

Hitting the road tomorrow ? Better hit the box first! Make it tonight.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
October 30, 1956

Friday is the First Friday of the month -- the day we pray especially for a Happy Death!

November And The Poor Souls

There is scarcely any doubt that of the millions of men who die every year, very few escape Purgatory. If you except children who die in baptismal innocence, we do not hesitate to say that among thousands scarcely one will be found so good and so just as to be translated into heaven immediately after death.

Saint Catherine of Genoa assures us that no one, no matter how holy he may live, is spared from Purgatory unless he endure his purgatory in this world by severe and lingering suffering for love of God, and in atonement for his sins.

Purgatory is the place of purification. No one enters heaven until he is perfect. Have you ever met anyone who was perfect ?

The Holy Souls are dear to God, and they also ought to be dear to us. They are especially our brethren; many of them a short time ago were sharing our earthly trials. There is not one of us who would not find in that vast assemblage many of his own family, his parents, perhaps, or his own personal friends; those whose faces are yet familiar to his eyes, and whose voices still sound in his ears. How closely have we been connected with many who are now in Purgatory ? How important a part have they played in our lives! They were our instructors, and benefactors, and neighbors, and companions! They loved us on earth, and perhaps worked hard to do us good. Year after year we saw their cheerful faces; side by side we knelt with them in the house of God; together we shared in the sorrow and joy of this life. And now they are gone; and we are remaining. They are suffering for their sins and we -- are we their helpers, or have we forgotten them ?

If we could but realize sufficiently the state of these suffering souls, we would discover that it is a condition of patient love, suffering, and helplessness. They stand, as it were, on the very brink of eternal rest and happiness -- and yet they cannot reach it. But it is not merely the absence of joy -- it is the fire that tries and purifies the soul. Hence, they have to endure its piercing pains. Their burning love of God, their ardent desire, their angelic purity and patience are all insufficient to ward off even the smallest drop of that fiery torrent.

In the midst of all this terrible pain and torture, each constantly cries out: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched me!"

And the Church, to remind us of our duty toward them, concludes many of her devotions with that heartfelt ejaculation: "May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace!"

The Poor Souls are, themselves, silent. They publish no newspaper. They sponsor no radio or T-V program. That's why the Church dedicates this month of November to them -- and reminds us that, as they are now, so we shall be some day.

The Mass Helps Them Most

A Novena of Masses will be offered for the intentions you jot down on a piece of paper and drop into the receptacle at the bulletin board in each hall. You are asked to assist at Mass daily, joining your intentions with the Prefect of Religion. It won't be a very great sacrifice on your part, but it will help your deceased loved ones immeasurably. And they, grateful for your kindness, will someday spend their power before the throne of God in helping you. Don't fail them!

A Plenary Indulgence is gained for them on Friday, each time you visit the Church, and recite 6 Paters, Aves, Glorias. Confession and Communion within the Octave suffice.