



## Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time C November 10, 2019

- **November - special month to pray for the souls in Purgatory**
- **Will there be people who will pray for you if you go to Purgatory?**

To repeat what I said in last week's column, the holy souls in Purgatory depend on *our* prayers to get them through the purification process before entering Heaven.

During a Wednesday audience on August 4, 1999, Pope John Paul II, now St. John Paul II, said:

*Every trace of attachment to evil must be eliminated, every imperfection of the soul corrected. Purification must be complete, and indeed this is precisely what is meant by the Church's teaching on Purgatory. The term does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence. Those who, after death, exist in a state of purification, are already in the love of Christ who removes from them the remnants of imperfection.*

Thus, Purgatory is essentially a process of purification. We must not get caught up in the idea of a "place."

John Paul II points to a comforting thought that these souls "are already in the love of Christ who removes from them the remnants of imperfection." They died in a state of grace and are guaranteed to reach Heaven.



### **St. Faustina Kowalska's 'visit' to Purgatory**

Sister Faustina was a young, uneducated nun in a convent of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Poland during the 1930s.

She came from a poor family who struggled during the years of World War I. She had only three years of simple education, so hers were the humblest tasks in the convent, usually in the kitchen or garden. However, she received extraordinary revelations—or messages—from our Lord. Jesus asked Sr. Faustina to record these

experiences, which she compiled into notebooks, known today as the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*. It contains God's loving message of Divine Mercy.

Though the Divine Mercy message is not new to the teachings of the Church, Sr. Faustina's *Diary* sparked a great movement, and a strong and significant focus on the mercy of Christ. St. John Paul II canonized St. Faustina in 2000, making her the "first saint of the new millennium." Speaking of Sr. Faustina and the importance of the message contained in her *Diary*, the Pope called her "the great apostle of Divine Mercy in our time."

Recently, I got a book entitled "*Day by Day with Saint Faustina - 365 Reflections*" by Susan Tassone. For each day of the year, the author has a quote from Faustina's *Diary* with a reflection and prayer. The following is the quote, reflection and prayer for November 5:

### ***Purgatory: Souls Longing For God***

*I saw my Guardian Angel, who ordered me to follow him. In a moment I was in a misty place full of fire in which there was a great crowd of suffering souls. They were praying fervently, but to no avail, for themselves; only we can come to their aid....I asked these souls what their greatest suffering was. They answered me in one voice that their greatest torment was longing for God. I saw Our Lady visiting the souls in Purgatory. The souls call her "The Star of the Sea." She brings them refreshment.... [I heard an interior voice] which said, My mercy does not want this, but justice demands it. Since that time, I am in closer communion with the suffering souls. (Diary, 20)*

### ***Reflection***

*Most simply put, what's the torment of purgatory and what is it the souls there want? They long to see God. That's more than everything to them. It's the only thing. And like St. Faustina, we're called and chosen to be in "closer communion"*

*with them. By our prayers and sacrifices, we can help fulfill their most heartfelt—their most “soul-felt”—desire.*

### **Prayer**

*Dear Lord, You who are Divine Mercy, have mercy on the souls in Purgatory. Let them see You face-to-face, let them be with You forever. Jesus, I trust in You.*

### **St Gertrude the Great (1256-1301) Prayer for the Souls in Purgatory**

It is said that our Lord showed St. Gertrude a vast number of souls leaving Purgatory and going to Heaven as a result of the following prayer which St. Gertrude often prayed during the day.

*Eternal Father,  
I offer You the Most Precious Blood  
of Your Divine Son, Jesus,  
in union with the Masses  
said throughout the world today,  
for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory,  
for sinners everywhere,  
for sinners in the Universal Church.  
those in my own home,  
and within my family.  
Amen.*

### **We can assume that we and our loved ones may spend some time in Purgatory**

The Book of Revelations 21:27 tells us that “*nothing unclean enters Heaven.*” I assume—and I hope I’m wrong—that very few people die in a perfect state of grace. At funerals, we priests invariably speak of the deceased loved one as going to Heaven. To say that the loved one will have to go through the “burning fires of Purgatory” would not bring much comfort to the relatives. But, perhaps, we priests should at least find a way to encourage those present to continue to offer prayers and Masses for the deceased should they have a “stopover in Purgatory.”

As for us, I do not know about you, but I certainly expect to do time in Purgatory. If this is so, then I must make sure I will have people to pray for me as I go through my purification process in Purgatory.

What examples of sins make us unclean and therefore stop us from going straight to Heaven? Some of these

are unforgiveness, hate, unrighteousness, anger, greed, selfishness, unchaste thoughts, words and deeds, malicious words and deeds, attachment to possessions, addictions, laziness, stealing, cheating, dishonesty, etc. These and all other sins not only hurt us and make us unclean, but can and do hurt the Body of Christ we belong to.

The good news is that while we continue to live on earth, we have an opportunity to get rid of all that makes us unclean and hinders us from doing more time in Purgatory than we would if we died today unprepared. More good news is that lots of us, I hope, can look at our lives and thankfully say that we have gotten rid of some or all of our sins. For example, maybe in the past we abused alcohol, but we have rehabilitated and it’s no longer an issue. Maybe in the past we carried a lot of unforgiveness and resentment, but today we have completely forgiven all who have hurt us. Maybe in the past we lived selfish, greedy lives but now we are more thoughtful and generous, glad to share our blessings with our Church and those in need.

Another great way to lessen our own time (and that of other souls, too) in Purgatory is by offering our sufferings as a reparation for past sins.

### **Indulgences**

As you probably know, abuse around Indulgences was a big cause for Martin Luther’s Reformation. But *abuse* of something does not make it bad in itself.

### **What is an Indulgence?**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC1471) answers that question in this way:

*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 prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.*

*An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sins. The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.*

In a statement about Indulgences, *The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (p.244) states:

*Every sin has consequences. It disrupts our communion with God and the Church, weakens our ability to resist temptation, and hurts others. The necessity of healing these consequences, once the sin itself has been forgiven, is called temporal punishment. Prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other works of charity can take away entirely or diminish this temporal punishment.*

*Because of the fullness of redemption obtained for us by Christ, the Church attaches to certain prayers and actions an indulgence or pardon, that is, the full or partial remission of temporal punishment due to sin. Christ, acting through the Church, brings about the healing of the consequences of sin when an individual uses such a prayer or engages in such an action.*

### **Partial and Plenary Indulgences**

Our Church teaches that *Partial Indulgence* removes a part or some of the temporary punishment due to sin, whereas *Plenary Indulgence* removes *all* of the temporary punishment due to sin.

To obtain an indulgence, partial or plenary, one must be in the state of grace at least at the time the indulgence work is completed.

The following are some prayers that can be used to gain *partial* Indulgences (approved by the Church):

- ◆ The Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55)
- ◆ The Memorare
- ◆ Hail Holy Queen

Conditions to obtain Plenary Indulgence:

- ◆ Reception of sacramental Confession
- ◆ Reception of Holy Communion
- ◆ Prayer for the Pope's intentions: during November, pray for all people living in the Near and Middle East—that a spirit of dialogue may prevail among the diocese religious communities who live there.
- ◆ Have an interior disposition of complete detachment from sin.

The whole issue of conditions for gaining indulgences can be a bit confusing and complicated. You can get more information on this issue on the internet.

### **Pray for the Souls in Purgatory, not just during the month of November**

The Church tells us that *our* prayers can help the souls in Purgatory. These are the souls of our brothers and sisters in Christ who desperately need our prayers. It is important that we are spiritually “there for them,” not just for our own deceased family members and friends but also for the millions of souls who have no one to pray for them.


Have you ever wondered if *you* will have anyone to pray for you if you spend time in Purgatory? Will your children or relatives know to pray for you?

It is probably a good idea to include in our Will requests for some Masses. Priests in the poor areas of the world often have no Mass intentions. Stipends for Mass intentions are often their main source of income.

***A final thought.*** If through our prayers some souls in Purgatory go to Heaven, isn't it reasonable to think that these souls will be praying for us if and when we arrive in Purgatory?

If you want to read more on Purgatory, google books by Susan Tassone. If you do not have access to the internet or do not know how to order books online, contact Teresa at the office and she will order a book for you.

Have a blessed week,



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### **A Chuckle**

A highway patrolman stopped a car traveling 20 miles per hour along an interstate and found a nun at the wheel.

“Sister,” he said, “you are driving much too slowly and creating a traffic hazard.”

“Why, officer,” she replied, “I’m driving the speed limit. All the signs say 20.”

The officer said, “Sister, those signs identify the highway; the speed limit is 65. I suggest you speed up a little so as not to hinder traffic.”

He looked in the back seat, where three nuns sat, white as sheets. When the officer asked if there was a problem, one said, “Well, we just came off 121!”