

# WHY BECOME A PURGATORIAN

## What is Purgatory

Purgatory is a place or state of expiation from petty sins and stains after death and before entering Heaven. It is also seen as a place of temporary expiation/suffering. It is a place of spiritual purgation. 'Purgation' there is from the verb 'to remove stain by cleaning and cleansing, to get rid of the unwanted or the unacceptable. The doctrine of purgatory, however, is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This doctrine has been handed down by Tradition and taught by the infallible church.

Purgatory is a prison of fire where so many souls are plunged after death. It is a place where souls suffer intense pain. The fire we see on earth is physical and made by the goodness of God for our comfort and well being. On the contrary, the fires of purgatory is spiritual and made by the justice of God to purge and to purify souls just as gold is refined in fire, that it may sparkle! But in this case, souls are purified for all unspassing and severe pain of loss and separation from God. It is the bitterest of sufferings; the separation and loss of God. The difference between hell and purgatory is that purgatory is temporary while hell is eternal.

## The Scriptures on Purgatory

The scriptures points to the revelation and existence of a place of purgation and purification in which souls are plunged after their departure from this life. This place is given the name purgatory by the Holy Mother Church. We shall take only a few of such scriptures which would suffice for this message: Psalm 66:12, Isaiah 4:4, Zechariah 9:11, 2 Maccabees 12:39-42, 44-45, Matthew 5:26, 12:32, 1 Cor 3:13-15, 1 Peter 3:19 and Philippians 2:10

## The Holy Fathers on Purgatory

St. Augustine, the greatest Doctor of the Church, taught that many souls before entrance into heaven are subjected to a fire more penetrating, more dreadful than anything we can conceive in this life. St. Thomas Aquinas, the prince of theologians, says that the fire of purgatory is equal in intensity to the fire of hell and that the slightest contact with it is more dreadful than all the possible of this earth. St. Cyril of Alexandria adds that it would be more preferable to suffer all

the pains of the earth than to pass even one day in purgatory. These holy writers speak in identical terms of this awful fire.

### **Duration of the purgation/Sufferings**

The malice of sin is very great. Sometimes what appears small to us are in grievous before the infinite goodness of God. It is enough to study the lives of the saints to see how they bewailed their sins. The Lord tells us that we shall render accounts for every single idle word we have ever mentioned. This is a good example of what the Lord takes seriously and we take for granted. Many good Christians leave this world with venial/little sin. The word of God says that no one with sin will enter heaven, ccRev21:27. Thus, the need for purgation, ccIsaiah 1:25, 6:7.

The length of time souls are detained in purgatory, however, depends on the following; the number of their faults both mortal and venial, the malice and deliberation with which these faults have been committed, the penance done, or not done, the satisfaction made or not made for sins committed during life. Much also depend on the opinion that those who pass the whole of their lives in great sin and confess them on their death bed may be detained longer in purgatory.

### **Praying for departed souls: A Christian duty**

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that the measure you mete out to others is the measure you will receive. In this regard, we are always bound by charity to help and assist our neighbour. It is not a favour we do or leave undone or half done. It is a Christian duty. It is a monstrous crime in this life, to refuse the poor and destitute the food necessary to keep them alive. The question now is, who is in more desperate need of our charity than the souls in purgatory? What hunger, thirsty, or dire sufferings can be compared to their dreadful torments? God wishes us to help them. It is true they can never again offend Him but His justice demands expiation and atonement. He has granted us the power to relieve and release them by the force of our prayers and suffrages for them. Our prayers do so much as to bring them succor, relief, and release from their great pains. These are suggested ways we render help to the holy souls.

The most efficacious means of granting relief to the holy souls is by offering Masses for them. The praying of the Holy Rosary with its innumerable indulgences are excellent means of helping the holy souls. The Chaplet of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The prayerful repetition of short indulgence prayers, e.g. Jesus I love you, Save Souls.

## **WHY BECOME A PURGATORIAN**

Another powerful means is to offer our Lord all your pains sufferings/ reparations and suffrages for the relief of the holy souls.

Have your name registered in the purgatory society. Get as many people to join the society and promote the good work.

### **Benefits of Praying for the Holy Souls**

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that the measure you give is the measure you receive. Praying for the Holy Souls does a lot of good, bring so many merits and attract the mercies of God upon them that pray for their relief. The Holy Souls in purgatory are filled with an immense desire to repay the favour done to them. Their gratitude knows no bounds! They pray for their benefactors so feverently and so intensely that the Lord refuses them nothing.

St. Catherine of Bologna says: “I received many and very great favours from the Saints but more much from the Holy Souls. “Our stay in purgatory is far lessened if at all we even get there when we devote ourselves to praying for the souls suffering in purgatory. When they are released, they prostrate before All-Holy-Throne of God praying for those who helped them out of the excruciating flames. By their efficacious prayers, the Holy Souls shield their friends from dangers, perils, pestilence and the evils that threaten them. Let us make up our minds today to pray assiduously for the relief and release of the souls in purgatory.

### **What to Do Now**

Join Purgatorian society, so you will constantly be reminded of your duty towards the dead who are easily forgotten at death by their relatives. May the Lord bless you abundantly as you do.

Amen

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