

PRAISING FOR THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY

‘O God, to whose bounty and love man owes his pardon and salvation, we beg of Thy mercy that through the intercession of blessed Mary ever-virgin, and of all Thy saints, the souls of Thy servants who have departed from this life may be admitted into a fellowship of everlasting bliss. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.’

from the Roman Missal

‘And the day following Judas came with his company, to take away the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen, in the sepulchres of their fathers. And they found under the coats of the slain some of the donaries [votive offerings] of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids to the Jews: so that all plainly saw, that for this cause they were slain. Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord, who had discovered the things that were hidden. And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain. And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,) and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.’

2 Machabees 12:39-46

What is an Indulgence?

All sins are punished, whether in this life or in the next. If we have suffered more in this life than we have sinned – and have offered that suffering up to God as penances – then we will not have to suffer in the next life (in Purgatory). However, if, when we die, there is still some punishment outstanding then we will have to pay that debt in Purgatory and suffer accordingly.

An indulgence is the remission in full (a plenary indulgence) or in part (a partial indulgence) of the temporal punishment due to our sins. ('Temporal' means *not* the eternal punishment of hell.)

Indulgences can be obtained for ourselves or for those who have already died and are in Purgatory (but not for other people who are still living). The Holy Souls in Purgatory cannot gain indulgences for themselves because they have had their time on earth in which to live a life of virtue and undertake their penances voluntarily. So, once souls arrive in Purgatory they rely on us to pray for them.

Indulgences for the Holy Souls in Purgatory

- A *plenary* indulgence, applicable to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, is granted to the Christian faithful who devoutly visit a church or oratory on All Souls Day (Nov 2nd) and recite the Creed and Our Father.
- A *plenary* indulgence, applicable to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, can be gained on each of the days from 1st to 8th November by visiting a cemetery and praying there for the faithful departed. On other days of the year a *partial* indulgence can be gained.
- A *partial* indulgence, applicable to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, can be gained each time the prayer, "*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen*" is recited.
- A *partial* indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful, applicable to themselves or to the Holy Souls, who devoutly recite the *De Profundis*.

- A *partial* indulgence is granted the Christian faithful, applicable to themselves or to the Holy Souls, who devoutly recite Lauds or Vespers from the Office for the Dead.

To gain an indulgence you must:

- say the prayer or perform the work;
 - be free from all attachment to sin, even venial sin;
- and, within several days either side of this,
- go to Confession;
 - receive Holy Communion;
 - pray for the Pope's intentions (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.).

THE MOST COMMON PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SOULS

The De Profundis (Ps 129)

Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice.

O let Thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou, O Lord, should observe iniquity, Lord who shall endure?

But with Thee there is merciful forgiveness, and by reason of Thy law I have waited for Thee, O Lord.

My soul has relied upon His word, my soul has hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch even until night let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him plentiful redemption.

Israel indeed He will redeem from all its iniquities.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May they rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. O Lord hear my prayer.

R. Let my cry come before Thee.

Let us pray:

O God, Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of Thy servants departed the remission of all their sins, and through our pious supplication may they obtain that pardon which they have always desired. Who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Another Prayer for the Dead

O God, Whose property is ever to have mercy and to spare, we beseech Thee on behalf of the souls of Thy servants whom Thou hast called out of this world: look upon them with pity and let them be conducted by the holy angels to paradise, their true country. Grant that they who believed in Thee and hoped in Thee may not be left to suffer the pains of the purgatorial fire, but may be admitted to eternal joys. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer for those for whom we are bound to pray

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord our God, that the souls of Thy servants and handmaidens, the memory of whom we keep with special reverence, and for whom we are bidden and are bound to pray, and the souls of all our benefactors, relatives and connections, and all the faithful, may rest in the bosom of Thy saints; and hereafter, in the resurrection from the dead, may please Thee in the land of the living. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of St John Henry Newman

O Lord, support us all the day long, till the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done, then in your mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.