

Faith in Five – Adults
All Souls Day / Purgatory
October 28, 2022



1. All Souls Day, November 2nd

All Souls Day is a day of prayers for the faithful departed and is thus also known as The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. [Image Source](#)



The Church recognizes "the faithful" as baptized Catholics; "all souls" commemorates the church penitent of souls in purgatory, and the identification of "all saints" refers to the church triumphant of saints in Heaven with God.

The Old Testament Jewish prayed for the dead as we do today. The theological basis for the feast is the doctrine that there are righteous souls which, on departing from the body, lacked an opportunity to atone for venial sins or do sufficient penance for serious sins already confessed. Scripture says of Heaven: "nothing unclean will enter it" (Revelation 21:27).

St. Paul says each one's work will come to light: "for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire [itself] will test the quality of each one's work. If the work stands that someone built upon the foundation, that person will receive a wage. But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor 3:13-15).

2. The concept of purgatory is often misunderstood, by those believing it to be a 'spiritual jail, hell with parole', or a second chance to get into heaven. Purgatory is the state of purification of souls by the prayers or actions of those faithful on earth. These souls have died in a state of grace and are being made ready or prepared for Heaven. The biblical teaching of this states, it is "a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 Maccabees 12:46).

3. The word Purgatory comes from the Greek root πῦρ ("pur") which means both "fire" and "pure". Fire can be destructive yet also transformative, bringing forth a new, clean nature. "The souls in Purgatory are confirmed in grace. This means that their salvation is guaranteed – they are incapable of sin or error, and they are no longer at any risk of damnation. They know they will see God face-to-face one day, and they therefore embrace their suffering in purgatory as the necessary means by which to attain the beatific vision" ([Source](#)). While suffering occurs from a temporary distance, purgatory is considered a place of expectant joy. It is the mercy and grace of God at work, so that we may enjoy full communion with Him for all eternity.

The souls in purgatory cannot help themselves to get to Heaven quickly and rely on our help. "The most common request is for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Any small prayer, penance, indulgence, or offering of suffering that we take on behalf of the Holy Souls can greatly accelerate their journey through Purgatory toward Heaven". ([Source](#))

4. **St. Gertrude** was a German Benedictine nun with a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She was a great writer, and her collection, [Spiritual Exercises](#) is helpful to those desiring a deeper spirituality through prayer and meditation. She was never formally canonized, but Rome approved a liturgical office of prayer and readings in her honor.

St. Gertrude had a great love for the souls in purgatory and asked that prayers be made on their behalf. She is attributed to this prayer (shown here) for the Souls in Purgatory. According to tradition, the recitation of this prayer would release a thousand souls from purgatory. St. Gertrude's belief of the Holy Mass to help the faithful departed souls are in line with devotions associated with the Church.

**For the Souls in Purgatory
Eternal Father,
I offer You the most precious blood
of thy Divine Son, Jesus,
in union with the Masses said
throughout the world today,
for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory,
for sinners everywhere,
for sinners in the universal Church,
for those in my own home,
and in my family. Amen.**

5. Customs associated with All Souls Day besides praying for the faithful departed may include visitations to the graveside of the beloved, offering tokens of love in remembrance, or at the very least, a gathering to remember the beloved. Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead in Spanish) is a two-day celebration founded in Latin America where families honor their deceased loved ones, with the belief that the spirits of the dead return home to spend time with their families. There are decorated home altars with pictures of the deceased, festivals, candles, food and music. These customs are not Catholic, but many Catholics still celebrate, as part of their heritage and culture. It is believed to originate from the Aztecs; when the culture became catholic, this was moved to All Saints and All Souls Day.

3 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT PURGATORY

- IT MAKES US IMAGES OF CHRIST**
It isn't a punishment. Rather, it's a state of purification to make us "perfect images of Christ".
- WE NEED TO PRAY FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY**
This process of purification can be long and painful, so we need to pray for them - always.
- THE SOULS IN PURGATORY CAN PRAY FOR US**
Though they can't pray for themselves, as members of the body of Christ, can pray for us.

PRAYER FOR THE SOULS OF THE DEPARTED
V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.
R. And let the perpetual light shine upon them.
And may the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

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This is a free resource! For more information, visit, www.acatholicmomslife.com

We invite you to review the Faith in Five postings for Children (ages 3-8) and Children (Ages 8+) during the month of October. The weekly postings there will focus on the lives of the saints, in preparation for November's All Saints Day!

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