

of their services to the Church: *

To the rich, who are now the most destitute: *

To the mighty, who are now as lowly servants: *

To the blind, who now see their folly: *

To the frivolous, who spent their time in idleness: *

To the poor, who did not seek the treasures of Heaven: *

To the tepid, who devoted little time in prayer: *

To the indolent, who were negligent in performing good works: *

To those of little faith, who neglected the frequent reception of sacraments: *

To the habitual sinners, who owe their salvation to a miracle of grace: *

To parents, who failed to watch over their children: *

To superiors, who were not solicitous for the salvation of those entrusted to them: *

To the souls of those who strove for hardly anything but riches and pleasures: *

To the worldly minded, who failed to use their wealth and talents in the service of God: *

To those who witnessed the death of others, but would not think of their own: *

To those who did not provide for the great journey beyond and the days of tribulation: *

To those whose judgment is so severe because of the great things entrusted to them: *

To the popes, rulers, kings and princes: *

To the bishops and their counselors: *

To teachers and advisors: *

To the deceased priests of this diocese: *

To the priest and religious of the whole Church: *

To the defenders of the Holy Faith: *

To those who died in the battlefield: *

To those who are buried at sea: *

To those who died suddenly: *

To those who died without the last rites of the Church: *

To those who will die within the next twenty-four hours: *

To my own poor soul when I shall have to appear before Your judgment seat: *

L: Eternal rest grant unto all those souls of the faithful departed, Lord

A: And let perpetual light shine upon them.

L: May they rest in peace

A: Amen

* Lord have mercy

SCRIPTURAL READINGS / MEDITATIONS

First Day

"If he had not believed that the dead would be raised, it would have been foolish and useless to pray for them. In his firm and devout conviction that all of God's faithful people would receive a wonderful reward, Judas (Maccabaeus) made provision for a sin offering to set free from their sin those who had died." 2 Maccabees 12:44-45

Sin is the one thing that holds back the progress of men and women. True progress is man's ascent to God. Only sin blocks this path.

Vice and crime throw away human being to animal levels when they should be mounting towards the Angels.

Death in mortal sin means the complete failure that is hell. It flings man, who is destined for eternal happiness, into eternal loss and pain.

Death in venial sin or with the punishment due to sin still on the souls, means a half in the progress toward heaven. The poor souls – poor indeed in his eagerness to reach God and the painful and tedious delay that keeps him from God – must linger in this prison house.

This is purgatory, a place of anxious, almost impatient waiting.

Second Day

"Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? Now the sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:55-57

Nothing else is humanly harder to bear than painful waiting. All the souls in Purgatory are sure one day to reach Heaven. They know how wonderful heaven is and how desirable God is. But they cannot follow the violent impulse which drives them towards their happiness. They must hunger for God and still be withheld from the possession of Him.

In hell, there is only bleak and hopeless despair. In purgatory, there is hope and certainty, love and eagerness – and long period of waiting, waiting, waiting.

There is suffering, too, in purgatory, the suffering that washes away in flame the stains of guilt and cleanses as with fire the souls will eventually enter into the presence of the all-holy God. But the real pain in purgatory is that of awful eagerness for God, who is just out of reach, and that longing to go home to heaven, which is almost seen but as yet unattainable.

Nothing defiled can ever enter heaven. So purgatory is the place where defilement is removed, where the souls that are destined for glory are prepared by punishment and tedious delay for their homecoming with God.

NOVENA FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

Third Day

"If Christ lives in you, then although the body be a dead thing in virtue of our guilt, the spirit is a living thing, by virtue of our justification. And if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies too, for the sake of his Spirit who dwells in you." Rom 8:10-11

This life on earth is a time of merit. When through the Church's indulgences we avail ourselves of the merits of Christ and of the Saints, we can wipe away the guilt of forgiven sins and eliminate the punishment due to venial sins, as we can also do through penance and deeds of charity.

But once the souls enter purgatory, the time for that soul to gain merit has ended.

When we suffer on earth, we can offer our sufferings to God, increasing thereby our future happiness in heaven and cancelling out the pains of purgatory. When a soul suffers in purgatory, he slowly and tediously cancels the debts of sin but gains no further merit for heaven. There are no indulgences in purgatory, nor fresh use of the merits of Christ, of His Mother or of the Saints.

Thanks, however, to our union in the Mystical Body of Christ, thanks to the communion of Saints, we can gain merit for the suffering souls. We can win indulgences and apply them to their period of waiting. We can cut their sufferings and speed their entry into heaven by whatever good we offer for them on earth.

Fourth Day

"If we have died with Christ, we have faith to believe that we shall share his life. We know that Christ, now he has risen from the dead, cannot die any more; death has no more power over him; the death he died was a death, once for all, to sin; the life he now lives is a life that looks towards God. And you, too, must think of yourselves as dead to sin, and alive with a life that looks towards God, through Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 6:8-11

Swiftly the memory even of the dear departed seem to pass from human minds. Memory is like tears in a coffin, swiftly evaporated, quickly dried.

The rush of the days fills the minds and hands of the living. The press of old associations and the establishment of new friends help supplant and elbow into dusty corners of our minds the friends now hidden in God's penitentiary. But these prisoners do not forget us.

In the slow, painful dragging of the days, they have time to remember. They are so hungry for God that they have little heart for new companions. They are made sensitive, as pain always makes us sensitive, to memory, to neglect, to hope for deliverance, to the knowledge that those who once cried aloud their love have swiftly forgotten.

With gratitude, they do think of those who remember them. With sorrow, they think of those who have swiftly dropped them. They pray to God, who loves them even in their exile, the thoughtful and the mindful. They beg that those who have pushed them away for the near

NOVENA FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

and the living will drop in their prison house a thought, a prayer, a good deed in ransom.

Fifth Day

"Remember the Good News that I care; 'Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David.' Here is a saying that you can rely on: If you have died with him, then we shall live with him. If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him. If we disown him, then he will disown us. We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful, for he cannot disown his own self." 2 Tim 2:8,11-13

Those in purgatory are friends of God. These souls are saved. Their crowns are awaiting them, their thrones prepared, their mansions ready.

God loves them deeply, as He loves all those faithful sons and daughters who fought the good fight.

Their prayers for others come straight to His throne. They can no longer pray for themselves; their time of merit is over. They can pray and they do pray for those on earth whom they love. That loving mother in purgatory is interceding for her children. That devoted father is now more devoted. Those friends have not forgotten the value of their friendship. Those relatives are bound to us with ties much closer than blood.

Most of all the holy souls pray for their benefactors. Our slight remembering of them wins for us a great measure of intercession from them. We pray thoughtlessly; they pray with the intensity of souls who are coming ever closer to God. We ask for deliverance for them; they beg God for a thousand blessings for us.

Sixth Day

"Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body, he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life. He has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Power his subjects." 1Pet 3:18,22

Our souls hunger for God with far more intensity than a body hungers for food. Here in this world we are distracted by the pleasure of life about us. In purgatory, there are no distractions. Their eyes fixed on the closed gates of heaven, the holy souls long for God, yearn for God, hunger and thirst for God.

The terms of their sentences ring in their ears: "thus and thus long shall you remain separated from your joy, until these sins, misdeeds, stains and blemishes have been atoned for."

Balanced against their consuming hunger for God is their certainty that they would not dare enter His presence with the slightest stain upon them. They almost wished that the fires burned more fiercely and more rapidly so that the pain could be at once more intense and more cleansing.

Imagine then their gratitude for every prayer or good deed by which we help them cleanse their soul and speed them on their way to God. Imagine the leaping joy with which they welcome any act by which we cut their sentence, shorten their stay in purgatory, and

hasten their entrance into heaven.

Seventh Day

"None of us lives for himself only, none of us dies for himself only. If we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For Christ died and rose to life in order to be the Lord of the living and of the dead." Rom 14:7-9

What food is to the starving, what drink is to the parched throat, what light is to a man long blind, what restored health is to the patient invalid, what freedom is to the prisoner, all this and far more is release from purgatory of a holy soul.

And when food, health and freedom come suddenly and unexpetedly, the human heart leaps and bounds, and the souls know the sharp ecstasy of joy.

So it is with each prayer that we say for the beseeching souls in purgatory. Our prayer is bread and water, light and health; it is a reprieve and a release, freedom and homecoming. It is the cutting of bonds, the lessening of weary waiting, the termination of exile, the sudden glorious lift that picks them up and seems almost to shoot them towards the center of their joy, God Himself.

For us, that prayer is an almost careless gesture, a routine act of charity. Prayers, alms, a bit of fasting, a good deed done... all forgotten in the long doing. For them, however, such are beyond price and measure, something for which they can repay us only in the immortal coin of eternity.

Eighth Day

"They will see the Lord face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. It will never be night again and they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them. They will reign forever and ever." Rev. 22:4-5

Then, a happy day of release comes. Perhaps, for those whose friends on earth forgot and for those because of some valid reason did not receive any special consideration from God, that release comes only at the end of long and bitter centuries. Perhaps, it comes far sooner than they have dared to hope. Their friends have remembered them, prayers poured in upon them and God has accepted these in part or full payment of their debt.

But late or soon, the release comes, the sentence is finished, the grim gates of purgatory swing open. Ahead are the white and shining portals of the Eternal City. Like the rush of light, the released soul sweep upward toward God. Fierce winds have now the fierce intensity, which marks this flight of a soul from exile to the happiness for which God destined it.

Then, in the presence of God, there is the moment of triumph, the welcome by the Trinity, the entrance into the heavenly mansion, the enthronement of another saint. At that moment shall begin for that soul an eternity of bliss and incomparable happiness that shall be without flaw, never to be marred by uncertainty or

disillusionment. For, then, the souls shall possess God for all eternity.

Ninth Day

"Everyone whom my Father gives me will come to me. I will never turn away anyone who comes to me, because I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me. And it is the will of him who sent me that I should not lose any of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them all to life on the last day. For what my Father wants is that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life. And I will raise them on the last day." John 6:37-40

Joy does not cause the souls in heaven to forget. On the contrary, joy makes them more alive to memory. The soul that has entered into bliss does not, for a second, forget the generous friends on earth who helped him reach God and glory.

Now a saint in heaven, he uses to the full his power of intercession. He prays to God to be merciful and generous. By name he mentions to Christ and to Mary those who mentioned his name when he was helpless to help himself. He speaks to the Trinity about his friends.

He becomes, in effect, a mighty benefactor, persuasively beseeching God to extend mercy and grant favors to those who remembered him in purgatory. He prays with the fervor of new-found joy that their passage through life will be safe, their stay in purgatory be brief, their entrance into heaven swift and triumphant. He prays that one day, they too might behold the beatific vision and see God face to face through the endlessness of eternity. It is their unselfish urge to share so great a bliss that we ask them to send us.

Source: **MEDITATION** from Daniel A. Lord, SJ

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(Message from the Editor: We strongly urge all you PWHS members to reproduce this novena and give copies to whoever you think will be interested. Provide your parish priest a copy and suggest that it be prayed starting Oct. 24 till Nov. 1 before or after mass; give copies to your prayer groups, and let us all pray this novena.)

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NOVENA FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY



OPENING PRAYER
please kneel

O Eternal Father. I offer You the Most Precious Blood of Your Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory and for sinners everywhere – for sinners in the Universal church, for those in my own home and for those within my family. Amen.

Most loving Jesus, I humbly beseech You to offer to Your Eternal Father, on behalf of the Holy Souls in Purgatory, Your Most Precious Blood, which poured forth from the Sacred Wounds of Your adorable body, together with Your agony and death.

O Sorrowful Virgin Mary, do present to the Heavenly Father, together with the sorrowful passion of Your Son, Your own sighs and tears and all the sorrows You did suffer in communion with Him, in order that 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.

SCRIPTURAL READING FOR THE DAY
please be seated

MEDITATION FOR THE DAY

NOVENA PRAYER
please kneel

Merciful Father, in union with the Saints in heaven, we beg You to have mercy on the souls in purgatory. Be mindful of Your eternal love for them and show them Your mercy because of the boundless merits of Your Beloved Son. Be pleased to free them from pain and sorrow that they may soon enjoy eternal peace and happiness.

Loving Redeemer, Jesus Christ, You are the King of kings in the land of bliss. We beg You, in Your mercy, hear our prayer and set free the holy souls in purgatory. Lead them from the prison of darkness to the light and freedom of the children of God in the Kingdom of Your glory. Redeem them with Your Precious Blood and save them from eternal death.

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light, enkindle in us the flames of charity that we might be able to offer up our prayers and sacrifices for the suffering souls in purgatory. We wish to apply the merits of this devotion to the entire Church Suffering, but especially to our departed loved ones. Hear our prayers that we may be united with them in the kingdom of Your glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

LITANY OF THE HOLY SOULS

Almighty God, Father of goodness and love, have mercy on the poor suffering souls and grant them Your aid:

- To our parents and ancestors:*
- To our brothers and sisters and relatives: *
- To our spiritual and temporal benefactors: *
- To our former friends and subordinates: *
- To all for whom love or duty bids us to pray: *
- To those who suffered disadvantage or harm through us: *
- To those who have offended us: *
- To all those who are especially beloved by You: *
- To those whose release is at hand: *
- To those who desire most to be united with You: *
- To those who endure the greatest suffering: *
- To those whose release is most remote: *
- To those who are least remembered: *
- To those who are most deserving on account

* Lord have mercy