

Help for the Souls in Purgatory

Who Cannot Help Themselves

The Catholic Encyclopedia defines purgatory as a condition or state for those not wholly alienated from God by their sins, but who are temporarily alienated while their love is made perfect and sufficient satisfaction is made for their sins. Catholic belief affirms that there is fire in purgatory, but a cleansing fire different from that of hell. Purgatory's fire is a fire that burns within and purifies one for union with God, whereas hell's fire is one of everlasting torment and darkness, punishment without relief or end. Purgatory will cease to exist once we have the Last Judgement, but hell will go on forever. The certain thing about purgatory is that the Holy Souls are guaranteed salvation, even though not yet sufficiently purified to enter into the Presence of God in the Beatific Vision.



<https://catholic-link.org/images/infographic-3-things-you-may-not-know-about-purgatory/>

The doctrine on purgatory was formulated in the Councils of Florence, 1438 – 1439, and Trent, 1545 – 1563. This teaching is based on the practice of praying for the dead contained in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. From its beginning, the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers for them, particularly the Eucharistic sacrifice, to hasten their release from purgatory and their entrance into the glory of God. While the Church does not specify the nature of the punishment of purgatory, nor speak to its duration, it does teach that those in purgatory cannot help themselves but must depend upon the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant for prayers to release them from its burning fire. The Church teaches that prayer for the souls in purgatory is efficacious; it also encourages almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance on behalf of the dead. The Holy Souls will pray for us in return for our prayers for them. In a homily, St. John Chrysostom bid us remember and help these poor souls.

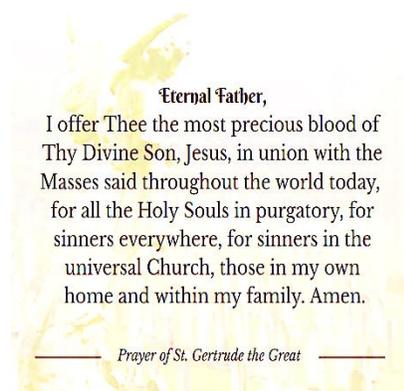
If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them. References: Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia, Pg. 800, and Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pgs. 268-269.

At the crucifixion of Jesus, the bystanders assumed Jesus was crying out, **praying to Elijah** to save Him from the agony of the cross. They are seen as allies of Jesus, not enemies, as one of them gave Him a drink. This type of petition to someone dead was commonly believed at that time. (MT 27:48-49) When Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus, first He **prayed for him as a dead man**, then He spoke directly to the dead man, in effect, **praying to him: "Lazarus, come out!"** (Jn 11:43.) The point being, we must, in charity,

pray for the Holy Souls as they have no other recourse for their release from purgatory, and we can also **pray to them for our own needs**, especially to members of our families who have died and gone before us and who would do anything to help us get to heaven. The Church Triumphant and the Church Militant can pray for the Church Suffering, and the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant can pray for the Church Militant. This is the Communion of Saints at its best!

<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/4-biblical-proofs-for-prayers-to-saints-and-for-the-dead>

The Church urges us to offer prayer, penance, alms and indulgences for the Holy Souls, especially during November, the month dedicated to them. What are some effective ways to do this? The most efficacious prayer for those who have died is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We should have Masses said for our deceased loved ones



frequently, both as a form of almsgiving and as prayer. The short prayer given by our Lord to St. Gertrude (left) is so simple to add to our Thanksgiving after Holy Communion, along with another given to Sister Mary of St. Peter: **"Ask My Father for as many souls as I shed drops of Blood during My Passion."** By asking for the Precious Blood to be poured out on souls we prevent its being, as it were, spilled out on the ground in vain. In His mysterious Providence God has put the salvation of others in our hands: we must ask for it and ask fervently and often. Do not let His Most Precious Blood be shed in vain for even one more soul.

St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, a mystic who was given a glimpse of the suffering souls in purgatory and the various levels therein, exclaimed: **"Every time a creature offers up the Blood by which he was redeemed, he offers a gift of infinite worth, which can be equaled by no other."** God revealed the practice of making this offering to this Saintly Carmelite nun when He complained to her that so little effort is made in this world to disarm His Divine justice against sinners. Acting upon this admonition, she daily offered the Precious Blood fifty times for the living and the dead. She did this with so much fervor that God showed her on different occasions the numerous souls who had thereby been converted or delivered from purgatory.

https://whitelilyoftrinity.com/precious_blood_of_jesus_devotion.html#:~:text=Our%20Lord%20to%20Sister%20Mary,on%20the%20ground%20in%20vain,numerous%20souls%20who%20had%20thereby%20been%20converted%20or%20delivered%20from%20Purgatory/

From the Diary of St. Faustina, Divine Mercy in My Soul, #1227, Page 441.

Eternal Father, turn your merciful gaze upon the souls suffering in Purgatory, who are enfolded in the Most Compassionate Heart of Jesus. I beg you, by the sorrowful Passion of Jesus Your Son, and by all the bitterness with which His most sacred Soul was flooded, manifest Your mercy to the souls who are under Your just scrutiny. Look upon them in no other way than through the Wounds of Jesus, Your dearly beloved Son; for we firmly believe that there is no limit to Your goodness and compassion. Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on the Poor Souls in Purgatory.

Litany for the Poor Souls in Purgatory

O Jesus, You suffered and died that all mankind might be saved and brought to eternal happiness. Hear our pleas for further mercy on the souls of:

My dear parents and grandparents, my Jesus mercy!
My brothers and sisters and other near relatives, my Jesus mercy!
My godparents and sponsors of confirmation, my Jesus mercy!
My spiritual and temporal benefactors, my Jesus mercy!
My friends and neighbors, my Jesus mercy!
All for whom love or duty bids me pray, my Jesus mercy!
Those who have offended me, my Jesus mercy!
Those who have suffered disadvantage or harm through me, my Jesus mercy!
Those who are especially beloved by Thee, my Jesus mercy!
Those whose release is near at hand, my Jesus mercy!
Those who desire most to be united to Thee, my Jesus mercy!
Those who endure the greatest sufferings, my Jesus mercy!
Those whose release is most remote, my Jesus mercy!
Those who are least remembered, my Jesus mercy!
Those who are most deserving on account of their services to the Church, my Jesus mercy!
The rich, who now are the most destitute, my Jesus mercy!
The mighty, who now are powerless, my Jesus mercy!
The once spiritually blind, who now see their folly, my Jesus mercy!
The frivolous, who spent their time in idleness, my Jesus mercy!
The poor, who did not seek the treasures of heaven, my Jesus mercy!
The tepid, who devoted little time to prayer, my Jesus mercy!
The indolent, who neglected to perform good works, my Jesus mercy!
Those of little faith, who neglected the frequent reception of the Sacraments, my Jesus mercy!
The habitual sinners, who owe their salvation to a miracle of grace, my Jesus mercy!
Parents who failed to watch over their children, my Jesus mercy!
Superiors who were not solicitous for the salvation of those entrusted to them, my Jesus mercy!
Those who strove for worldly riches and pleasures, my Jesus mercy!
The worldly-minded, who failed to use their wealth and talents in the service of God, my Jesus mercy!
Those who witnessed the death of others, but would not think of their own, my Jesus mercy!
Those who did not provide for the life hereafter, my Jesus mercy!
Those whose sentence is severe because of the great things entrusted to them, my Jesus mercy!
The popes, kings, and rulers, my Jesus mercy!
The bishops and their counselors, my Jesus mercy!
My teachers and spiritual advisors, my Jesus mercy!
The deceased priests of this diocese, my Jesus mercy!
The priests and religious of the Catholic Church, my Jesus mercy!
The defenders of the holy faith, my Jesus mercy!
Those who died on the battlefield, my Jesus mercy!
Those who fought for their country, my Jesus mercy!
Those who were buried in the sea, my Jesus mercy!
Those who died of apoplexy, my Jesus mercy!
Those who died of heart attacks, my Jesus mercy!
Those who suffered and died of cancer, my Jesus mercy!

Those who died suddenly in accidents, my Jesus mercy!
Those who died without the last rites of the Church, my Jesus mercy!
Those who shall die within the next twenty-four hours, my Jesus mercy!
My own poor soul when I shall have to appear before Thy judgment seat, my Jesus mercy!

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them forevermore with Thy saints because Thou art gracious.
May the prayer of Thy suppliant people, we beseech Thee, O Lord, benefit the souls of Thy departed servants and handmaids: that Thou mayest both deliver them from all their sins, and make them to be partakers of Thy redemption. Amen.

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

<https://www.churchpop.com/2020/11/02/5-powerful-prayers-for-the-poor-souls-in-purgatory-every-catholic-should-know/> EWTN

How to Gain Indulgences for the Holy Souls:

In the past, from November 1 to November 8 a plenary indulgence, applicable only to Poor Souls in Purgatory, has been granted to those who visit a cemetery and pray, even if only mentally, for the departed, provided the usual conditions are met. Since the pandemic, this privilege has been extended throughout the month of November. **On November 2, All Souls Day, a plenary indulgence for Poor Souls will be granted to those who visit any parish church or public oratory and there recite one Our Father and one Credo.**

Only one plenary indulgence may be granted each day. The usual conditions to acquire a plenary indulgence are: 1. detachment from sin; which is a true sorrow for, and repudiation of, all one's sin, mortal and venial; 2. reception of Holy Communion on the day the indulgence is sought; 3. prayer for the intention of the Holy Father on the day the indulgence is sought (one Our Father and one Hail Mary suffice, or any other suitable prayer); 4. sacramental confession within a week of completion of the prescribed work. If these conditions are not met, the indulgence will be partial. Several plenary indulgences may be granted on the basis of a single sacramental confession, but only one plenary indulgence may be gained on the basis of a single Holy Communion and prayer for the pope's intentions. Partial indulgences are granted to those who recite the Eternal Rest Prayer. A partial indulgence may be granted more than once a day. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/249462/how-catholics-can-get-a-plenary-indulgence-all-november-2021>



O Jesus in the Sacred Host,
we offer Thee through Mary to the Father

Of all our prayers, those that we pray for the dead are the most agreeable to God, because such an exercise includes within itself works of both corporal and spiritual charity.

(St. Thomas Aquinas)

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