



Month of the Souls in Purgatory

Prayer for the Dying

O most merciful Jesus, Lover of souls, I pray Thee, by the agony of Thy most Sacred Heart, and by the sorrows of Thine Immaculate Mother, cleanse in Thine Own Blood the sinners of the whole world who are now in their agony and who are to die this day. Amen.

Documents

[The Doctrine Of Purgatory](#) — John A. Hardon, S.J.

[How To Argue the Existence of Purgatory](#) — Jason Evert

[A Most Reasonable Doctrine](#) — James Buckley

[Praying for the Dead and Gaining Indulgences During November](#)
— Jennifer Gregory Miller

[Purgatory: Service Shop for Heaven](#) — Fr. Anthony Zimmerman, STD

Websites

[Purgatory](#)

[Treatise on Purgatory](#)

[12 Steps to Avoid Purgatory](#)

[Canons Regular of St. John Cantius](#)

[Purgatory! Catholic Bible 101](#)

[Daily Prayers for the Poor Souls](#)

[Friends of the Suffering Souls](#)



Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!

The month of November ([Overview](#) - [Calendar](#)) is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. The Church commemorates all her faithful children who have departed from this life, but have not yet attained the joys of heaven. St. Paul warns us that we must not be ignorant concerning the dead, nor sorrowful, "even as others who have no hope ... For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven ... and the dead who are in Christ shall rise.

The Church has always taught us to pray for those who have gone into eternity. Even in the Old Testament prayers and alms were offered for the souls of the dead by those who thought "well and religiously concerning the resurrection." It was believed that "they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them" and that "it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." We know that a defiled soul cannot enter into heaven.

Excerpted from *Liturgical Meditations*, The Sisters of St. Dominic

Duration of Purgatory



Purgatory is not eternal. Its duration varies according to the sentence pronounced at each particular judgment. It may be prolonged for centuries in the case of the more guilty souls, or of those who, being excluded from the Catholic communion, are deprived of the suffrages of the Church, although by the divine mercy they have escaped hell. But the end of the world, which will be also the end of time, will close for ever the place of temporary expiation. God will know how to reconcile His justice and His goodness in the purification of the last members of the human

race, and to supply by the intensity of the expiatory suffering what may be wanting in duration. But, whereas a favourable sentence at the particular judgment admits of eternal beatitude being suspended and postponed, and leaves the bodies of the elect to the same fate as those of the reprobate; at the universal judgment, every sentence, whether for heaven or for hell, will be absolute, and will be executed immediately and completely.

Offering Prayers and Sacrifices



The Church Suffering and the Church Militant constitute in their relations a second circle of most vital activities. Having entered into the night "wherein no man can work," the Suffering Church cannot ripen to its final blessedness by any efforts of its own, but only through the help of others—through the intercessory prayers and sacrifices (*suffragia*) of those living members of the Body of Christ who being still in this world are able in the grace of Christ to perform expiatory works. The Church has from the earliest times faithfully guarded the words of Scripture that it is a holy and a wholesome thing to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins. [2 Macab. 12, 43] The suppliant cry of her liturgy: "Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them," can be heard already in the

Acts of the martyrdom of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas (A.D. 203) and is represented in numerous sepulchral inscriptions of the most ancient period, while theologians and Fathers of the Church, beginning with Tertullian, have supplied its substantial proof. . . . So fundamental indeed and so natural to man's hope and desire and love is this belief, that historians of religion have discovered it among almost all non-Christian civilized peoples: a striking illustration of Tertullian's saying that the human soul is naturally Christian.

The Catholic, therefore, is jealous to expiate and suffer for the "poor souls," especially by offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice, wherein Christ's infinite expiation on the Cross is sacramentally represented, and stimulating and joining itself with the expiatory works of the faithful, passes to the Church Suffering according to the measure determined by God's wisdom and mercy.

— Karl Adam

Indulgences



By the practice of Indulgences, the Church places at the charitable disposal of the faithful the inexhaustible treasure accumulated, from age to age, by the superabundant satisfactions of the saints, added to those of the martyrs, and united to those of our Blessed Lady and the infinite residue of our Lord's sufferings. These remissions of punishment she grants to the living by her own direct power; but she nearly always approves of and permits their application to the dead by way of suffrage, that is to say, in the manner in which, as we have seen, each of the faithful may offer to

God who accepts it, for another, the suffrage or succour of his own satisfactions.

— *The Liturgical Year*, Abbot Gueranger O.S.B.

A partial indulgence can be obtained by devoutly visiting a cemetery and praying for the departed, even if the prayer is only mental. One can gain a plenary indulgence visiting a cemetery each day between November 1 and November 8. These indulgences are applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory.

A plenary indulgence, again applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, is also granted when the faithful piously visit a church or a public oratory on November 2. In visiting the church or oratory, it is required, that one *Our Father* and the *Creed* be recited.

A partial indulgence, applicable only to the souls in purgatory, can be obtained when the Eternal Rest (*Requiem aeternam*) is prayed. This is a good prayer to recite especially during the month of November:

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.

