



The Saint Francis Xavier's Messenger - #22– November 2016 ***Newsletter of the Society of Saint Pius X in Sri Lanka***

THE RELIEF OF THE POOR SOULS

Father Ravignan, an illustrious and holy preacher of the Society of Jesus, also cherished great hope for the welfare of sinners carried away by a sudden death, when otherwise they had borne no hatred in the heart for the things of God. He lived to speak of the supreme moment, and it seems to have been his opinion that many sinners are converted in their last moments, and are reconciled to God without being able to give any exterior sign thereof. In certain deaths there are mysteries of Mercy where the eye of man sees nothing but strokes of Justice. As a last glimmer of light, God sometimes reveals Himself to those souls whose greatest misfortune has been to ignore Him ; and the last sigh, understood by Him who penetrates hearts, may be a groan that calls for pardon ; that is to say, an act of perfect contrition. General Exelmans, a relative of this good father, was suddenly carried to the tomb by an accident, and unfortunately he had not been faithful in the practice of his religion. He had promised that he would one day make his confession, but had not had the opportunity to do so. Father Ravignan, who, for a long time had prayed and procured prayers for him, was filled with consternation when he heard of such a death. The same day, a person accustomed to receive supernatural communications thought he heard an interior voice, which said to him, "Who then knows the extent of God's mercy? Who knows the depth of the ocean, or how much water is contained therein? Much will be forgiven to those who have sinned through ignorance."

The biographer from whom we borrow this incident, Father de Ponlevoy, goes on to say, "Christians, placed under the law of Hope no less than under the law of Faith and Charity, we must continually lift ourselves up from the depths of our sufferings to the thought of the infinite goodness of God. No limit to the grace of God is placed here below; while there remains a spark of life there is nothing which it cannot effect in the soul. Therefore we must ever hope and petition God with humble persistency. We know not to what a degree we may be heard. Great saints and doctors have gone to great lengths in extolling the powerful efficacy of prayer for the dear departed, how unhappy soever their end may have been. We shall one day know the unspeakable marvels of Divine Mercy. We should never cease to implore it with the greatest confidence."

The following is an incident which our readers may have seen in the "Petit Messager du Coeur de Marie", November 1880. A Religious, preaching a mission to the ladies at Nancy, had reminded them in a conference that we must never despair of the salvation of a soul, and that sometimes actions of the least importance in the eyes of man are rewarded by God at the hour of death. When he was about to leave the church, a lady dressed in mourning approached him and said, "Father, you just recommended to us confidence and hope; what has just happened to me fully justifies your words. I had a husband who was most kind and affectionate, and who although otherwise leading an irreproachable life, entirely neglected the practice of his religion. My prayers and exhortations remained without effect. During the month of May which preceded his death, I had erected in my room, as I was accustomed to do, a little altar of the Blessed virgin, and decorated it with flowers, which I renewed from time to time. My husband passed the Sunday in the country, and each time he returned he brought me some flowers, which he himself had plucked, and with these I used to adorn my oratory. Did he notice this? Did he do this to give me pleasure, or was it through a sentiment of piety towards the Blessed Virgin? I know not, but he never failed to bring me the flowers.

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"In the beginning of the following month he died suddenly, without having had time to receive the consolations of religion. I was inconsolable, especially as I saw all my hopes of his return to God vanish. In consequence of my grief, my health became completely shattered, and my family urged me to make a tour in the south. As I had to pass through Lyons, I desired to see the Cure d'Ars. I therefore wrote to him asking an audience, and recommending to his prayers my husband, who had died suddenly. I gave him no further details.

"Arrived at Ars, scarcely had I entered the venerable Cure's room than, to my great astonishment, he addressed me in these words: 'Madame, you are disconsolate; but have you forgotten those bouquets of flowers which were brought to you each Sunday of the month of May?' It is impossible to express my astonishment on hearing M. Vianney remind me of a circumstance that I had not mentioned to any one, and which he could know only by revelation. He continued, 'God has had mercy on him who honoured His Holy Mother. At the moment of his death your husband repented; his soul is in purgatory; our prayers and good works will obtain his deliverance.'"

We read in the Life of a holy Religious, Sister Catherine of St. Augustine, that in the place where she lived there was a woman named Mary, who in her youth had given herself up to a very disorderly life, and as age brought no amendment, but, on the contrary, she grew more obstinate in vice, the inhabitants, no longer willing to tolerate the scandal she gave, drove her from the city. She found no other asylum than a grotto in the forest, where, after a few months, she died without the assistance of the Sacraments. Her body was interred in a field, as though it were something contagious.

Sister Catherine, who was accustomed to recommend to God the souls of all those of whose death she heard, thought not of praying for this one, judging, as did every one else, that she was surely damned. Four months later the servant of God heard a voice saying, "Sister Catherine, how unfortunate I am! You recommend to God the souls of all; I am the only one upon whom you take no pity!" "Who then are you?" replied the sister. "I am poor Mary, who died in the grotto." "What! Mary, are you saved?" "Yes, by the Divine Mercy I am. At the point of death, terrified by the remembrance of my crimes, and seeing myself abandoned by all, I called upon the Blessed Virgin. In her tender goodness she heard me, and obtained for me the grace of perfect contrition, with a desire of confessing, had it been in my power to do so. I thus recovered the grace of God and escaped Hell. But I was obliged to go to Purgatory, where I suffer terribly. My time will be shortened, and I shall soon be liberated, if a few Masses are offered for me. Oh! have them celebrated for me, dear sister, and I shall ever remember you before Jesus and Mary."

Sister Catherine hastened to fulfill this request, and after a few days the soul again appeared, brilliant as a star, and returning thanks for her charity.

Taken from the book "Purgatory Explained by the Lives and Legends of the Saints" by Fr. Schouppe, S.J.

The importance of All Souls Day was made clear by Pope Benedict XV (1914-22), when he granted all priests the privilege of celebrating three Masses on All Souls Day:

1. One for the faithful departed;
2. One for the priest's intentions;
3. One for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Only on a handful of other very important feast days are priests allowed to celebrate more than two Masses.

While All Souls Day is now paired with All Saints Day, which celebrates all of the faithful who are in Heaven, it originally was celebrated in the Easter season, around Pentecost Sunday (and still is in the Eastern Catholic Churches). By the tenth century, the celebration had been moved to October; and sometime between 998 and 1030, St. Odilo of Cluny decreed that it should be celebrated on November 2 in all of the monasteries of his Benedictine congregation.

Over the next two centuries, other Benedictines and the Carthusians began to celebrate it in their monasteries as well, and soon it spread to the entire Church.

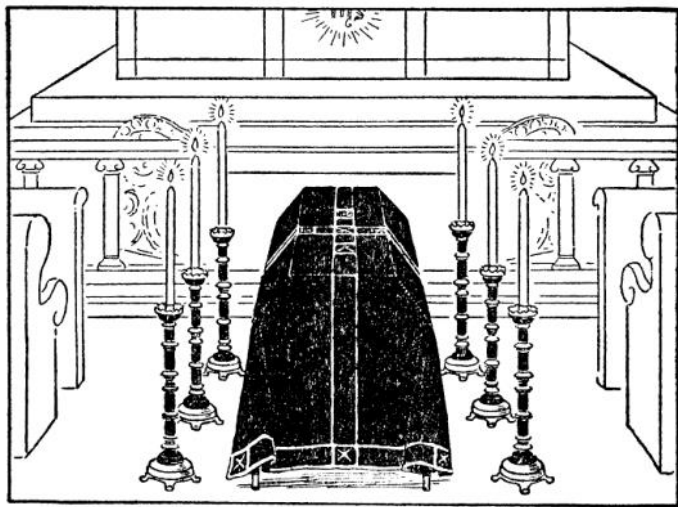
On All Souls Day, we not only remember the dead, but we apply our efforts, through prayer, almsgiving, and the Mass, to their release from Purgatory. There are two plenary indulgences attached to All Souls Day, one for visiting a church and another for visiting a cemetery. (The plenary indulgence for visiting a cemetery can also be obtained every day from November 1-8, and, as a partial indulgence, on any day of the year.) While the actions are performed by the living, the merits of the indulgences are applicable only to the souls in Purgatory.

Praying for the dead is a Christian obligation. In the modern world, when many have come to doubt the Church's teaching on Purgatory, the need for such prayers has only increased. The Church devotes the month of November to prayer for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and participation in the Mass of All Souls Day is a good way to begin the month.

Q. What benefits can flow from a visit to a Catholic cemetery? It must first be recalled that a Catholic cemetery is a holy place, being consecrated ground, especially blessed by the Church to receive the bodies, temples of the Holy Ghost, that will rise up to meet Our Lord, the Supreme Judge, on the last day. It is for this reason that it was always considered obligatory for the bodies of faithful Catholics to be buried in Catholic cemeteries (Canon 1205, 1 of the 1917 Code).

A visit to a cemetery is consequently an act of religion, as is the special care of the cemetery and of the tombs of those who are buried there. It inspires a Catholic with reverence, awe for God's judgments, respect for the souls of those whose bodies are buried there, with an awareness of the brevity of this earthly life, and of the union of the Church militant with the Church suffering in the mystical body of Christ. Special graces are consequently attached to silent and prayerful visits to cemeteries. It can easily be understood why Church law prescribes that

each parish have its own cemetery (Canon 1208), and why it is the traditional custom for it to be physically adjoining the parish.



However, if Catholics love to visit cemeteries, it is especially out of a motive of charity. We long to assist the suffering souls in purgatory by our prayers, sacrifices, and Masses, given that we are united as members of the same mystical body. A physical visit to a cemetery is a great help in inciting us to this duty of charity. It is for this reason that the Church has generously enriched with her indulgences visits to cemeteries. During the eight days from November 1-8, any of the faithful can, simply by visiting a cemetery and praying for the poor souls, obtain a plenary indulgence, applicable to the poor souls in purgatory, under the usual conditions.[*] At other times of the year this is a partial indulgence. The gaining of a plenary indulgence does not mean that one soul is freed from Purgatory, but that the power of the Church's suffrages is added to the personal prayers and applied to the poor souls, by manner of intercession. How could we refuse to take advantage of the unlocking of the Church's treasury, which simply depends on our visits and prayers.

Let us consequently be generous and regular with our visits to Catholic cemeteries, and let us never pass one by without stopping to recite a short prayer for the poor souls there, or at least reciting such a prayer as we go by.

 * An indulgence can either be partial or plenary. It is partial if it removes only part of the temporal punishment due to sin, or plenary if it removes all punishment.

To be able to gain an indulgence, one must have the intention to gain them, and perform the works at the time and in the manner prescribed.

Six General rules for obtaining a plenary indulgence:

1. State of grace at least when performing the indulgenced act.
2. Complete detachment from sin, even venial sin.
3. Confession (20 days before or after the indulgenced act).

4. Communion (20 days before or after the indulgenced act).

5. Prayers for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff.

6. Indulgenced act: a special good work with special conditions of place and time.

All attachment to sin, even venial sin, must be absent. If one's disposition is less than perfect or if some of the above conditions are not fulfilled, the indulgence becomes partial.

The Apostolic Penitentiary guide for indulgences:

In order to obtain a plenary indulgence (only one per day), the faithful must, in addition to being in the state of grace: have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin; -- have sacramentally confessed their sins; -- receive the Holy Eucharist; pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff.

It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the sacramental Confession and especially Holy Communion and the prayer for the Pope's intentions take place on the same day that the indulgenced work is performed; but it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days (about 20) before or after the indulgenced act. Prayer for the Pope's intentions is left to the choice of the faithful, but an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary" are suggested. One sacramental Confession suffices for several plenary indulgences, but a separate Holy Communion and a separate prayer for the Holy Father's intentions are required for each plenary indulgence.

Indulgenced Acts for the Poor Souls A partial indulgence can be obtained by devoutly visiting a cemetery and praying for the departed, even if the prayer is only mental. One can gain a plenary indulgence visiting a cemetery each day between November 1 and November 8. These indulgences are applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory.

A plenary indulgence, again applicable only the Souls in Purgatory, is also granted when the faithful piously visit a church or a public oratory on All Souls Day. In visiting the church or oratory, it is required, that one Our Father and the Creed be recited.

A partial indulgence, applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, can be obtained when the Eternal Rest (Requiem aeternam) is prayed. This can be prayed all year, but especially during the month of November:

Requiem aeternam dona ei (eis), Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei (eis). Requiescat (-ant) in pace. Amen.

Eternal rest grant to 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.

TUE 1 November	No Mass	ST. ELISABETH OF HUNGARY 7.15am – Low Mass	SAT 19 November
WED 2 November	ALL SOULS DAY 6.00pm – Low Mass	6TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 5.30pm – Rosary 6.00pm – Low Mass	SUN 20 November
THU 3 November	FERIA 4.50pm – Rosary & Benediction 5.30pm – Low Mass	PRESENTATION OF THE BVM 5.30pm – Low Mass	MON 21 November
FRI 4 November	FIRST FRIDAY 5.30pm – Low Mass	ST. CECILIA 5.30pm – Low Mass	TUE 22 November
SAT 5 November	FIRST SATURDAY 7.15am – Low Mass	ST. CLEMENT 5.30pm – Low Mass	WED 23 November
SUN 6 November	4TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 5.30pm – Rosary 6.00pm – Low Mass	ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS 4.50pm – Rosary & Benediction 5.30pm – Low Mass	THU 24 November
MON 7 November	FERIA 7.15am – Low Mass	ST. CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA 5.30pm – Low Mass	FRI 25 November
8-12 November	No Mass	ST. SYLVESTER 5.30pm – Low Mass	SAT 26 November
SUN 13 November	5TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 5.30pm – Rosary 6.00pm – Low Mass	1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 8.30pm – Rosary 9.00am – Low Mass	SUN 27 November
MON 14 November	ST. JOSAPHAT 5.30pm – Low Mass	FERIA 5.30pm – Low Mass	MON 28 November
TUE 15 November	ST. ALBERT THE GREAT 7.15am – Low Mass	FERIA 7.15am – Low Mass 5.30pm – Low Mass	TUE 29 November
16-17 November	No Mass	ST. ANDREW 5.30pm – Low Mass	WED 30 November
FRI 18 November	DEDICATION OF THE BASILICAS OF SS. PETER AND PAUL 5.30pm – Low Mass		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News about the church construction: On Monday, 12 December, feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a first Mass will be celebrated inside the new church. Both Fr. Wailliez and Fr. Loschi will be present. As it is a national holiday, the Mass will be in the morning and a little celebration will take place afterwards. Bring in friends.

Priests' Presence: Fr. Wailliez (13-15/11; 28/11—3/12); Fr. Loschi (2-7/11; 18-29/11).