
FROM THE CHAPLAINCY



Dear Woodrose Parents

The month of November begins with the commemoration of All Saints' Day, a solemnity that reminds us of all the Christian faithful who have already reached our true home, Heaven. Many of them received official recognition in the Church and have been enlisted in the roster of saints. They are the ones whose intercession we could have recourse to and whose examples we are encouraged to imitate. There are many others who have not received such a recognition but are saints nevertheless, for they too are in heaven.

All Souls' Day follows on the second day of November. This is the day when the Church offers the suffrage of the Holy Mass for all the faithful departed. In this month's newsletter, we would like to share with you a beautiful article by Philip Kosloski about praying for the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

5 Ways to pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory

Philip Kosloski | Nov 02, 2016

Praying for the souls of those who have died is an ancient practice of the Church -- here's how to do it this November.

November is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory and the faithful are encouraged not only to remember the passing of relatives and friends, but most importantly to pray for the souls of the deceased. Praying for the souls of those who have died is an ancient practice of the Church, one that is based on the Catholic teaching regarding Purgatory.

The Catechism offers a brief explanation regarding this state in the afterlife: *“The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect... As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come”* (CCC 1031).

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“Every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory” (CCC 1472).

On account of this reality, the Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy explains, *“Hence derives the pious custom of suffrage for the souls of the faithful departed, which is an urgent supplication of God to have mercy on the souls of the dead, to purify them by the fire of His charity, and to bring them to His kingdom of light and life. This suffrage is a cultic expression of faith in the communion of saints. Indeed, “the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and “because it is a*

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



holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins” (2 Mac 12, 46) she offers her suffrages for them.”

It is a Spiritual Work of Mercy to pray for the souls of the faithful departed, imploring God to purify the souls of the dead “by the fire of His charity” and to bring them at last to their Heavenly Home.

The Church offers numerous ways to pray for the dead. For the purposes of this article, here are five of the most common that the Church recommends, especially in the month of November.

1) Offer Masses for the Dead

It is a custom in the Church to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for a particular soul, whether they are a deceased relative or friend. The Directory recommends having Masses offered on the “third, seventh, and thirtieth day following their deaths, as well as on their anniversaries.” Contact your local parish to inquire about offering a Mass for someone.

Pope Benedict XVI recommended this practice in *Sacramentum Caritatis*: *“I wish, together with the Synod Fathers, to remind all the faithful of the importance of prayers for the dead, especially the offering of Mass for them, so that, once purified, they can come to the beatific vision of God. A rediscovery of the eschatological dimension inherent in the Eucharist, celebrated and adored, will help sustain us on our journey and comfort us in the hope of glory”* (SC, 32).

2) Pray the Novena for the Holy Souls

Composed by Saint Alphonsus Liguori, the nine days of prayer for the Holy Souls in Purgatory is a more prolonged way to pray for the deceased. Traditionally it is prayed in preparation for All Souls Day or in the days following the celebration.

Here is a link to this novena: <https://www.ewtn.com/devotionals/novena/Purgatory.htm>

3) Visit a Cemetery



An indulgence, applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, is granted to the faithful, who devoutly visit a cemetery and pray for the departed. The indulgence is plenary each day from the 1st to the 8th of November; on other days of the year it is partial. Besides benefiting the Holy Souls, visiting a cemetery is a healthy reminder of our own mortality, realizing that we

too will pass from this life to the next.

4) Pray the “Eternal Rest” Prayer

A partial indulgence, applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, can be obtained when the “Eternal Rest” prayer is prayed with faith. The prayer is as follows:

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

This prayer is used most often during the liturgical functions surrounding a funeral, but is often prayed by families in connection with prayers before and after meals.

5) Pray Saint Gertrude the Great’s Prayer for the Holy Souls

One of the most popular prayers for the Souls in Purgatory is that of Saint Gertrude the Great. She received many visions of Our Lord during her lifetime and expressed to Jesus her great desire to pray for the deceased. In return, Jesus taught Saint Gertrude the following prayer. It is piously believed that 1,000 souls are released from purgatory by praying this prayer with the heart.

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 all sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.

