

The Suffering Souls in Purgatory

Belief in purgatory is essential for all, for at death each soul goes before Jesus Christ for judgment. Heaven's bliss, hell forever or purgatory for purification before Heaven are the only three possible judgments.

Our Lady of Fatima's first visit to the three children on May 13, 1917 led to Lucia asking Our Lady if Maria das Neves (who died at 16) was in Heaven. The Blessed Virgin Mary assured Lucia she was in Heaven.

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Much later, when Lucia was questioned by theologians, she was challenged on this point, but wisely replied, that for one mortal sin a soul will go to hell forever, so it is not hard to accept that a soul can be in purgatory until the end of the world, then go to heaven.

What exactly is purgatory? The late great Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. in his Pocket Catholic Dictionary defines purgatory as follows: "The place or condition in which the souls of the just are purified after death and before they can enter heaven... The sufferings in purgatory are not the same for all, but proportioned to each person's degree of sinfulness. Moreover, these sufferings can be lessened in duration and intensity through the prayers and good works of the faithful on earth. Nor are the pains incompatible with great peace and joy, since the poor souls deeply love God and are sure they will reach heaven."

The poor souls in purgatory can do nothing for themselves, to lessen their sufferings or shorten their purification.

But we can do much for them: the offering of sacrifices, the offering of Masses for the poor souls or a particular deceased person, and daily prayer.

One of the most touching stories of the release of a poor soul from purgatory is as follows: A young lady had the good habit of having masses said for any poor soul in purgatory. She went to the city to find a job. Having no luck, she stopped in a church and asked the priest to say a mass for a poor soul in purgatory. The priest didn't know it, but those were the last two coins the young lady had. She was broke, totally dependent upon God's Providence.

After the mass, she left the church. On the steps a young man, very pale, stopped her and asked her if she needed a job. She said yes and he told her that she should go to a nearby home where a maid was needed. Upon arriving at the very grand home, a woman answered the door and the young lady said she was told by a young man that a maid was needed. The older woman said she didn't know how anyone could know that since she had just fired her maid.

The young lady was invited into the home and led into the living room to be interviewed. Looking up, the young lady was startled by a color painting of the young man she had just met on the church steps. The older woman asked what was wrong and the younger woman told her what had happened.

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The older woman then said, "The mass you had said for a poor soul in purgatory released my son, who died at an early age. I now know that he is in Heaven and it was indeed he who sent you here. I'm so grateful to God for this wonderful blessing. As for you, I do not have a position in my home for you as a maid. No, you will be accepted by me as my only daughter. All that I have is yours. Come live with me in your home."

While a person is still alive, the sacrament of the sick can free the soul from sin and the temporal punishment due for sins already forgiven. Fr. Hardon says, "The Sacrament of the New Law, instituted by Christ is to give back the sick spiritual aid and strength and to perfect spiritual health, including, if need be, the remission of sins." Fr. Hardon points out the words of the priest in anointing the sick, "Through this holy anointing and His most loving mercy, may the Lord assist you by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that, freed from your sins, He may save you and in His goodness raise you up." It is extremely important for very sick and dying family members to receive the Sacrament of the Sick. It can be received numerous times.

The following prayers should be said daily and it is suggested that you cut this out and save it to say these daily prayers for the poor souls. As you will see, the prayers each day are for a different soul: that soul most destitute of spiritual aid, the soul nearest to its entrance into Heaven, that soul for which I am most bound to pray, that soul who amongst them all was the most devout to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and other special intentions over the seven days of the week.

Never, ever, forget the poor souls in purgatory in your daily prayers!!!

Prayer for SUNDAY

O Lord God Almighty, I pray Thee, by the Precious Blood which Thy Divine Son Jesus shed in the garden, deliver the souls in purgatory and *especially that soul amongst them all which is most destitute of spiritual aid*; and vouchsafe to bring it to Thy glory, there to praise and bless Thee forever. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Prayer for MONDAY

O Lord God Almighty, I pray Thee, by the Precious Blood which Thy Divine Son Jesus shed in His cruel Scourging, deliver the souls in purgatory, and *especially that soul amongst them all which is nearest to its entrance into Thy glory*, that so it may forthwith begin to praise and bless Thee forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Prayer for TUESDAY

O Lord God Almighty, I pray Thee, by the Precious Blood which Thy Divine Son Jesus shed in His bitter crowning with thorns, deliver the souls in purgatory, and *in particular that one amongst them all which would be the last to depart out of those pains*, that it may not tarry so long a time before it come to praise Thee in Thy glory and bless Thee forever. Amen

Our Father. Hail Mary.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Fr. Hardon points out the words of the priest in anointing the sick, "Through this holy anointing and His most loving mercy, may the Lord assist you by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that, freed from your sins, He may save you and in His goodness raise you up." It is extremely important for very sick and dying family members to receive the Sacrament of the Sick.

Prayer for WEDNESDAY

O Lord God Almighty, I pray Thee, by the Precious Blood which Thy Divine Son Jesus shed in the streets of Jerusalem, when He carried the Cross upon His sacred shoulders, deliver the souls in purgatory, and *especially that soul which is richest in merits before Thee*; that so, in that throne of glory which awaits it, it may magnify Thee and bless Thee forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Prayer for THURSDAY

O Lord God Almighty, I pray Thee, by the Precious Body and Blood of Thy Divine Son Jesus, which He gave with His own hands upon the eve of His Passion to His beloved Apostles to be their meat and drink, and which He left to His whole Church to be a perpetual sacrifice and the life-giving food of His own faithful people, deliver the souls in purgatory, and *especially that one which was most devoted to this mystery of infinite love*, that it may with Thy Divine Son, and with the Holy Spirit, ever praise Thee for Thy love therein in eternal glory. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Prayer for FRIDAY

O Lord Almighty, I pray Thee, by the Precious Blood which Thy Divine Son shed on this day upon the wood of the Cross, especially from His most sacred hands and feet, deliver the souls in purgatory, and *in particular that soul for which I am most bound to pray*; that no neglect of mine may hinder it from praising Thee in Thy glory and blessing Thee forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Prayer for SATURDAY

O Lord God Almighty, I beseech Thee by the Precious Blood which gushed forth from the side of Thy Divine Son Jesus, in the sight and to the extreme pain of His most holy Mother, deliver the souls in purgatory, and *especially that one amongst them all which was the most devout to her*; that it may soon attain unto Thy glory, there to praise Thee in her, and her in Thee, world without end. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.