

So I Prayed To The Poor Souls

It was about 7:15 and I was scheduled for an eight o'clock operation. So quickly did the medications take their course that I was half asleep as they wheeled me upstairs. I last remembered trying frantically to finish an act of contrition. . . beginning over and over again. . . and then I lapsed into sleep.

The third night after the operation, the nurse as usual brought me a sleeping pill but as I have a dread of even the mildest sedatives, I told her I felt I could sleep tonight without a pill. I drowsed off to sleep well enough . . . only to awaken later in considerable pain. It was 11:20 by my watch. The night was young . . . and long as only it can be in a hospital! By midnight the pain was throbbing steadily. I reached for my rosary in an attempt to pray. . . but I couldn't keep my mind on even a Hail Mary. Instead I just lay there thinking how foolish I was to even consider calling on the Lord for surcease from pain. Why should He single me out of the hundreds of suffering humans? There was the lady across the corridor dying of cancer! And the little boy next door whose leg was just amputated! And here was I perfectly well except for the painful aftermath of successful surgery. No. I couldn't ask for personal attention. Others were in greater need.

Then I recalled a dear friend of mine, a nun, who once suggested during a previous painful illness . . . that I "offer up" my sufferings. So I tried to meditate on the sufferings of Christ and unite my own pain with His. I tried . . . but I gave it up. Once more I turned on the light. It was two a.m. Nothing to do but buzz for the nurse, and she would come with a "hypo" . . . and sleep.

I was reaching for the bell-cord when I had what they call in the movies a "flash-back." It happened two years ago at our summer cottage. For some reason I now forget I had to be up and dressed by 5:30 a.m. After the lazy weeks of getting up at any old hour, I was fearful lest I'd sleep over . . . especially since I had no alarm clock. At this point my little daughter interposed with "Why don't you ask the Poor Souls, Mother; promise them a rosary. They'll wake you up." Quite amused at such a strange idea, I agreed to try it. Next morning I suddenly awoke out of a sound sleep at 4:40. That evening on my return from the city my daughter reminded me of the rosary: she didn't even ask how I woke up. She knew! I said the rosary, though skeptical as to whether it wasn't my subconscious mind that had done the trick rather than the Poor Souls.

As I say, I was reaching for the bell-cord, for the pain was increasing steadily. . . when those words of my daughter came ringing into my mind. . . "Ask the Poor Souls, Mother." Why, of course ask them. They needed my prayers as much as I needed their help! Before I had finished the fourth decade of the rosary the pain had diminished. I finished the rosary and fell fast asleep. How long I slept I cannot say, but when pain wakened me again I reached for the rosary once more. Three rosaries I said at different times that night. . . but I got through without medication. And thus I became a client of the Poor Souls! Being a convert, I found it difficult to pray to the saints. But the Poor Souls. . . believing in the infinite love and goodness our heavenly Father has for His Children, I am sure that as He gives some great faith in His Saints, He gives to others a faith in the Holy Souls. (Told by Silvia Keeley, in "Perpetual Help".)

PRAYERS: (deceased) Mary Harty; grandfather of Charles Mason (Wal); mother of Bill Murphy (Dil) (7th Anniv); Father Malachi Burns, '42 (New Orleans). (Ill) father of Jim Klockenkemper (Sor), Stroke; Edward Basta (Far.) appendectomy; Seven Special Intentions. One Thanksgiving.