



Why Pray for Souls in Purgatory?

Commemorating All the Faithful Departed
All Souls Day, November 2

Prepare: Read John 6:37-40

Can we help those who are in purgatory? Definitely! That's why the Church provides us with a memorial Mass for all the faithful departed. We're praying for those who died in the arms of Jesus but who have not yet reached the full glory of heaven.

Think of your loved ones who died believing in Jesus and wanting to be loved by Jesus. Even if there was the smallest seed of faith in them, they wouldn't have wanted to reject Jesus when he came for them as they took their final breath; they are with him now.

We can be assured of this because of what Jesus said in John 6:37-40. The Father's decision is that everyone who recognizes Jesus as the Son of God, wanting him to be their Savior and the Redeemer of their sins, will have eternal life. "And I shall raise him on the last day," Jesus promised.

However, rarely does anyone die in the full state of grace, perfect in holiness. Most still have unrepented or unexpiated sins ("unexpiated" means insufficient penance has been made to rectify the damage of sin). God wants all of his children to receive the fullness of his perfect love, which means being forever united to him in a state of complete holiness. Because nothing unholy exists in heaven, when souls realize what they've forfeited by clinging to their sins, they want to be purged. They gladly choose the state or process of purgatory to reach the state of full grace.

Our loving prayers help them in this transition.



Pope Leo XIII wrote in his encyclical on the Eucharist, *Mirae Caritatis*, on May 28, 1902: "The communion of saints is nothing else but a mutual sharing of help, satisfaction, prayer and other good works, a mutual communication among all

the faithful, whether those who have reached heaven, or who are in the cleansing fire, or who are still pilgrims on the way in this world."

Through Jesus and our love for the souls in purgatory, we can do penances on their behalf in imitation of Jesus who was crucified on our behalf. Such penances include prayers, alms-giving, fasting, sacrifices, good works and other acts of piety.

A bonus benefit is that we're also purified, here on earth instead of later after our own deaths, because such deeds made on behalf of others will increase our own holiness.

By offering Masses for the souls in purgatory, publicly and privately, we consciously give them our love and we commend them more fully to Jesus' love. The celebration of All Souls Day and the whole month of November is given over to this important ministry.

What are you going to do this month that will help your loved ones who've gone Home to Jesus but who are probably not yet enjoying the fullness of his love for them?