

My Dear Parish Family,

This Sunday we offer the Mass of All Souls and it is a very important day in the Church as we enter the month of November dedicated to the Souls in Purgatory. We the Church Militant as we battle for eternal life are called to assist those of the faithful departed through our prayers and Mass intentions for them.

Usually a Mass like this would not be offered on this day because the Sunday takes precedence over it, but Holy Mother Church in her love for souls wants this Mass for the Dead to be encountered by all so that we know its importance and relevance even for our time now. We can see the differences with this Mass today, as there is no Gloria or Creed said.

Our prayers are a great gift that we can offer to all of our loved ones and friends, and even for all those we do not know. Our true home is Heaven, but we do realize that not all of us will be perfectly purified when we die to be able to enter into Heaven right away and so in Purgatory we are purged of anything that cannot be brought into the Presence of God.

*As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, All who die in God's friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.*

St. Catherine of Genoa explains a little deeper why we need this purification: *if a soul were brought to see God when it had still a trifle of which to purge itself, a great injury would be done it. God is perfect and holy and so we would not want to bring any attachment to sin that we have into His Presence until after we are purified.*

The Holy Scriptures in the Second Book of Maccabees shows the importance of praying for those who have died. As it says, *For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.*

The souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves, but they pray for us as we pray for them. May we take the time during this month of November to remember the

souls of the faithful departed. There are a few things that we can do during this month that are greatly beneficial for them, including offering indulgence prayers.

To attain a plenary indulgence, three conditions must accompany the prescribed act: the faithful must receive the Sacrament of Confession, either eight days before or after All Souls Day, receive Holy Communion on All Souls Day and then recite prayers on this Day (an Our Father and the Apostles Creed) at the Church for a particular soul like our family or friends, and then say an Our Father and a Hail Mary for the monthly intention of the Pope. All attachment to sin, even venial sin, must be absent. If not absent or if some of the above conditions are not fulfilled, the indulgence becomes partial.

Also a partial indulgence can be obtained by devoutly visiting a cemetery and praying for the souls there who have died, like our relatives and friends. One can gain a partial indulgence by visiting a cemetery each day between November 1st and November 8th. These indulgences are applicable only to the souls in Purgatory, so that is why we pray for a particular person each day.

This partial indulgence above can be obtained when the *Eternal Rest* prayer is offered for them at the Cemetery. This is a good prayer to recite especially during the month of November, but also all year round: *Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, *From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.*

Thank you for your great generosity in offering prayers for the souls in Purgatory and may we flood the Cemeteries in St. Charles, Albee, Maple Grove and beyond, with prayers for all of our loved ones and even those we do not know.

May God Bless you and Mary keep you,

Rev. Fr. Christopher Coman