



Holy Souls  
Sodality

# For Heaven's Sake

www.PrayForSouls.org

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 12 † DECEMBER 2011

## Dear Members,

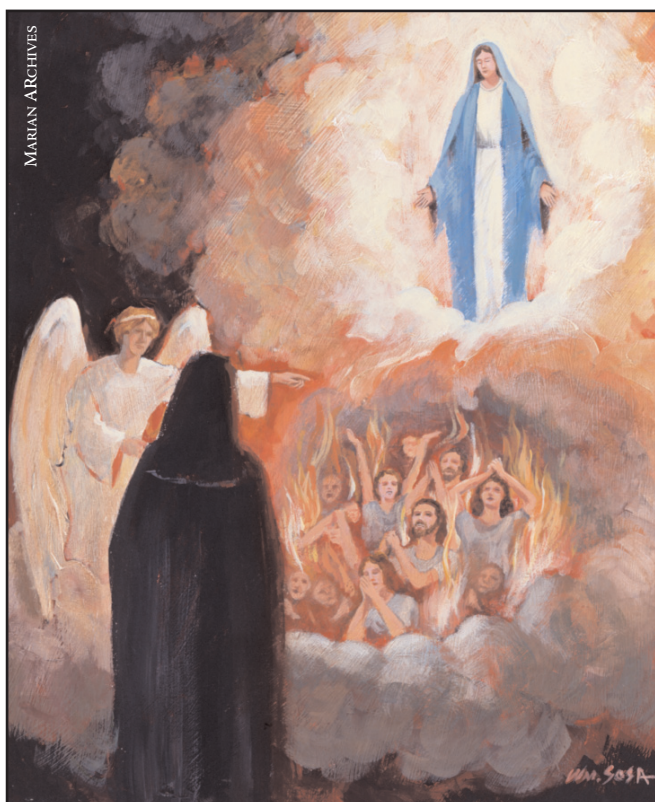
As we enter the month of December, the month in which we celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, let us focus on Mary and how she can help the souls in purgatory. Father John Larson, MIC, offers some insight into how Mary assists the souls in purgatory.

From the standpoint of official Church teachings, there is at least one thing that points to Mary helping the souls in Purgatory: an ancient prayer of the Mass. It is the collect or opening prayer for a Mass celebrated for deceased relatives, friends, and benefactors, and it is the same in both the extraordinary and ordinary forms of the Latin Rite. The new English translation of this prayer is:

O God, giver of pardon and loving author of our salvation, grant, we pray you, in your mercy, that through the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever-Virgin, and all your Saints, the members, friends, and benefactors of our community, who have passed from this world, may attain a share in eternal happiness. Through our Lord Jesus Christ ... (Roman Missal, 3rd Edition, page 1413).

Clearly, the Church believes that the prayers of Our Lady and the saints can be helpful to the souls in purgatory.

**Mary is the mother of the Church Suffering:** If the Blessed Virgin Mary is



**St. Faustina had a vision in which her Guardian Angel took her to purgatory. She says, "I saw Our Lady visiting the souls in Purgatory. The souls call her 'The Star of the Sea.' She brings them refreshment."**

not only mother of the physical Christ but also the mother of the mystical body of Christ, then it follows she is mother of Christians on earth, in heaven, and in purgatory. The first two are sometimes referred to as the Church Militant and Church Triumphant. The souls in purgatory are referred to as the Church Suffering. Therefore, we can say that Mary is the mother of the Church Suffering. We have the marvelous certainty that "Mary is ever pleading for the Holy Souls in Purgatory and that her intercession merits more than that of all the saints and angels taken together"

(Drinan, R., "Mother of the Church Suffering," *Ave Maria Magazine*, Vol. 70, Oct. 29, 1949, pg. 551).

**Mary has the ability to intercede in a special way:** In the *Raccolta*, A manual of indulgences, a prayer asks the sorrowful Virgin Mary to "present unto Him (the Eternal Father), together with the dolorous Passion of thy dear Son, thine own sighs and tears, and all the sorrows thou didst suffer in His suffering, in order that, through the merits of the same, refreshment may be granted to the souls now suffering in the fiery torments of purgatory" (Prayer no. 595 in the 1952 edition). Her participation at the foot of the cross in the work of redemption gives her the ability to intercede for the souls in a special way.

Many saints were confident of Our Lady's intercession for the souls in purgatory.

**Mary has a special ability to help:** St. Thomas Aquinas

explains that the saints in heaven cannot merit, and thus their prayers for the souls in purgatory do not bring the relief that our prayers and sacrifices for the souls do. Our Lady has a special situation, though, because she was involved in the meriting of all graces as the associate with the Redeemer in the work of redemption. Her mediation is universal, and thus she has a special ability to help the souls in purgatory.

**Mary is the 'consolation of the souls in purgatory':** In the writings of St. Brigid,

Continued on reverse →

## A hazardous journey, to help the Holy Souls in Purgatory

By Andrew Leeco

More than a foot of snow in a rare October storm didn't keep pilgrims from attending the first Mercy for Souls Conference on Sunday, Oct. 30, at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass. The conference was sponsored by the Marian Fathers and their Holy Souls Sodality.

Author Susan Tassone, acclaimed for her bestselling books on purgatory, gave two talks, and Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC — the Sodality's spiritual director — was the celebrant and homilist at Mass, as about 40 people braved the elements to prepare for November, the month to remember the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

"I knew it was the first conference, and we could be a powerful group to help the souls in purgatory. I wasn't going to let anything keep me from coming here today," Suzanne Fiorillo of Teaneck, N.J., said. "It took me about an hour to get out of my town. You could hear branches breaking. All eight of the trees in my yard had lost limbs. We had no power, but I wasn't going to let those struggles keep me away."

Dianne Sarno and Rosemary Petro were also from New Jersey and weren't sure they were going to make it through the snow.

"We had no electricity, but I had packed earlier and slept in my clothes," Rosemary said. "Dianne couldn't call because the phones were out, but she knocked on my door this morning and we made it here."

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ANDREW LEECO

**Father Dan Cambra, MIC, greets Susan Tassone during a special ceremony at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy that focused on why and how we help the Holy Souls in Purgatory.**



## Why Masses for the living?

Susan Tassone, noted author on purgatory, explains why Masses would benefit us here on earth:

- A living person is still capable of growing in sanctifying grace.
- A Mass for a living person may help the person avoid purgatory.
- A Mass offered for a person in a state of mortal sin may supply the grace necessary for the person to repent.
- The offering of a Mass may also help people unite their sufferings more deeply to those of Christ.

To request the offering of a Mass, visit [prayforsouls.org/masses](http://prayforsouls.org/masses) or call 1-800-462-7426.

## SOULS

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"We wanted to come because we have lots of people to pray for," Dianne added.

Mary Nguyen-ta traveled the farthest to come to the conference, flying in from Sacramento, Calif.

"I flew in to Boston and rented a car and drove here this morning," Mary said. "I travel to give thanks to God. I escaped Vietnam on the last day of the war and ever since I've been praying for the Holy Souls."

Dorothy Feder and her nephew, Jay Frazier, also overcame the elements to come to the conference.

"I'm from Belleville, Ill., and my nephew is from Columbus, Ohio. It took a long time to drive in from Boston this morning," Dorothy said. "It was our first time driving in a nor'easter."

"It was worth it," Jay said. "I'm learning a lot. Much more than I anticipated."

Father Dan opened his homily by telling the congregation that praying for the Holy Souls is "nearest and dearest to my heart."

"We are the Church Militant, and the souls in purgatory are the Church Suffering. You and I can pray for them and relieve their suffering," Fr. Dan explained. "In building the kingdom of God, we must be mindful of the Church Suffering. It is in the Marian's charism — authentic to our roots that began more than 300 years ago — and it's part of the Lord's infinite plan."

In the first of Susan's talks, she gave an insight into her passion for the Holy Souls. She explained that she was a corporate

woman and not nearly so devoted to the Holy Souls until a cab in the streets of Chicago altered her career path. She was hit by the cab — badly injuring her leg — but the down time allowed her to discover a closer connection to God and ultimately revealed her mission to pray for the Holy Souls.

Susan also answered the question she's asked most: What about the St. Gertrude Prayer and the promise that each prayer will release 1,000 souls.

"Why 1,000? My question is why not 2,000 or 3,000?" Susan asked. "What was so significant about 1,000? I did the research, and I found that Gertrude asked how many could be released, and Jesus said He wanted all the souls released. He wanted Gertrude to ask for more than she dared. In other words, our Lord is asking us to pray with zeal and fervor, to ask big, and to be bold. Basically the number 1,000 is more than you can count and more than you dare ask for. It is symbolic of an infinite number."

She also answered another frequently asked question: "What is purgatory?"

"Purgatory is not a punishment, it's a purification," Susan said. "It is a mercy from God. It's like going to a wedding dressed in a T-shirt and blue jeans. We know we don't belong there. We are stained by sin. Purgatory is a fiery love that burns away our sins. We are blessed to have purgatory."

In the second talk, she gave tips and ways to help the Holy Souls and to help us both here on earth and when we die.

Susan told the pilgrims about the key ways to help the Holy Souls: Masses, especially Gregorian Masses, praying the Rosary,

praying the Way of the Cross, and the use of sacramentals such as holy water. "Masses are the most powerful way to help the souls, and our Rosaries are the weapon," Susan said. "We can't always [go to] Masses every day, but we can say the Rosary every day."

But she said these ways can also help us while we are still on earth. "These things can help us, too," she said. "Have Masses said for yourself while you're still alive. Put Gregorian Masses in your will."

She also suggested that we get our children involved.

"Teach children about the souls in purgatory. Take them to the cemetery, teach them the Eternal Rest Prayer and the St. Gertrude Prayer, so they know what to do when you die," Susan said.

She encouraged the pilgrims to "do good, be good, and think good." She said that the more we do for the souls, the more they become intercessors for us. "The souls pray unceasingly for you," she said. "They will never stop praying and interceding for you."

Finally, she reminded those in attendance to take advantage of every indulgence and to offer them for the Holy Souls. She pointed out that on Divine Mercy Sunday, you can obtain graces for yourself and offer the gift of the plenary indulgence for a soul in purgatory.

"I feel sorry for all of those people who couldn't be here due to the weather," Fr. Dan said. "That's OK. In the words of [our Marian Renovator] Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, 'It's better to start slow with a more fervent group than start too big and showy and it all falls apart.' We are going to hope that that's true."



## Novena to the Mother of God

We turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary for special graces through this Novena to her as the Mother of God Dec. 23-31.

Enroll yourself and loved ones during this special time of prayer. Call 1-800-462-7426 or visit [www.prayforsouls.org/novenas/motherofgod](http://www.prayforsouls.org/novenas/motherofgod).

she tells about hearing Jesus say to His mother: "You are My Mother, the Mother of Mercy, and the consolation of the souls in purgatory." She also mentions Mary telling her that as a poor, sick person, bedridden, suffering, and abandoned, is relieved by words of encouragement and consolation, so are the souls in purgatory consoled and relieved by only hearing her name.

**Mary brings them refreshment:** St. Faustina had a vision during her post-lulancy with the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in which her Guardian Angel took her to purgatory. She says, "I saw Our Lady visiting the souls in Purgatory. The souls call her 'The Star of the Sea.' She brings them refreshment." She also heard an interior voice say to her, "My mercy does not want this, but justice demands it" (*Diary of St. Faustina*, 20). Purgatory is a result of the justice of God, but Mary is there providing the souls with refreshment.

**Souls are often visited and relieved by Mary:** St. Bernadine of Sienna discusses purgatory in a similar manner, explaining that "the pains of purgatory are called waves, because they are tran-

sitory, unlike the pains of hell, which never end; and they are called waves of the sea, because they are so bitter. The clients of Mary, thus suffering, are often visited and relieved by her." The above quote was found in St. Alphonsus de Liguori's *The Glories of Mary*.

The Marian Fathers have talked about this topic in the past, and to close the article, I will quote from an anonymously written article from *The Marian* (a magazine the Marians in Chicago published in the past) called "The Mother of All the Souls in Purgatory": Since Mary, Our Blessed Lady, is so solicitous for the souls suffering in purgatory, we must recommend our faithfully departed friends and relatives to her sincere prayers and intercession. [Let us pray] the Rosary for them. It must be recited often for the souls in purgatory, and it is here that we must develop a zeal for being present at the wakes of friends when the Rosary is recited for their repose. Mary must be asked to take their souls under her special protection, so that they too may be relieved of their sufferings (p. 4, November 1959).

(Father John wishes to thank the people at the Marian Library in Dayton, Ohio, for their help.)

So as we approach the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8th and the Advent and Christmas season, remember the Holy Souls in Purgatory through your prayers and works. Especially have Holy Masses celebrated for their souls. As you do, keep in mind that noted author Susan Tassone tells us that the most souls are released on Christmas Day. (To read more about Susan and her visit to Eden Hill, see pages 3 and 4).

Also, remember at Mass and in your prayers to ask the Queen of the Suffering Souls for her intercession. May she bring them consolation and relief, and may she welcome many of them into the glories of heaven on Christmas Day.

Sincerely in The Divine Mercy and Mary Immaculate,

*Father Dan Conlon MIC*

Father Dan, MIC

## Prayers to Mary for the Holy Souls

### Petition to Mary for the Suffering Souls

O Immaculate Mother, Queen of Heaven, hear the cries of your suffering children in purgatory and intercede for them at the throne of the Almighty. Behold in them, O Mother most faithful, the image of your Divine Son who offered Himself on their behalf. Recall His bitter Passion and Death, and see in them His very sufferings. We feel confident, then, O Mother of Mercy, that you will obtain their liberation; so that they, in union with you and the Choir of Heaven, may contemplate the Beatific Vision in heaven forever. Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them. Amen.

### Prayer to Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth

O Mary, may the souls who suffer cruel torments in purgatory, purified by the ardor of the flames, be the object of your compassion!

O Mary, Open Spring that cleanses our faults, Reconciler of sinners, reach out to those who pray to you and implore your assistance in purgatory!

O Mary, intercede for our deceased. They await patiently the end of their suffering when they will see you and taste eternal joys!

O Mary, Model of the Just, Guide of the Faithful, Salvation of those who hope in you to lead them to God, help us to pray ardently for the souls of the deceased and touch the Heart of your Divine Son!

O Mary, by the merits you have gained, give the dead true life, obtain mercy for them, and be the way that leads to your Son Jesus and to Eternal Rest! Amen.

### Prayer to Jesus and Mary for the Holy Souls

Most loving Jesus, I humbly beseech Thee that Thou wouldst Thyself offer to Thine Eternal Father, on behalf of the Holy Souls in

Purgatory, Thy Most Precious Blood, which poured forth from the Sacred Wounds of Thine adorable Body, together with Thine Agony and Death.

And do thou likewise, O Sorrowful Virgin Mary, present unto the Heavenly Father, together with the Dolorous Passion of thy dear Son, thine own sighs and tears, and all the sorrows thou didst suffer in His suffering, in order that, through the merits of the same, refreshment may be granted to the souls now suffering in the fiery torments of purgatory, so that, being delivered from that painful prison, they may be clothed with glory in heaven, there to sing the mercies of God for ever and ever. Amen.

Absolve, O Lord, the souls of all the faithful departed from every bond of sin, that by Thy gracious assistance they may deserve to escape the judgement of vengeance and enjoy the blessedness of everlasting light. Amen.

