

Tomorrow: We start the Novena for your deceased relatives and friends....

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About Purgatory

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Purgatory is not a cemetery. It is not an abyss for the thoughtless and loveless dead. Purgatory is very much a place for the living. There is rest in Purgatory; but it is not the rest of cemeteries, full of corruption, or defilement, and of death. In Purgatory there is no agitation or disquiet; no movement of revolt; no guilt of resistance to God's will. Everyone there is always in the state of grace, always conformed to God's will. That is the rest, the requiem of Purgatory.

But in this rest there is life; there is love; there is remembrance and gratitude, and hope. There is trust in our prayers on earth.

Yes, and there is suffering, too -- keen, mysterious suffering that causes neither shock nor start, nor dread, nor shrinking -- suffering most gentle, and at the same time most purifying.

Almost surely, some of your relatives or friends are today suffering in Purgatory -- maybe even your father or mother, a brother or sister. Perhaps Fred Miller, or Phil Twigg, or Chet Wynne, or Joe Leptak, or Phil Vessart -- fellows who were walking the campus at this time last year with you, thinking about mid-term tests, or sharing pizza down at the Volcano. Maybe they are all suffering in Purgatory this November!

If they are, they have a strong claim upon your charity all during this month. At the last judgment, when you face them, you will be glad if you have heard their cries for prayers -- if you spent this November praying for all the Poor Souls.

Someday, maybe very soon, you, too, may be in Purgatory. And some priest here on campus may be writing a Bulletin to influence another student body to pray for you -- reminding the students of that future day that the family of Notre Dame has a bond that should extend even beyond the grave -- to the souls of those who walked these paths before them, and who now depend upon their charity to help you in your hour of suffering! Oh, with what earnestness you will then hope they read and heed his admonition to make the most of the month of November!

A Consoling Doctrine

Ever go to a non-Catholic funeral? Ever observe the hopeless grief that prevails? Why? Because they do not believe in Purgatory, and so are denied the consolation we have of still being able to assist our departed one, to help him, to be united still with him in our prayers, and to realize that he is still dependent upon us.

Non-Catholics cannot pray for their dead. If the departed one is in heaven, there is no need for prayers. If the departed one is in hell, prayers will do him no good. It is only by a belief in Purgatory that we can be of any assistance to the dead. That's why Catholics frequently admonish friends: "Please omit flowers." What they want most of all is a Mass. It's the Mass that matters most, because the Mass is the greatest kindness we can show the deceased one -- the only expression that brings adequate results at that time. Flowers never helped anyone in Purgatory. A Mass helps most.

If your best gift is a Mass, then get to Mass every day in November. Someday, when the Poor Souls get to Heaven, they'll remember who came to their assistance, and they will be generous in their perfect prayers for you -- when you'll need help most!

PRAYERS: Deceased: Msgr. Thomas Temple; Gerald Holland, '25; father of Dick McCarthy, '49; brother of Rev. Thomas Richards, CSC; brother of Prother Reginald, CSC. ILL: the mother of Dick Hendricks of Walsh; mother of Don Schaefer of Alumni; mother and father of Matt Weis of Dillon; father of Prof. Vincent Smith; uncle of Brother Melaric, CSC.