

PURGATORY  
R.C.I.A.  
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Today little mention is made of purgatory, even in Catholic circles, with the result that many who profess to be Catholic no longer believe in the doctrine. If people never read about purgatory and seldom hear it spoken of, they are naturally going to place less and less credence in it. None the less, it is natural for people to believe. This teaching comes down to us from the Apostles and is found in sacred scripture. The existence of purgatory is a dogma of the Church and to be Catholic requires one to adhere to all Church teachings. This is not an option we can pick, choose or reject.

The forgetfulness, neglect and indifference to the souls in purgatory and all deceased members of faith is an injustice. Charity for the holy souls in purgatory is holy and meritorious before the sight of God. One of God's gifts to the faithful is "blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy". The mercy of our concern and remembrance for their spiritual well being should have a priority in our lives. We may well have a mother, father or family member among these souls awaiting reparation for their shortcomings in this life. Are we not obliged [out of love] to deliver them at all costs? To help deliver them from purgatory may well be to purchase our own ransom through their intercessions in heaven on our behalf.

We pray for the communion of the faithful, the mystical body of Christ. The Church triumphant, the Church militant and the Church suffering. The Church in heaven, the Church on earth and the Church in purgatory; which is the advent to heaven. It is easy to remember the saints in heaven for that is what our hearts' desire seeks. It is easy to pray for the Church here on earth for it is part of our daily lives. But we seldom contemplate the fate of those languishing in purgatory. Once a year we pray for this forgotten suffering Church for which we have a share and a responsibility; particularly when you consider that most of us may well be part of that community in the near future. We also pray for them at every Mass, all though we may not be fully aware of this intercession. Physical death does not mean out of sight out of mind; for they continue to live.

Many think that money is the extent of generosity. Generosity is much more than that! "What you did for the least of my people you did for me." But what about the least of the least of our people; who are they? They are the souls in purgatory who are unable to help themselves and depend on us for help. The church suffering. If by our prayers, sufferings, good works and Holy Communion offered for the souls in purgatory every day, we could release one soul from the separation of God's love, how it would please the Lord. Maybe more than one soul. Maybe we could flood heaven with grateful souls by directing our devotion to the Blessed Mother who is the intercessor of the afflicted and the Mother of mercy and consolation. Can you imagine being the helper to bring one soul from suffering to glory by our concern? One life is such a small thing to give to God when you consider the billions of lives and souls He has created. Each and every soul is important. Jesus left the ninety nine sheep to look for the one lost lamb.

During the year my mail box is filled with catalogues, flyers, adds of all shapes and sizes, enticing me to save money. Buy me and save 70%; buy now and save; two for one if you buy now. Enticements of all kinds; all you can eat, please yourself; pamper yourself with a cruise. These are very appealing but lead us to consider only ourselves. If all these commercial enticements can sway your perspective, think about how we can persuade heaven when we bombard it with prayers, good works, and excessive compassion on behalf of those who need our help. Change by the yard is very hard; change by the inch is a cinch. Just a few minutes a day to pray will chase their blues away. What a bargain; there is no commercial advertising that can match that. If we do not take advantage of this, it is one of the greatest wastes which we may come to regret. We can achieve two objectives with one effort; help for the Church suffering and help for the Church militant. A two for one sale.

Prayers for the right reason will always be answered. What a joy it can bring to have a suffering soul now see God face to face through our efforts. The appreciation by that soul for your generosity will not go unrewarded. That soul will be your special intercessor before God when our turn comes to enter purgatory. It will plead for mercy for your suffering as you gave mercy to theirs. We need all the help we can get and

so do they; be sure to include those who no longer have anyone to pray for them. [the fullness of mercy.] Talk about Joy, talk about a bargain, you can't beat that!

The choice of how we spend out time is ours to make. Our lives are complex only because we are not sure. Simplicity of faith is important because it eliminates the useless, for then we can concentrate on the assurance of faith. Prepare to share their purgatory if we do not show mercy and concern for their sufferings through prayer.