

# The Souls in Purgatory

## NOVEMBER

Traditionally, the Church divides the faithful into three groups: 1) the Church Triumphant (AKA those in Heaven); 2) the Church Militant (AKA us living people); and 3) the Church Penitent (the souls in Purgatory; those who have died in God's grace, but still need to undergo purification before entering Heaven).

During the month of November, we are urged to spend time in prayer and remember those who have gone before us. Christian charity implores (requires) us to pray for the souls in Purgatory. It is our duty to pray for the poor souls in Purgatory because they cannot help themselves. In praying for them, we also call to mind our own mortality. 2 Maccabees 12:46 tells us:

***“It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.”***

In particular, on All Souls Day (November 2nd), we remember the dead and we use our efforts in prayer (especially at the Mass), good works, and almsgiving to release the souls in Purgatory. There are two opportunities to gain ***plenary indulgences*** on All Souls Day applicable (for) the souls in Purgatory. “What is an indulgence? ‘An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven.’” (CCC 1471)

Even though the works (acts) are performed by us (the living), the indulgences listed on the next page are applicable (used by) only the souls in Purgatory. Because a *plenary indulgence* remits (removes) the temporal punishment for sin (i.e. the reason a soul is in Purgatory), then applying a *plenary indulgence* to one of the Holy Souls in Purgatory means that your work (the indulgence you did) releases a soul from Purgatory so they can enter Heaven!



**“May the souls of the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.”**

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### VARIOUS INDULGENCES FOR NOVEMBER

#### 46 PRAYER FOR THE DEAD (REQUIEM AETERNAM)

cf. Roman Ritual, *The Order of Christian Funerals*

A *partial indulgence*, applicable only to the souls in purgatory is granted to the faithful who recite the prayer for the dead.

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

**Latin:** Réquiem ætérnam dona eis Dómine; et lux perpétua lúceat eis. Requiéscant in pace. Amen.

Réquiem      ætérnam      dona      eis      Dómine;      et      lux      perpétua      lúceat  
Rr-eh-qwee-em   ay-TER-nam   doh-na   ey-ees   DOH-mee-neh;   et   loo-ks   per-PE-too-ah   LOO-chay-at

ei.      Requiéscat      in      pace.      Amen.  
ey-ees.   Reh-qwee-EHS-kat   een   pah-cheh.   Ahh-men.

#### 13 VISITING A CEMETERY (*COEMETERII VISITATIO*)

An indulgence is granted the Christian faithful who devoutly visit a cemetery and pray, if only mentally, for the dead. This indulgence is applicable only to the souls in purgatory. This indulgence is a *plenary* one from November 1 through November 8 and can be gained on each one of these days. On the other days of the year this indulgence is a *partial* one.

#### 67 VISITING A CHURCH OR AN ORATORY ON ALL SOULS DAY (VISITATIO ECCLESIAE VEL ORATORII IN COMMEMORATIONE OMNIUM FIDELIUM DEFUNCTORUM)

A *plenary indulgence* which is applicable only to the souls in purgatory is granted the Christian faithful who devoutly visit a church or an oratory on All Souls Day.

This indulgence can be obtained either on the day mentioned above, or with the consent of the ordinary, on the preceding or following Sunday or on the solemnity of All Saints...According to norm 16 of the apostolic constitution, this visit is to include the “recitation of the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed (Pater and Credo).”

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### WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT PURGATORY?

#### III. The Final Purification, or Purgatory

1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

1031 The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. the tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

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.

1032 This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin."<sup>607</sup> From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.<sup>608</sup> The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.





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