From the Pastor



November 1, 2026

Dearest Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

I know, I said I would be continuing with my report on the great things we heard about at the fall ministry conference in La Crosse; however, that will have to wait for next week because THIS weekend we have two great events in the Church year occurring: the ***Solemnity of All Saints*** and ***Commemoration of All Souls***, which kicks off our whole month observance of prayers for the souls in *purgatory*.

A day in celebration of all the saints has been celebrated in the Churches of both west and east since at least the 4th century. By 800 it was celebrated in the west on November 1, possibly through the influence of Alcuin of Northumbria (England) who was a member of the royal court of Charlamagne (Charles the Great). Along with Alcuin, the observance of a day for celebrating all the saints spread from the British Isles to all of northern Europe through the English and Irish missionaries of the period.

Why a day for celebrating all the saints? For one thing, a saint is not just those who are canonized by the Church. A saint is anyone who is in heaven – both those who are known to the Church as well as those who are known only by their family or, indeed, those known only to God (we might be surprised at who is in heaven).

First of all, there are many saints that are no longer celebrated in a local Church because there is simply not enough days in the year to celebrate all the saints whose feast falls on a particular day. So, it is good to have a day in which ALL the saints are celebrated.

Second, how can there be saints known only by a family? Am I suggesting that everyone who dies and is loved by their family is in heaven? No. But, there are plenty of family members who have died before the age of reason (my older sister being one of them) among other particular situations which give us the assurance that the family member is in heaven – and therefore, a saint!

Finally, there really are many people who we don't know are in heaven. And yet, there they are! And so, it is good that we celebrate them as well. Indeed, these give us a particular assurance that we, who are sinners, can be counted among the saints in our own good time.

So celebrate! Be inspired by those elder brothers and sisters in the faith whom the Church presents to us as examples to be followed. Ask the prayers of all those who are in heaven, for they stand before the face of God. And live in the blessed assurance that God has made you for heaven, just as He has already brought them into the fullness of that blessed state.

Pray Well!

Fr. Michael

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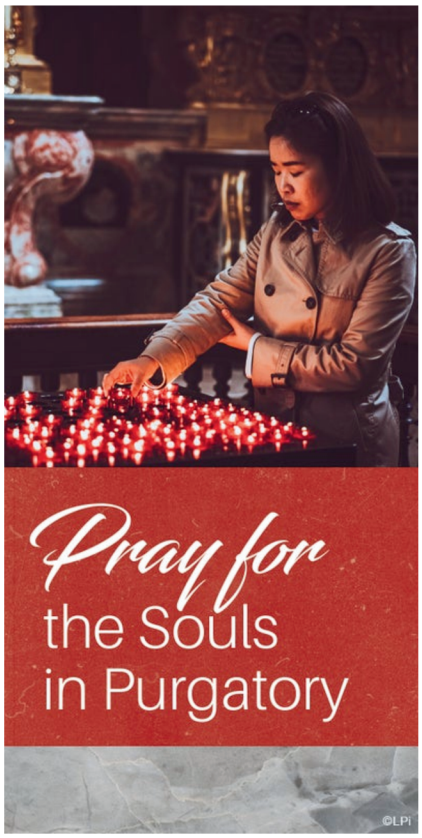
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On Living the Vocation to the Holiness

November is traditionally the month of ***All Souls,*** a month in which we are reminded of the need to do that great spiritual work of mercy by praying for the poor souls in purgatory. Indeed, holy Mother Church extends to all her children in the *Church militant* (the Church on earth) the indulgences, both *plenary* (full) and *partial*, to be applied to the souls in purgatory.

Why does the Church still insist on the necessity of prayers for the souls in purgatory. As any number of parishioners over the years have asked, "Didn't the Church get rid of that out dated teaching?" The simple answer is "NO". The more important answer is: This teaching of the Church reflects the reality revealed to us by God, including Jesus Himself, in holy Scripture, in the Tradition, through the Churches infallible teaching, and through the testimony of many of the saints. Indeed, I have found the doctrine of purgatory to be much more than a teaching to be insisted upon and promoted; I have found it to be a great comfort. The Church's teaching on purgatory is a great comfort because it reveals to us something of the reality of heaven and of God's great love and mercy for us.



The Church's teaching on purgatory tells us something of heaven because it reveals to us that when we arrive in heaven we will be completely free of both sin and our attachment to sin. Imagine being in heaven and still trying to overcome even the desire to commit the smallest of sins? Or rather, maybe it is easier for us to be grateful that we won't have to endure the behavior of someone we otherwise love who has a particular sinful habit, even the smallest, that drives us up the wall!!! Heaven is a place of perfection because not only is it the home of God, Who is perfect, but we are truly perfected before we are allowed in.

The Church's teaching on purgatory is a great comfort to me because I know I am not perfect (and I sure as heck know some of you aren't perfect! 😊) And yet, knowing that ONLY the perfect can enter into the house of the Father, I can have confidence that I will one day enter, not because God is willing to overlook my sins, but because, in his great goodness, God will heal those wounds of sin which would otherwise keep me from being able to truly appreciate the heaven in which I have been admitted.

There is a beautiful booklet available at all of our churches called: NOVENA for the relief of the Poor Souls in Purgatory. It is a very clear catechesis on the Church's teaching on purgatory while also being a wonderful prayer for the poor souls in purgatory. I would encourage you to pick one up and use it this month. Also, cultivate the habit, this month, a remembering the poor souls in your daily prayers – traditionally, in your after meal prayers and at the end of the day.