

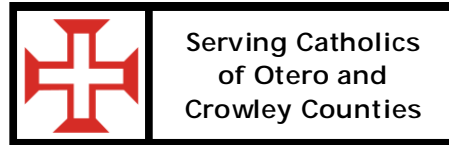
PRAYER OF SAINT GERTRUDE
FOR THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.



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What
Happened to
Purgatory?



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Examples of approved revelations of Purgatory

Christ repeatedly showed souls in purgatory to St. Gertrude the Great (d. 1302), and she could dialogue with them. She asked one soul, "What gives you the most consolation?" The soul replied, "The prayer of my friends alleviates my torments from hour to hour."

St. Nicolas of Tolentino (d. 1305) several times visited purgatory. Also, many poor souls came to him on earth and begged him for holy Masses.

The guardian angel of St. Maria Magdalena di Pazzi (d. 1607) guided her into purgatory; she, too, was frequently visited by souls who implored her help. Once she saw her brother in purgatory and remarked, "In the past, you didn't listen to my admonitions, now I see that you want so much that I listen to you. What do you want?" The answer: Holy Masses and offered-up Communion. Note that she saw his soul in a state of hunger for her love, while he expiated in purgatory.

St. Phillip Neri (d. 1622) used to be skeptical when told that someone had been visited by a poor soul, until such souls began appearing very often to him, imploring suffrages, or thanking him for their delivery from purgatory.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (d. 1690) received many visits from poor souls, noting the fervor with which they asked for the new devotion to the Sacred Heart of Suffrage.

Blessed Anna Katharina Emmerick (d. 1824) had frequent contacts with poor souls; often she heard their plaintive calls for help (and also their jubilant cries of gratitude).

Our Lord told St. Faustina Kowalska (d. 1938), "Enter into purgatory often, because they need you there." She indeed visited purgatory and was also visited herself by souls from there (see examples in her *Diary*).

Theresa Neumann, mystic (d. 1962), was besieged, as it were, by souls that ardently implored her help. She called them, affectionately, "my beggar kitten." This recalls a frequent remark of St. Joseph-Mary Escrivá (d. 1975), who was very much devoted to his "friends in purgatory," that he had the impression "as if the souls pull at my cassock."

Catholic Teaching on Purgatory

The Demise Of Purgatory?

The tumultuous years after the Second Vatican Council led to an abandonment of many devotional practices in the Church: the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the devotion to the Saints, belief in miracles, weekly confession, Eucharistic Adoration, Praying the Rosary, etc. Yet, Vatican II never abridged any of these consoling practices, nor did it discourage their use.

Another casualty of those years was belief in Purgatory. In many untrained minds, Purgatory and Limbo were combined into one reality and tossed out. As late as 4 years ago, the question of Limbo was looked at by theologians at the Vatican as to its roots and force in Catholic belief. Purgatory was not subjected to such scrutiny because it is well established in Catholic thought and practice.

Purgatory is still part of Catholic Thought and belief

There is ample evidence in the Bible and in theology, as well as in

the writings of the Saints to support Purgatory as part of Catholic teaching and devotional practice.

Biblical evidence includes Jesus' belief in both Hell (Gehenna) and Purgatory (Sheol)., the 500 or so dead who wandered Jerusalem after the crucifixion, Judas Maccabaeus' encouraging prayer for the dead, are three of the more obvious citations. Evidence from Catholic teaching includes the new Enchiridion of Indulgences (2000) and the Apostolic Penitentiary's assignment of plenary indulgences for certain pious and charitable acts of the baptized. Then there is a long list of revelations (see blue box on reverse side) by the Saints.

What are we to do about Purgatory?

Since it is a foregone conclusion of the Catholic Faith that there is such a state as Purgatory, then what is a modern Catholic to do about it?

First: give the assent of Faith to it.

Second: give contemplation to how one must change his or her life to accommodate the reality of Purgatory and its purpose in one's own life.

Third: resume the pious practice of praying for the dead, having Masses offered for them and offering communions in favor of one's beloved dead and all the poor souls in Purgatory.

What good can be gained?

The goods gained by these practices of prayer and sacrifice for the poor souls are many. They include, a healthy understanding of one's self in this life, and in the hereafter, a proper care for the dead, a realization of the effects of one's sins and consequently of the need for repentance in this life.

One who believes in Purgatory must consider how one lives one's life with an eye to the 'punishments' for offenses against God that one merits for his or her sins. One who believes in Purgatory must renew his or her commitment to frequent confession, gaining plenary indulgences for one's sins and fulfilling the requirements of gaining them for their beloved dead.

One who believes in purgatory must furthermore encourage other Catholics to live lives worthy of being called Christian and Catholic by admonishing them with the reality of Purgatory.

One must also take care to bury the dead in a Catholic manner, and return to visiting their beloved dead, especially on All Souls' Day. Many are the cases where those who had not received their religious due of a Catholic Mass and burial as they are laid to rest in

the ground or in a mausoleum. The Souls in Purgatory literally thirst and hunger for your help. Do what you can by praying daily for the dead, and offering Masses, rosaries and communions in reparation for the unconfessed sins of others and for the lessening of temporal punishment due to the sins of your beloved dead.

Requesting Masses

Masses can be offered for the dead, one per day by any priest, except on All Souls day, when the priest can do three masses for the dead. In some cases, where there is an abundance of masses requested, the petitions may be doubled up or even three intentions may be offered. Then the extra Mass stipends are given to the Seminarian Book fund of the diocese. The usual stipend for masses for the dead is \$10 per mass petition.

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