God, those relating to the suffering souls, and those relating to ourselves.

### 1. Motives Relating to God

If we truly love God, we will prove our love by our eagerness to do whatever we know to be pleasing to Him and by striving with all the means in our power to promote His honor and glory. Now it is the unanimous teaching of the Doctors of the Church that charity toward the poor souls is most pleasing to God. St. Thomas Aquinas holds that mercy shown to the souls of the departed is more pleasing to God than that shown to the living. St. Francis de Sales says: "This one act, mercy toward the poor souls, comprises the thirteen others, the spiritual and corporal." The saint and Doctor of the Church, Cardinal Bellarmine,

said in his sermons: "He who espouses the cause of the poor souls and is charitable toward them, performs a far greater act than if he had given a most generous alms to a poor person here on earth."

Our Divine Savior Himself confirms this teaching. To the Venerable Marie Lataste He once said: **You can do nothing more pleasing to God than to aid the suffering souls.** And to St. Gertrude He said: "Every prayer, howsoever poor it may be, if said for the souls in purgatory, is acceptable to Me on account of the great desire I have for their release."

Besides being an act highly pleasing to God, charity toward the poor souls promotes God's honor and glory. The chief purpose of the saints in all their actions was always to honor and glorify God. Likewise, this should always be the principal object of the good works we offer for the dead.

Our Divine Savior taught us that our first petition to the Heavenly Father should be, "Hallowed be Thy Name!" Holy Church has the same intention when in the **Gloria** of the Mass she prays, "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!" Praising God is the principal occupation of the saints in heaven, and if we ransom a soul from purgatory, we help to people heaven with souls who praise God. A pious monk was so affected by this thought that he exclaimed: "I invite all who are in-

flamed with the desire to see God glorified, and who strive for the pure love of God, to ponder this truth."

St. Teresa and other saints have declared that they would gladly suffer all imaginable torments if thereby they could increase God's glory one degree. What, then, ought not we to do and suffer in order to hasten the deliverance of the souls in purgatory, since thereby God's glory is increased not for a moment only, but for all eternity? A fervent religious, Father John of St. Mary, exclaimed in a transport of love: "Oh, that I could be banished to a wilderness or a prison all the days of my life, and there do nothing else but gain indulgences for the suffering souls, so as to conduct some of them to our Divine Savior that they might love and praise Him with all their power." Father Faber says: "It is most fortunate to have some one in heaven who praises, loves and glorifies God with us and for us." And elsewhere he writes: "This devotion is an act of love toward the humanity of Jesus Christ, because it exalts the wealth of His Redemption, it honors His merits and glorifies His Blood."

## **2. Motives Relating to the Poor Souls**

Closely associated with the first and greatest commandment of the love of God is that second great commandment so tirelessly inculcated by Our Lord — the love

of our neighbor. Now, if Christian charity commands us to relieve our neighbors who are in corporal or spiritual distress, how binding is the obligation it imposes upon us to assist the poor souls in purgatory — the poorest of the poor! These dear prisoners of Divine Justice, as we have seen, are utterly unable to help themselves. Their tears of contrition can no longer blot out their misdeeds. They can no longer avail themselves of the sacraments, of indulgences or other means of grace. No longer can they atone for their faults by good works, prayer, fasting or almsdeeds. They are totally dependent upon our assistance; our works of atonement in their behalf are their only hope of relief. They cannot even make known to us their pitiable condition, but must rely upon Holy Church to do so in their stead. **Would not our hearts be harder than stone if we remained indifferent to their needs? if we neglected to do all in our power to assist them?** Ah, surely the helpless condition of these poor sufferers merits our heartfelt compassion and our most generous charity!

### **Souls Especially Entitled to Our Charity**

Perhaps among the poor souls there are many who during life were near and dear to us—souls who have special claims upon our gratitude and affection, because of the many benefits they bestowed upon us. During their life, they no doubt con-

soled and encouraged us many times. And perhaps we were the cause of their committing many of the faults for which they are now making atonement. Can we be so heartless as to abandon them to their excruciating pains without making any effort to help them? Shall we do nothing to hasten their union with God, for whom they now long so ardently?

We must not too easily convince ourselves that our departed loved ones, because of the virtuousness of their lives, are already enjoying the bliss of heaven. We know that the judgments of Divine Justice are rigorous and that "nothing defiled can enter heaven."

After the death of his mother, Saint Monica, St. Augustine wrote: "Truly, my mother lived in a way that by her living faith and the purity of her morals she glorified Thy Name, O Lord. May I dare to declare that no word against Thy commandments ever passed her lips? But what is the holiest life if Thou search it with holy justice? Therefore, O Lord, I shall not speak of the good works of my mother, but rather beg Thee to forgive her sins. Hear me, for the sake of the bleeding Wounds of Him who died on the Cross for her, and who, sitting at Thy right hand, is our Mediator. Grant that all Thy servants, my brothers, and all who read these lines, may remember Thy servant Monica, and her husband, Patricius."

The filial duty imposed by the fourth commandment does not cease at death. If during life parents need the support of their children, how much greater is their need of succor when they languish in the torturing fires of purgatory? And who has a greater claim upon our charity than a devoted, sacrificial father who spared no pains in providing for our sustenance, or a loving mother who suffered and sacrificed for us from the first moment of our existence? Shall our dear parents now be obliged to cry out from the flames of purgatory, "I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have forgotten me"?

Parents, on their part, have a no less strict duty to pray for the souls of their deceased children. Sad to say, however, many parents neglect this duty. They weep and lament with inconsolable grief when death robs them of a child, yet they do not think of praying for the repose of the child's soul. Especially in the case of young children is this duty neglected, as if all children entered heaven immediately after death and had no need of prayer. Let parents not neglect to pray for the souls of even young children who have attained the use of reason, for only God knows the secrets of their hearts, and His justice constrains Him to punish every stain of sin.

Likewise the bonds of affection which

unite husband and wife, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, ought to be strengthened rather than severed by death. Though we are deprived of the visible presence of our loved ones, our faith should be sufficiently strong to make us realize their dependence upon our charity in the prison house of pain in which very likely they are detained.

Nor let us forget the souls of religious suffering in purgatory. Their lives, spent in prayer, teaching, or nursing claim the charity of our prayers at their death.

Among the suffering souls there is, furthermore, a class which is too seldom recommended to the prayers of the faithful, namely, the souls of deceased priests. This is regrettable indeed, for the faithful can never sufficiently realize the many and great blessings for which they are indebted to priests. From the cradle to the grave, the priest is the dispenser of graces; he is the comforter, the helper and the adviser of souls. Our Divine Lord once spoke to Ven. Marie Lataste: "My daughter, pray much for My priests, for they are prayed for entirely too little. Too often the faithful forget that it is their duty to pray for priests, who are their fathers as regards their salvation."

The greater the dignity with which a person is invested, the greater his responsibility, and the more strict his judgment. We read in the life of Bl. Frances of the

Blessed Sacrament that the souls of two popes, many bishops, and a great number of priests appeared to her, begging her assistance. Among all the suffering souls, the souls of priests are dearest to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to Mary. Therefore, mercy shown to them is especially pleasing to God and those who aid the souls of departed priests may expect special graces.

Young men, in particular, who are preparing for Holy Orders, should practice great charity toward the souls of deceased priests; they will thereby obtain special graces for their vocation. Mercy shown to them and to the other suffering souls will be the means of providing great and powerful friends in eternity. Parents, also, whose sons are preparing for the priesthood, should be most charitable toward the souls of deceased priests. Thus they will obtain aid for their sons to become good priests, worthy ministers of the altar.

### **3. Motives Relating to Ourselves**

St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Robert Bellarmine are of the opinion that the poor souls may be invoked. To be convinced of their intercessory power, we need but read the numberless instances recorded of aid received through the poor souls. One person, for instance, is delivered from the passion of gambling on account of his charity for the souls in purgatory, another

from drink, a third from impure temptations, and another obtains through the holy souls the grace of receiving the last sacraments, etc.

Because God loves the souls in purgatory so much and longs for their deliverance, and because their sufferings are so dreadful, He bestows special graces on those who come to their assistance. It was revealed to a saintly person that God answers with exceptional promptness the prayers of those who in distress and misery have recourse to the suffering souls. They receive graces for soul and body, temporal favors which they could not have expected, had they not been merciful to the poor souls. St. Catherine of Bologna declared expressly that she had obtained more graces through the mediation of the poor souls in purgatory than through the intercession of the saints. Frequently she petitioned the saints in heaven for graces which were not granted; but no sooner did she appeal to the poor souls, than she obtained what she desired.

A devout person declared that when all her prayers and petitions for a certain grace had proved fruitless, she turned to the souls in purgatory, and her request was granted. Our Lord Himself appeared to St. Catherine of Siena and revealed to her that she had obtained hundreds of great graces through the intercession of the holy souls. A certain poor soul said to

Blessed Frances of the Blessed Sacrament:  
"We too, recommend your needs to God.  
Whenever a person remembers us, we all  
remember him before God and obtain  
graces for him, especially the grace to  
serve God faithfully, to avoid sin and to  
die a happy death." St. Brigid relates  
that she once heard many poor souls pray-  
ing, "O God, reward those who help us in  
our misery."

The Blessed Virgin herself recommends  
charity toward the souls in purgatory to  
her servants. Rev. Alphonse Corsetti, S.J.,  
had long been annoyed by violent tempta-  
tions against holy chastity. As he had  
vainly employed every means to banish  
them, he took refuge in Mary. The Blessed  
Virgin appeared to him and admonished  
him to pray much for the poor souls; he  
did so and was relieved.

Let us, then, pray with confidence for  
the poor souls in all our necessities, and  
we will soon experience that through them  
many great graces can be obtained.

### **Thirty-three Days' Devotion for the Poor Souls**

An efficacious means of obtaining favors  
from heaven is to assist at Holy Mass and  
to pray the "Way of the Cross" daily for  
thirty-three consecutive days for the poor  
souls. Many persons have by this means  
obtained favors which they did not receive  
even through the intercession of the saints.

## Means of Assisting the Poor Souls



**O**UR holy Mother, the Church, holds out such manifold and powerful means of assisting the souls in purgatory that none of her children can plead inability to help them, no matter in what circumstances they may be placed. If done for the love of Jesus and with a good intention, the least good work aids the poor souls. Our Divine Savior revealed this to St. Gertrude, saying: "As a usurer will not permit a single opportunity to escape of earning a penny, much less will I let even a movement of your little finger, made for love of Me, be lost, but will apply it for My honor and your salvation. My tenderness will accept a step made, a straw picked up from the ground, a word, a greeting, a short memento for the dead, a prayer for sinners or for the just, if only the good intention to apply the satisfactory value to the poor souls is attached thereto."

Some of the rich treasures at our disposal for aiding the poor souls are the following: —

## 1. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

The most powerful means to secure the release of the poor souls from purgatory is the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This was solemnly declared by the Council of Trent in its twenty-fifth session. The Fathers of the Church likewise speak in the most glowing terms of this consoling truth. The holy Doctors St. Gregory and St. Jerome maintain that the souls for whom a Holy Mass is being said, or for whom the priest makes a memento, **experience no pain during the time of the Sacrifice.**

Holy Mass is the unbloody Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, offered to God for the living and the dead through the ministry of His priests. As once on the Cross, so now on the altar the Precious Blood pleads for mercy and forgiveness. After the Consecration, the priest, in the name of the Divine Victim, prays for the departed members of the Church. For this reason Holy Mass is a most efficacious means wherewith one may help the poor souls, either by having it offered up for them, or by assisting at its celebration. Great refreshment is given to the suffering souls if, after the Consecration, the Precious Blood in the chalice is offered in their behalf.

The efficacy of Holy Mass for the poor souls is proved by many incidents such as the following: — Blessed Henry Suso and

one of his brothers in religion agreed that whichever of the two survived should, upon hearing of the death of the other, offer several Holy Masses for the soul of the departed. A few years later, Blessed Henry received notice that his friend had died. However, as he still had many Mass intentions on hand, he thought it unnecessary to fulfil the assumed obligation immediately, but fasted and prayed much, and performed other works of penance for the soul of his departed friend. After a few days the deceased appeared to him in a most pitiful condition and rebuked him for not keeping his promise. Suso sought to justify himself by saying he had prayed much and fasted severely for the soul of the departed. But the friend answered: "Your good works are too feeble to free me from these torments. **Only the Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Mass is capable of that.** If you had offered the promised Holy Masses, I would already be released from the fiery prison, but now I must burn through your fault." Blessed Henry then offered the Holy Masses, whereupon his friend appeared to him a second time, announcing that he was now released and happy in heaven amid the angels and saints, and that he would not cease to intercede for him before the throne of God.

Numberless persons have been aided in their own necessities by **having Masses said** for the souls in purgatory. **Assisting**

at Mass for the poor souls is likewise a source of many graces for the living. Could the faithful upon earth but witness the consolation, joy and refreshment of the holy souls during the time that Holy Mass is offered for them, they would be most zealous in having the Adorable Sacrifice offered for them and in assisting thereat for their benefit.

## 2. Holy Communion

The offering of Holy Communion for the suffering souls is also very beneficial to them. After the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Holy Communion is the most sublime act of religion, the one which most glorifies God. On account of the sentiments of humility, contrition and love it excites in the soul, it becomes one of the most salutary of satisfactory works. This satisfactory merit may be applied to the poor souls. After Holy Communion, when our Divine Savior is the Guest of our soul, He is truly our possession, with all His infinite merits and perfections. Can the Heavenly Father refuse our petition if we offer Him this precious treasure and implore Him in return to grant relief to the suffering souls and to release them from purgatory? The precious moments after Holy Communion are likewise the most opportune wherein to petition favors from Our Lord Himself, and to implore His pardon for them.

The saintly and learned Benedictine Abbot, Louis Blossius, an acknowledged master of the spiritual life, relates an incident which demonstrates the efficacy of offering Holy Communion for the relief of the poor souls. A person whom Blossius knew intimately was favored with an apparition of a departed friend enveloped in flames. The deceased made known that he was deprived of the Beatific Vision of God for having received Holy Communion without due preparation, and that he was immersed in burning flames for having approached the Eucharistic table with culpable tepidity. He besought his friend to communicate once with devout preparation and great fervor of spirit as a suffrage for him. The friend complied with this request, and later saw the soul of the deceased person joyously ascend to heaven.

### **3. Indulgences**

A further powerful means of assisting the souls in purgatory is the gaining of indulgences in their behalf. An indulgence, as we know, is the remission of all or a part of the temporal punishment due to sin after the sin has been forgiven. It is gained by the performance of some good work prescribed by the Church, in consideration of which the Church draws an atoning value from the treasury of the merits and atoning works of Jesus Christ and the saints. Innumerable prayers and

good works have indulgences attached, and nearly all are applicable to the poor souls.

By gaining an indulgence and applying it to the poor souls, we can help them to pay what they still owe to Divine Justice, and thus hasten their departure from that place from which they cannot be released until the last farthing is paid. We must remember, however, that indulgences can be gained only by those who are in the state of grace.

Our Lord revealed to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, after the death of one of her Sisters, that the soul of the deceased had been detained in purgatory only fifteen hours because during life she had been zealous in gaining and offering indulgences for the dead.

#### 4. Prayer

Prayer has been called by St. Augustine the "key of heaven." Certainly it is one of the indispensable means for attaining salvation. We are bound to pray during this earthly life if we wish one day to enjoy the bliss of heaven. Fervent and submissive prayer penetrates the clouds and moves the Heart of God to mercy. Now, if God is pleased to hear and answer our prayers when we petition for ourselves, even for transitory goods, how much more will He hear and answer our prayers when we pray for those souls whom He ardently loves and who are destined for and certain

of enjoying with Him eternal bliss and glory in His heavenly kingdom? Thomas a Kempis very aptly remarks: "Therefore let us pray for our dear departed ones, whom we shall follow in a short time, that hereafter they may remember us in our distress and sufferings; but let us always pray with fervent devotion and attention." And St. Cyril exhorts all: "Let us pray for the departed, for thereby we procure for them much alleviation."

God in His wisdom and goodness does not grant what we ask for in prayer when He sees that it would be harmful to our salvation. But when we implore help for the poor souls we promote both the honor of God and the good of our neighbor's soul. We may, therefore, confidently expect that God will always hear our prayers in their behalf. **There is no means which God has given us to impart assistance to the poor souls which we can employ so frequently and so easily as prayer.** At all times, in all places, even amid an abundance of work, we can pray and implore God for the release of the souls suffering so dreadfully in purgatory. Prayer for the departed is urged by Holy Scripture in the words: "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Machab. 12:46). Let it be our firm purpose generously to make use of this easy means of bringing consolation to the poor souls.

## 5. Ejaculations

The practice of offering ejaculatory prayers for the poor souls is greatly to be commended, particularly such as are enriched with indulgences. A short but fervent prayer is often of greater benefit to the poor souls than a prolonged form of devotion which is wanting in attention. Innumerable are the short ejaculatory prayers to which the Church has granted indulgences, all of which are applicable to the poor souls. We must, however, form the intention of applying them to the souls of the departed, and it is well to renew this intention frequently. How easily we can multiply these little fiery darts of prayer during the day as we go from task to task, and even while our hands are busy with some occupation! It is not even necessary for us to move our lips, so that no one need be aware of our praying. How many souls could we not relieve or release from purgatory if frequently during the day we offered this short indulgenced prayer of the Church for the departed: "Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen." (Ind. of 300 days each time. "Manual of Indulgences," 582.) If we repeat with fervent devotion the holy names of "Jesus, Mary, Joseph" an indulgence of seven years may be gained each time. (274) Oh, let us begin

today to make fervent use of such ejaculations,\* that we may truly become "angels of consolation" for the suffering souls.

## 6. The Rosary

Another most efficacious prayer for the faithful departed is the Rosary. The Blessed Virgin herself assures us through St. Dominic that "the release of the souls in purgatory is one of the chief effects of the Rosary." The Rosary is more precious by far to the poor souls than silver and gold are in the eyes of worldlings. They love this prayer because it is an urgent supplication to their most powerful Mediatrix — the Mother of God — which may not easily be denied. In a single Rosary, the pleading petition "Pray for us" is repeated fifty times. In this instance it means "Pray for the poor souls." So impetuous, so manifold a petition, Mary, the clement Virgin, surely cannot refuse!

Moreover, the numerous indulgences with which the Rosary is enriched are a most efficacious means of canceling the indebtedness of the poor souls and of hastening their release from the fiery prison of purgatory. So generously have the popes endowed the Rosary with indulgences that one might almost say there is no prayer

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\*Our booklet **Indulgenced Prayers and Aspirations** contains most of the indulgenced ejaculations in common use, conveniently classified. 10¢ per copy, plus postage; reduction on quantities.

which can more effectively aid the poor souls.

Blessed Alanus relates that many members of the Dominican Order testified under oath to having received visits from souls in purgatory during the recitation of the Rosary. The holy souls appeared, bearing the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads, thanked their benefactors and asked them to continue their prayers. Repeatedly these holy souls made known that, with the exception of Holy Mass and Holy Communion, there is no more powerful means of releasing souls from purgatory than the Rosary, and that a great number are delivered by it every day.

In addition to the indulgences which may be gained by the Rosary prayer itself, innumerable indulgences, both plenary and partial, may be gained by becoming a member of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Rosary. This Archconfraternity, the foundations of which were laid by St. Dominic himself, is the oldest and largest in the world and has been approved and recommended by at least thirty-four popes. Father Faber says, "The Archconfraternity of the Holy Rosary can well be called the queen of indulgenced devotions."\*

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\*Our booklet *The Rosary, My Treasure* gives a more detailed explanation of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Rosary, together with the rich indulgences which are available to its members. 10¢ per copy.

## 7. The Way of the Cross

Yet another most powerful, and at the same time easily available, means of helping the poor souls and acquiring merit for ourselves, is to pray the Stations or the **Way of the Cross.**\* Nothing is more pleasing to Our Lord than devout meditation on His bitter sufferings. Many teachers of the spiritual life assure us that more benefit is derived through loving meditation on the sufferings of Our Lord than by the practice of rigorous penances and the recitation of long prayers. Moreover, contemplating Our Lord in His bitter sufferings is the best means to fill us with contrition for sin and incite us to the practice of penance and mortification. The atoning merit which we thus acquire may be applied to the poor souls, and will, without doubt, afford them great relief in their pain.

Because of the rich indulgences which Holy Church has attached to this devotion, it is a source of special aid and affords great consolation to the poor souls.

We read in the life of the venerable Mary of Antigua that a nun of her convent appeared to her after death and complained: "Why is it that you do not perform for me and for other suffering souls the devotion of the Stations of the Cross?"

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\*Our booklet **The Way of the Cross** contains a popular method of praying the Stations, with 15 illustrations. 10¢ per copy.

The servant of God stood speechless at these words: Then she heard Jesus say to her: "The devotion of the Stations of the Cross is so profitable to the souls in purgatory that this soul has come to demand it of you in the name of all. It is a most efficacious suffrage for the souls in purgatory, who, on their part, will be as so many protectors standing and praying for you and defending your cause before My justice."

### **8. Works of Expiation**

The Church has at all times recommended works of mortification and self-denial, and the saints have always had recourse thereto as the best means of obtaining special graces from God. Although great works of penance and mortification are not expected of us, surely we can all occasionally deny ourselves some favorite dish or some amusement, mortify our eyes, ears or tongue, curb our self-will, or bear patiently the inconveniences of sickness, of heat or cold, or the trials God sends us, and offer the merit of expiation thus acquired for the relief of the suffering souls. The fasts and abstinences prescribed by the Church are also a salutary form of penance which may be offered up for the souls in purgatory.

Doubtless many souls are suffering there because during their life they were slothful, self-indulgent, idle, gluttonous,

insubmissive, etc. By becoming more industrious at work, firmer in resisting temptations, more mortified in our senses, more generous in giving, we can repair their neglect by doing what they should have done, and can really pay the debt which they owe to Divine Justice. Such charity lovingly bestowed on the souls of the faithful departed will obtain for them great alleviation in their sufferings and will at the same time call down rich blessings upon the giver.

### 9. Almsgiving

One of the most perfect works of expiation, and one which is highly extolled and most earnestly recommended in Holy Scripture is the giving of alms. We read in Ecclesiasticus (3:33): "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sin," that is, the punishment still due to sin. Another passage says: "Stretch out thy hand to the poor, that thy expiation and thy blessing may be perfected" (7:36), whereby the Holy Ghost intimates that without almsgiving there is no perfect expiation. St. Thomas does not hesitate to attribute more expiatory power to almsgiving than to prayer. Many departed souls have petitioned those to whom they appeared to give alms in their behalf. At all times, devout persons have been solicitous to give alms for the consolation of the poor souls.

A poor soul once appeared to St. Margaret of Cortona and said: "Oh, if men knew from what torments they deliver the suffering souls when they are generous to those in need, and what a treasure they thereby lay up for themselves, they would distribute all they possess to the poor." Let us not forget, however, what St. Gregory says, that God does not consider so much the amount given, as the heart of the giver. Charity alone renders a deed great in the eyes of God.

If some important matter causes us anxiety, let us give alms for the poor souls and implore them to intercede for us. Pope Leo XIII recommended the giving of alms especially for missions, and complained in an encyclical that the apostolic missions were in most distressing circumstances. God has raised up pious men in every age, who, trusting in Divine Providence, have gathered about them young men to educate them as priests and missionaries. Oh, let us give them alms, for the consolation of the suffering souls. The renowned Cardinal Manning says: "Among all God-pleasing works, the most excellent is that of educating a priest, that Divine instrument for a multitude of souls."

Many religious orders have founded institutions in heathen lands, and have thereby rescued hundreds of children from temporal and eternal ruin. They, too, in their poverty expect alms from their Chris-

tian brethren at home. The children thus rescued pray much for their benefactors. How efficacious are such prayers, the prayers of the poor! The Holy Ghost assures us expressly: "The Lord hath heard the poor, and hath not despised His prisoners" (Ps. 68:34).

Another form of almsgiving which assuredly is highly pleasing to the Divine Heart of Jesus is that which has for its object the maintenance of His Eucharistic Sanctuaries, His earthly courts, where Perpetual Adorers are ever in attendance, rendering to Him a solemn homage of praise, adoration, atonement and love.

In such sanctuaries of Perpetual Adoration, the adorers pay a kingly homage to Jesus hidden in the Sacred Host, but they likewise assume the office of mediators in behalf of mankind by their unceasing prayers offered for the living and the deceased. And what is more fitting than that certain souls be set apart to fulfil just this purpose, to relinquish every other duty in order to devote themselves exclusively to a life of prayer, to send up supplications day and night to God's throne of mercy on behalf of the members of the Church Suffering and of the Church Militant? (See page 41.)



# Special Aids for the Poor Souls



## The Precious Blood

Because of the all-merciful love of God, we have at our disposal a most efficacious means of bringing relief or release to the poor souls, namely, the **Precious Blood of Jesus Christ**. This Blood, once offered upon the Cross, is now constantly offered upon our altars for the forgiveness of sins, and for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory. It is a treasure which we can bestow copiously, a healing water which we can cause to flow freely for the consolation of the poor souls.

St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that "as the dew refreshes and raises up the withering plants and flowers, so does the Blood of Christ revive and comfort and bring renewed hope to the poor souls in purgatory." But alas! how many poor souls there are in purgatory, who, like the sick man who for many weary years had waited at Bethsaida's pool for someone to assist him into the healing waters, might well raise this complaint: "I have no one to help me. I long for the Precious Blood of Jesus, but there is no one to apply It to me."

Let us, then, frequently offer the Precious Blood to the Eternal Father for the relief of the souls detained in purgatory's flames. (See prayers, page 62.)

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## The Gregorian Masses

The so-called "Gregorian Masses" are a series of thirty successive Masses said for the same deceased person, to obtain the deliverance of the soul from purgatory. The belief in the efficacy of this practice is based on a private revelation made to Pope Saint Gregory the Great, and approved by the Church. Pope Benedict XIV highly commended this pious usage, and the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences declared that the confidence of the faithful, which holds that the offering of the Gregorian Masses has a special effect in delivering a soul from purgatory, is pious and reasonable. More than one series of Gregorian Masses may be offered up for the same soul, however, because the application of the fruit of the Masses is not certain, being entirely dependent upon the holy will of God.

It is necessary that the thirty Masses be said on thirty successive days, without interruption. Each set of thirty Masses may be said for only one deceased person. It is oftentimes difficult for parish priests to accept Gregorian Masses, on account of other Mass intentions which must be persolved. In such instances, we shall be glad to be of assistance by forwarding the Gregorian Masses to needy prelates and monasteries, where they will be promptly and conscientiously offered for the de-

parted soul, as requested. The required stipend for one set of Gregorian Masses is thirty dollars.

## Holy Water

Water which has been blessed by a priest in the name of the Church, to be used for ritual purposes and by the faithful, is commonly known as "Holy Water." Holy Water reminds us of the Sacred Blood of Christ by which we are cleansed from sin, and incites us to purify our souls by a chaste and pious life. The prayer of the Church and the blessing imparted to the water are rendered efficacious through the merits of Christ. When we take holy water and sprinkle ourselves or our surroundings with it, the prayer of the Church ascends to heaven, drawing down blessings upon us and upon the objects that are sprinkled with it. Hence the regular and confident use of holy water is attended with great benefits for soul and body for the living and brings consolation to the souls of the faithful departed.

For this reason, too, a drop of holy water is sometimes more effectual than a long prayer; hence the suffering souls thirst for holy water. Could we but witness their yearning for a drop of it, we would strive by all means in our power to refresh them at least morning and evening, and sometimes during the day, with this sacred dew. If hitherto we have made use

of holy water sparingly and merely from custom, let us henceforth do so liberally and from a conviction of its usefulness and efficacy for the faithful departed as well as for the living.

## **Perpetual Adoration, a Consolation to the Poor Souls**

Many persons regret that their occupations leave them so little time to devote to prayer. Others, too, feel the worth of their own prayers entirely insufficient to satisfy their yearning desire to assist their departed loved ones. Such persons have found untold peace and comfort in the knowledge that they may obtain for their dear ones a share in uninterrupted prayer before God's throne of mercy on earth — the Most Blessed Sacrament. The Perpetual Adoration is, indeed, a welcome help, opportunely destined by Divine Providence for the consolation and aid both of the living and the deceased. From the Sacred Host, streams of alleviating grace flow into the expiatory realms of purgatory, bringing unspeakable relief to those imprisoned there.

## **Association of Perpetual Adoration**

For more than seventy years, the service of Perpetual Adoration has been continued at the motherhouse of the Benedictine Sisters at Clyde, Missouri. Since

June, 1928, it has also been conducted at a branchhouse founded at Mundelein, Illinois; and since November, 1935, at a second branchhouse located in Tucson, Arizona, and in a third branchhouse, in Kansas City, Missouri, since December, 1943. In these Eucharistic Sanctuaries, members of the community kneel in constant adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed, supplicating for the needs of Holy Church, and for all the souls recommended to their prayers. By having their names enrolled in the Association of Perpetual Adoration, both living and departed persons participate in the many spiritual works enumerated below: —

1. **The unceasing Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament**, exposed, in the chapel of the motherhouse at Clyde, Missouri, and those of its branchhouses.

2. **The holy Sacrifice of the Mass**, at which the Sisters daily assist in each of the Adoration Chapels, which (with the exception of about one day a week) is offered by the Sisters for all the members of the Association.

3. A daily remembrance at **Holy Communion** by all the Sisters.

4. **Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament**, given daily in each of the Adoration Chapels.

In addition to the spiritual benefits

above enumerated, **PRIVILEGED** members participate in one or more special Holy Masses offered for them daily; in the Canonical Hours of the Divine Office daily offered in each sanctuary; and in the numerous other good works of the Benedictine Sisters. Such members also enjoy the privilege of having their names entered in the **GOLDEN BOOK**, a beautiful volume which rests near the throne of Exposition at the motherhouse at Clyde, Missouri.

Many families make it a practice to have the names of all their departed relatives and friends inscribed in the Association of Perpetual Adoration, in order that they may share in the numerous spiritual treasures enumerated above.

As mentioned, living persons may likewise be enrolled. The prayers and good works of the adorers for them are especially directed to the intention that they may obtain the grace to live a meritorious life and to die a happy death.

All that is required is to have the name of the person (living or deceased) who is to participate in these benefits inscribed in the register of the Association of Perpetual Adoration at the Benedictine Convent, Clyde, Missouri, and to make an offering according to the degree of membership desired. That is, for participation as an ordinary member, an offering of not less than one dollar for each person is

required; and for participation as a privileged member, the offering for each person is ten dollars, or fifty dollars for an entire family whose members exceed five persons. This offering, in either case, need never be renewed. Persons who are once enrolled remain members in perpetuity, and share in the spiritual benefits even after death, as long as they have need of suffrages. Non-Catholics, as well as Catholics, may be enrolled.

### **“Burnt Offering” for the Poor Souls**

In the Adoration Chapels of the Benedictine Sisters at Clyde, Missouri, Mundelein, Illinois, Tucson, Arizona, and Kansas City, Missouri, the Most Blessed Sacrament is constantly exposed. It is becoming, therefore, that numerous candles should burn before the exposition thrones. Many persons ask frequently to have a candle placed upon the altar for their special intention; some, to beg for the conversion of a sinner; others, as a petition to God to grant relief to their dear ones who may be in purgatory: others for help in some necessity.

No candle could be burned in a more privileged place than before the adorable Sacrament exposed. The living Heart of Jesus in the Sacred Host will be moved to mercy and compassion by this act of faith and generosity. In return, Our Lord will

bestow signal graces on the living and grant consolation to the departed.\*

## **The Heroic Act of Charity for the Poor Souls**

The heroic act of charity consists in offering for the souls in purgatory, through the hands of Mary, all one's good works, together with those which may be offered in one's behalf by others during life and after death. Pope Pius IX, in a decree of Nov. 20, 1854, recommended the heroic act of charity to all the faithful, and granted to this act extraordinary indulgences. A priest who has made the heroic act may by every Holy Mass he says release a soul from purgatory by way of suffrage. All the faithful who have made the heroic act can gain a plenary indulgence each time they receive Holy Communion, provided they pray one "Our Father," "Hail Mary" and "Glory be to the Father," for the intention of the Pope. A plenary indulgence may also be gained on Mondays by assisting at Holy Mass for the poor souls and fulfilling the usual conditions. All indulgences thus gained, including those which are otherwise not applicable to the souls in purgatory, will benefit the holy souls,

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\*For an alms of 50 cents, a large wax candle will be burned a day and night in any one of the three Adoration Chapels before the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed; for \$3.50, one week; for \$12.00, one month.

even though the intention was not made to gain an indulgence. Pius IX calls the heroic act the **greatest consolation of the poor souls**. By means of it, all other prayers, all interior acts, flow like a great, inexhaustible stream into purgatory. It may justly be said that the heroic act is the greatest work of mercy, the most salutary of all acts of charity. Those who make this act may expect a great reward in heaven.

The holy virgin St. Gertrude the Great was accustomed to offer up all her good works for the poor souls every morning. When the hour of her death drew near, the evil spirit filled her with alarm and endeavored to drive her to despair, by representing to her that she had no good works left for herself, as she had carelessly given them all away, etc. Thereupon Our Lord appeared to her in radiant splendor and said: "Why art thou so alarmed, My daughter? That thou mayest know how pleasing to Me was thy charity toward the suffering souls, I remit to thee the entire punishment that had been decreed for thee. And, having promised a hundredfold to those who, in charity toward their fellowmen, forget themselves, I will increase thy glory in heaven a hundredfold. Moreover, all the souls whom thou hast released from purgatory will soon come to meet thee and conduct thee to heaven."

By the heroic act we do not bind our-

selves under pain of sin, but merely resolve earnestly to keep it faithfully. The heroic act is a great honor and joy for Mary. Those who have consecrated themselves to Mary place everything in her hands so that she may release her suffering children. Nor does this act prevent a person from praying especially for his relatives. Mary realizes our obligations, and we may petition her to apply this or that good work to a soul for whom we desire to pray particularly. Let us also consider that whatever we do for the poor souls will be accepted by Our Lord as done to Himself, as though He had been ransomed from a fiery dungeon. He revealed this to St. Gertrude. Oh, let us not hesitate to make the heroic act of charity! For this purpose, the following formula may be used:

**O my God, in union with the merits of Jesus and Mary, I offer up to Thee for the poor souls in purgatory, all my works of satisfaction, as also those that may be offered up by others for me during my life, at my death, and after my death. Amen.**

### **The Month of November**

Holy Church has set aside the month of November for the practice of special devotions in behalf of the suffering souls in purgatory. The well known "Toties Quoties" indulgence, granted to all the faithful in connection with the Commemo-

ration of All Souls, is a most powerful means of assisting the suffering members of Christ's Mystical Body. From noon of the day previous until midnight of the day of commemoration (November 1st to 2nd), a plenary indulgence, applicable to the souls in purgatory, may be gained by all who fulfil the requirements of confession\* and Holy Communion, as often as they visit a church or a semi-public oratory and there pray for the intentions of the Pope, the Our Father, Hail Mary and Gloria six time at every visit. ("Manual of Indulgences," 590.)

Pope Pius XI, moved by a spirit of charity for the suffering souls, granted the following additional favors for the relief of the poor souls: Throughout the octave of the Commemoration of All Souls (November 1st to 8th), all Masses offered at any altar whatsoever, and by any priest, may be held to be privileged Masses, but the application may be made for only one soul, even when the Mass is said for the poor souls in general. By this is understood that a plenary indulgence may be

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\*The confession may be made within the eight days immediately preceding or within the eight days immediately following, and Holy Communion may be received on the day itself, on the vigil of the day, or on any of the eight days following. Persons, therefore, who are accustomed to approach the sacrament of penance at least twice a month and to receive Holy Communion almost daily, may gain these indulgences without a special confession.

gained, which in itself is sufficient to free the soul immediately from the pains of purgatory, but as far as the efficacy of the application is concerned, this must be left to the Divine mercy and acceptance. (591)

During the octave of All Souls, those who visit the cemetery and pray piously for the dead may gain, under the usual conditions, a **plenary indulgence daily**, applicable only to the deceased. Those who visit the cemetery **on any day whatsoever throughout the year** may gain a partial indulgence of seven years for each visit, applicable only to the deceased. (592)

During the year, the faithful may gain an indulgence of three years each day if they devoutly say any prayers they choose for the poor souls for either seven or nine continuous days, and on the completion of the seven or nine days they may gain a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions. (588) If such prayers are said during the month of November, an indulgence of three years may be gained each day of the month, and a plenary indulgence once during the month if these prayers have been said daily and the usual conditions are fulfilled. If the prayers are said **in church**, an indulgence of seven years may be gained each day, and a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions if the prayers are said for at least fifteen days. (589)

## Devotion to Mary

There is no doubt that the Queen of heaven and earth exercises a pre-eminent dominion over the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant, and also, as St. Bernard says, over the Church Suffering. The Church Triumphant participates in her glory, the Church Militant enjoys the treasures of her grace, and the Church Suffering is benefited by the efficacy of her intercession.

According to the revelations of Saint Dionysius the Carthusian, the souls in purgatory experience the same joy at the mention of the name of Mary as a sick person experiences when some alleviation is offered him. The learned Novarin declares that Mary's intercession falls like refreshing dew upon the flames of purgatory and mitigates their rigor. Salmeron says it is the opinion of many theologians that before her death the Blessed Virgin asked and obtained from her Divine Son the release of all the souls who were in purgatory at that time, in order that they might accompany her to heaven.

The pious Gerson says: "As she is crowned Queen, especially Queen of mercy and Mother of grace, it is but natural that she should have the power of obtaining pardon for all the imprisoned." The release of souls from purgatory is obtained through Mary as is also our salvation.

## Mary, the Mother of the Poor Souls

The Blessed Virgin once said to Saint Bridget: "I am the Mother of all the souls in purgatory, and their pains, suffered to satisfy the Divine Justice, are ever assuaged by my intercession." According to St. Bernardine of Siena, Mary has special dominion in this prison of pain, wherein the souls so dear to Christ are detained, and she consoles and delivers them. St. Bernard says, "Mary has great power over purgatory." Jesus Christ has appointed her the dispensatrix of His infinite merits. She holds in her hands, as it were, the key to the Divine treasury. If the poor souls are worthy of the benefit, Mary can deliver them from their torments. Her power extends to the depths of purgatory; but she exercises this power with individual souls in such a manner that Divine Justice is fully satisfied, and the mercy of her Son thereby celebrates a glorious triumph: If we wish, therefore, to be of real assistance to the poor souls, we must often recommend them to the Blessed Virgin Mary.



O Mary, our hope, have pity on us!

300 days each time. (299)

O Mary, Mother of God and Mother of Mercy, pray for us and for all who have died in the peace of the Lord!

300 days each time. (294)

## Prayers for the Poor Souls



### The "Our Father"

**A**T ONE time after St. Mechtilde had received Holy Communion for the souls of the departed, Our Lord appeared to her and said: "Recite an **Our Father** for them." The saint understood that she was to recite the prayer in the following manner. After she had done so, she saw a great multitude of the souls going up to heaven.

**Our Father who art in heaven.** I beg of Thee, loving Father, to pardon the souls in purgatory for not having worshiped Thee as they ought, but for having shut their hearts to Thee who didst desire to dwell therein. To atone for their fault, I offer Thee the love and honor Thy cherished Son rendered Thee while on earth and the abundant satisfaction by which He paid the debt of all their sins. Amen.

**Hallowed be Thy Name.** I beg of Thee, O loving Father, deign to pardon the souls in purgatory for not having worthily honored Thy holy Name, for having seldom invoked it with devotion, for having often used it in vain and for having by

their disgraceful lives rendered themselves unworthy of the name of Christian. In satisfaction for their sins, I offer Thee the perfect holiness of Thy Son by which He exalted Thy Name when preaching and in all His holy works. Amen.

**Thy kingdom come.** I beg of Thee, O loving Father, to pardon the souls in purgatory for not having fervently desired nor carefully sought after Thy kingdom, in which alone true rest and eternal glory consist. To expiate all the indifference which they have shown for every sort of good, I offer Thee the holy desires by which Thy Son wished us to be the co-heirs of His kingdom. Amen.

**Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** I beg of Thee, O loving Father, deign to pardon the souls in purgatory, and especially the souls of religious who during life preferred their will to Thine, for not having in all things loved Thy will, and for often living and acting according to their own. To make reparation for their disobedience, I offer Thee the union of the humble Heart of Thy Son with Thy holy will as also the ready obedience with which He obeyed Thee even unto the death of the Cross. Amen.

**Give us this day our daily bread.** I beg of Thee, O loving Father, to pardon the souls in purgatory for not having re-

ceived the most holy Sacrament of the Altar with the desire, the devotion and love which It merits, for having rendered themselves unworthy of It, or seldom or never having received It. To expiate these sins, I offer Thee the perfect holiness and the devotion and love of Thy Son, as also the ardent love and ineffable desire which made Him give us this precious treasure. Amen.

**And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.** I beg of Thee, O loving Father, to forgive the souls in purgatory the mortal sins into which they fell, especially in not forgiving those who offended them, and for not loving their enemies. For these sins, I offer Thee the loving prayer Thy Son made upon the Cross for His enemies. Amen.

**And lead us not into temptation.** I beg of Thee, O loving Father, to forgive the souls in purgatory for not having overcome their vices and concupiscences, for having consented to the temptations of the devil and the flesh, and for having wilfully given way to bad actions. To expiate these sins, I offer Thee the glorious victory by which Thy Son overcame the world and the devil, as also His most holy life with its works and fatigues, and His bitter Passion and Death. Amen.

**But deliver us from evil.** Deliver the poor souls from the pains of purgatory, O

loving Father, through the merits of Thy Divine Son, and graciously conduct them and us into the kingdom of Thy eternal glory, which is none other than the possession of Thyself. Amen.

### **The "Hail Mary"**

**Hail Mary.** Remember, O most blessed Virgin Mary, the great joy thou didst experience at the salutation of the Angel Gabriel. Through this joy of thy purest heart, I beg of thee to intercede for the poor souls in purgatory, that soon they may be delivered from their sufferings and become partakers of the eternal joys of paradise. Amen.

**Full of grace.** Remember, O most blessed Virgin Mary, the happiness thou didst experience when told by the angel that thou wert full of grace, and when thou becamest the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and His immaculate Spouse. For the sake of this great joy of thy purest heart, I beg of thee to intercede for the poor souls in purgatory, so that the Lord may pardon them and admit them to the eternal bliss of heaven. Amen.

**The Lord is with thee.** Remember, O most blessed Virgin Mary, the unspeakable bliss thou didst experience when the Eternal Word of the Father, His only-begotten Son, assumed flesh in thy womb and dwelt in thee, a living tabernacle. For the sake

of this great joy of thy purest heart, I beg of thee to intercede for the poor souls in purgatory so that through Jesus Christ, the Son of God who dwelt in thee, they may soon be delivered from their torments and may attain to the delights of the Beatific Vision. Amen.

**Blessed art thou among women.** Remember, O most blessed Virgin Mary, the unspeakable bliss thou didst experience when the angel, by order of God, greeted thee as most blessed among women, and thou didst understand that from that time on all generations would call thee blessed. For the sake of this great joy of thy purest heart, I beg of thee to intercede for the poor souls in purgatory, so that they may be delivered from their pains to praise the Ever-Blessed Trinity. Amen.

**And blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.** Remember, O most blessed Virgin Mary, the great joy thou didst experience when thy Lord and God rested so long a time beneath thy heart and thou becamest the tabernacle of the Godhead, not made of wood or stone, but formed by the hands of the Almighty. For the sake of this great joy of thy Immaculate Heart, I beg of thee to intercede for the poor souls in purgatory, so that they may love and praise eternally in heaven, Jesus, the blessed Fruit of thy womb. Amen.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, who because**

of thy great dignity art ever our most powerful intercessor at the throne of God, pray for us sinners and for all the souls in purgatory now and at all times, and remember that thou art the Mother of mercy, whose goodness and love urges thee to aid thy struggling children upon earth and thy suffering children in purgatory. Incline the ear of thy maternal mercy to us and despise not our fervent petitions in behalf of the poor souls. Through thy mediation, may they enter eternal blessedness and may the perpetual Light, Jesus Christ, with the Father and the Holy Ghost shine upon them for all eternity. Amen.

### **Offering of the Five Holy Wounds**

Holy Church repeatedly urges her faithful children to venerate the five Holy Wounds of our Savior on earth so that in heaven they may become partakers of the merits of the Precious Blood which flowed from them. That the merits of these five fountains of mercy may be applied to the poor souls in purgatory, let us often make use of the following invocations: —

I venture, O Divine Savior, to recommend to Thy Holy Wounds the suffering souls in purgatory, and through the infinite merits of Thy Wounds to ask their deliverance.

With profound humility I kiss the Wound of Thy right hand, and for the sake of the pain Thou didst experience at

Thy nailing to the Cross, I beg of Thee, to remember the poor souls in purgatory, and not to forget them. With Thy right hand, open the door of their prison and grant them the freedom of the children of God!

With sincere contrition I kiss the **Wound of Thy left hand**, and beg Thee to purify the poor souls in purgatory with the Blood which flowed from this Wound. Forget them not, good Savior, and with Thy pierced left hand lead them from the place of torment into the dwelling of peace!

With holy reverence, I kiss the **Wound of Thy right foot**, and adore the Blood which flowed from it for the salvation of the world. I pray Thee to permit one drop of this Blood to flow into purgatory to bring consolation to the poor souls. Forget them not, I pray Thee, but hasten to them with the joyful cry: "Come to Me, I will refresh you!"

With fervent love, I kiss the **Wound of Thy left foot**, and full of confidence in its infinite merits, I plead for the alleviation and deliverance of the poor souls in purgatory. Forget them not, good Savior, but approach them and bring to them the glad tidings that their hour of deliverance has come!

With glowing fervor, I kiss the **Wound of Thy sacred Side**, and recommend to Thee all the poor souls in purgatory. This

Wound, more than the others, reveals to us the greatness of Thy love. Through it we look into Thy Sacred Heart which has bled for us, and now in glory still beats for us. Oh, do not close it to the poor souls, dear Savior, but let it be the happy gate by which they may soon enter the heavenly kingdom. Amen.

### **The "De Profundis"**

Out of the depths I have cried to Thee,  
O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice  
of my supplication.

If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities:  
Lord, who shall stand it?

For with Thee there is mercy, and by  
reason of Thy law I have waited for Thee,  
O Lord.

My soul hath relied on His word: my  
soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch, even unto  
night: let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy:  
and with Him plenteous redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel: from all  
his iniquities.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

Ind. of 3 years every time, if recited with ver-  
sicle and response as given; plenary, once a month,  
if said daily and the usual conditions are fulfilled.  
(585) An indulgence of 5 years may be gained for  
the daily recitation of this prayer in November.

## **Efficacious Prayer to Our Redeemer**

O most compassionate Jesus, have mercy on the souls detained in purgatory, for whose redemption Thou didst take upon Thyself our nature and endure a bitter death. Mercifully hear their sighs, look with pity on the tears which they now shed before Thee, and, by virtue of Thy Passion, release them from their pains. O most merciful Jesus, let Thy Precious Blood descend into purgatory to refresh and revive the captive souls who suffer there. Stretch forth to them Thy strong right hand and bring them forth into the place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.

### **Prayer for Mercy**

O most gracious Lord, Father of mercies, God of infinite goodness, behold me, humbly prostrate before Thy throne. I pray and beseech Thee to have mercy upon the holy souls in purgatory. Cast a propitious look upon them, and in particular upon... Deliver them from their sufferings and place them in possession of their everlasting inheritance. Remember that they are the works of Thy hand, and that they were bought by the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus. Hear, O Lord, the prayers I confidently address to Thee, through the merits of the Passion and Death of Jesus, Thy most beloved Son,

in order that they may be consoled and enjoy without delay that immortal glory which Thou hast prepared for Thy elect. Amen.

## Daily Offering

The following prayer, found in a quaint old book of devotions, is beautifully simple, yet full of fervor, and combines all that is necessary in the direction of the intention with the true spirit of consecration: —

O my God, in union with the merits of Jesus Christ, I offer Thee every thought, word and deed of the day now beginning, for the poor souls in purgatory; my comings and goings, my work and recreation, my sorrows and delights, my successes and disappointments, my good fortune and mishaps, my gains and losses, my pleasures and crosses, all that I may do, say, think and feel; beseeching Thee that through the infinite merits of the Passion of Thy Divine Son, the souls detained in purgatory may be speedily released from their pains, to see, love, enjoy and praise Thee forever. Amen.



Divine Heart of Jesus, convert sinners, save the dying, deliver the holy souls from purgatory.

Ind. of 300 days every time. (229)

## Ejaculations

Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them eternal rest.

Ind. of 300 days every time. (583)

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Ind. of 300 days every time. (582)

We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.

Ind. of 300 days every time. (215)

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in expiation of my sins, in satisfaction for the holy souls in purgatory, and for the wants of Holy Church.

Ind. of 500 days every time. Plenary once a month under usual conditions, if said daily. An indulgence of 3 years may be gained for the daily recitation of the prayer during July. (219)

Eternal Father, we offer Thee the Blood, the Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ, the sorrows of Mary most holy and those of St. Joseph, in satisfaction for our sins, in aid of the holy souls in purgatory, for the needs of Holy Mother Church, and for the conversion of sinners.

My Jesus, mercy!

Ind. of 300 days every time. (70)

Jesus, Mary, Joseph!

Ind. of 7 years. (274)

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