



Holy Souls Sodality

For Heaven's Sake

www.PrayForSouls.org

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Dear Members,

I received a letter from a new member who had recently lost her son and had lost her husband just a few years earlier. She asked a lot of interesting questions about purgatory. I thought it best to answer her here because others might be asking the same questions themselves. I will be using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as my reference guide.

At the time of death, am I right that God judges our souls and that most souls go to purgatory for purification?

In the *Catechism*, we are taught by the Church that death should be seen as a step towards eternal life with the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all of the saints in heaven (see CCC, 1020-1041). While it can be very sad to say goodbye to a loved one, as Catholic Christians we must remember that we are not made for this world but for the next world, heaven.

There is, at the point of our death, a "particular judgment," meaning one "will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance to his works and faith" (CCC, 1021). This judgment is called "particular" because it is different for each person and each receives according to how he lived his life. It is immediate and can mean entrance into heaven, "through purification or immediately" (CCC, 1022) or for those who reject God, immediate damnation to the everlasting fires of hell.



BR. FRED WELLS, MIC

What do souls in heaven do? Heaven is the perfect fulfillment of all that we as humans ever hope for. In heaven, we live a most "perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity."

Why do we call the souls in purgatory "Poor Souls" or "Holy Souls?"

There are those who die in the grace of God and as His friends but are still imperfect and require a "purification" before entering the promise of heaven. These "Holy Souls" are sent to purgatory for that purification. We call them "holy" because although they are not yet perfect, they are on the way to heaven. They can no longer merit anything for themselves while in purgatory, and they need our help. Think of it this way; while we are living in the world, we must have great faith and practice good works in the hopes of attaining our eternal reward in heaven. Once we die we can no longer do this, so we must await this purification in purgatory, and the prayers of the living bring these "Holy Souls" consolation and help in attaining their eternal reward.

The souls in purgatory are also called "Poor Souls" because they are suffering to some extent, that is, they realize they must be purified and are still not in union with God in heaven (see CCC, 1030-1032). The Holy Founder of the Marians, Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski, says the greatest work of charity is to pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. (He actually had a vision of purgatory, but that is another story!)

What do souls in heaven do? I know we pray to the angels and saints. Do the souls become angels?

Heaven is the perfect fulfillment of all that we as humans ever hope for. In heaven, we live a most "perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity" (CCC, 1024), not as angels, but as we are meant in our

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humanity to be through our redemption in Christ — the adopted children of God. In heaven, we share in the very life of God with Mary and all the saints. It is eternal bliss and a happiness unimaginable to us and truly a mystery. Holy Scripture speaks of heaven in images such as “light, peace, wedding feast, paradise, etc.” (CCC, 1027). There, we will reign with Christ as He promised. It is certainly something to joyfully ponder and to pray about.

Am I correct in thinking that Catholics believe in purgatory?

Catholics believe in heaven, purgatory, and hell. All three are very real things and true consequences of our life and works while on earth.

If we have a mortal sin on our soul, such as excommunication, not attending Sunday Mass or Holy Days, or adultery, will we go straight to hell?

We must always remember that nothing is impossible for God and His great mercy. He loves us all and wants all

of us with Him in the eternal bliss that is heaven. Jesus told St. Faustina, “The greater the sinner, the greater his right to My mercy.” So never underestimate the power and love of Jesus, The Divine Mercy. Of course, if we believe that we are in the state of mortal sin, we should immediately make an act of contrition and go to confession as soon as possible.

Is there a heaven at this time, or do the souls have to wait until the world ends?

Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified “already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels” (CCC, 1023).

When at a wake or funeral, some people say the soul of the deceased is already in heaven. How do we know if the soul is in heaven?

Unless one has received a special grace

from God, we cannot really know where someone is after death. What we can do is pray fervently for the departed and ask them to pray for us.

Death is not easy to deal with, and these questions are quite normal to ask, especially by those — like our letter writer — who have recently lost loved ones. My heart and prayers go out to you! To the letter writer: Please be assured of my prayers for the souls of your son and husband.

Never forget the great love God has for all of us and how much He loves you in a very particular way. May He continue to bless you, and through your prayers, may many souls be aided in their purification and final journey to their heavenly reward.

Sincerely in The Divine Mercy and Mary Immaculate,



Very Rev. Dan Cambra, MIC

Tips for October

Every time you pray the Rosary during October:

Pray an extra decade for the Holy Souls.

When Our Lady visited Lourdes, France, she carried a six-decade rosary. When St. Bernadette asked Our Lady what the sixth decade was for, Our Lady replied: “The sixth decade is for the souls in purgatory!”

Entrust your departed loved ones to Mary and ask her to help the Holy Souls who need it the most instead of a specific individual.

Before or after Holy Mass, pray the Rosary for the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

When before the Blessed Sacrament, pray the Rosary for the Holy Souls.

Visit a cemetery and pray the Eternal Rest Prayer on your rosary beads.

Source: *Praying with the Saints for the Holy Souls in Purgatory* by Susan Tassone

How I help the Holy Souls



Jacqueline White says praying for the Holy Souls has always been part of her ministry, but it wasn’t until her brother, a priest, passed along a copy of *Marian Helper* magazine (Spring 2010 issue) that she found out about the sodality.

“It was a pleasant surprise for me to see the little advertisement relating to the Holy Souls Sodality,” Jacqueline said. “For years, I thought I was praying ‘alone’ for the souls in purgatory, but to realize that there is actually a sodality that prays ‘together’ was truly a strong message for me.”

Jacqueline says she joined the sodality immediately and loves being part of a group that has the same interests as she does.

“It is a good feeling to be praying with others for the Holy Souls. I can only hope that others will do that for me when I need their prayers.”

Retirement has also helped Jacqueline focus on the Holy Souls.

“I didn’t have the time to myself to pray as much when I was working. But now my children are grown, and I watch my grandchildren,” she says. “So I take some time to go out on the deck and pray for the Holy Souls.”

She adds, “My husband also has had some health issues. He’s had trouble with his heart, and I just seem to have more alone time than I have ever had before. That’s OK. I go out on to the deck and have quiet time.”

