



Society of St Pius X District of Canada

Centre Saint-Joseph, 1395 rue Notre-Dame, Saint-Césaire, Qc., J0L 1T0
Tel. +1 450 390 1323 - www.fsspx.ca

October 1, 2016

Fatima and Purgatory

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

At the first apparition at Fatima, young Lucia asked the beautiful Lady from Heaven about two of her friends who had just passed away: "Then I remembered to ask about two girls who had died recently. They were friends of mine and used to come to my home to learn weaving with my eldest sister. 'Is Maria das Neves in Heaven?' 'Yes, she is.' (I think she was about 16 years old.) 'And Amelia?' 'She will be in Purgatory until the end of the world.' (It seems to me that she was between 18 and 20 years of age.)" (*The Whole Truth on Fatima*, Brother Michael of the Trinity, vol. 1)

If a bishop described Fatima as a reminder of hell for a world who no longer believed in it, Our Lady of Fatima also reminded us of the reality of Purgatory, this ultimate place of purification before the entry into the kingdom of Heaven. Let me speak about it in this monthly letter as a preparation for November consecrated in a special way by Holy Mother Church to the Holy Souls. Purgatory is part of our faith, a very consoling dogma in fact, because without it, very few souls would ever make it to Heaven, since very few die in the state of perfect charity.

It is charity that unites us to the souls in Purgatory and that enables us to come to their help. "All who are united together by charity acquire some benefit from one another's works" teaches St Thomas (Suppl. q. 71, a.1). That is what is expressed in the article of the Creed, "The Communion of Saints".

St Thomas adds a clarification which is quite important for our devotion to the Holy Souls. He says that we can not only pray for them but also merit for them "through the intention of the doer who does certain works specially for the purpose that they may profit such persons: so that those works become somewhat the works of those for whom they are done, as though they were bestowed on them by the doer. Wherefore they can avail them either for the fulfillment of satisfaction or for some similar purpose that does not change their state". (Ibid.)

He then explains the importance of this intention : "Suffrages derive their value from being applied to another person by one's intention. In this way the satisfaction of one person counts for another, and there can be no doubt that thus they avail more the person for whom they are offered: in fact, they avail him alone in this way, because satisfaction, properly speaking, is directed to the remission of punishment. Consequently, as regards the remission of punishment, suffrages avail chiefly the person for whom they are offered" (Suppl. q. 71, a.12)

Thus St Thomas insists on the fact that naming the deceased is more useful to them than prayers made for all the deceased in general. Of course, this presupposes that the soul is still in Purgatory, otherwise, the satisfactory work will be applied to another soul. The word 'suffrage' here, when one speaks of the prayer for the Holy Souls signifies a prayer of intercession or a satisfactory work offered to God for these souls. It is then up to God to decide in what measure this prayer and work will be applied to them.

This theological point is well manifested by a practice found in many places to make lists of deceased people and to place them on the altar during the month of November.

Now, what is the best way to help these souls? Since the union of charity and the intention are the two conditions to be able to come to their help, the most useful deeds will be those which have more of one or the other. Since the Holy Eucharist is the source or bond of charity inasmuch as it contains Him in Whom the whole Church is united and incorporated, namely Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Mass is the most efficacious means to help them. Such is the teaching of the Council of Trent: “There is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful and chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar” (XXV Session, Decree on Purgatory).

The second best way to help them, according St Thomas in article 9 of the same question 71, is almsgiving “chief among the effects of charity”. He explicitly states: “Wherefore on the part of charity these two, namely the sacrifice of the Mass and almsgiving are the chief suffrages for the dead”. But on the part of the intention, “the chief suffrage is prayer”. And he concludes: “Hence these three (*the Holy Mass, almsgiving and prayer*) are reckoned the principal means of succoring the dead, although we must allow that any other goods whatsoever that are done out of charity for the dead are profitable to them.”

To practice almsgiving for the Holy Souls! That is an interesting thought too often forgotten. As a matter of fact, it is true supernatural logic, true satisfying *agere contra*. How many souls go through Purgatory for having been too attached to worldly goods? So, thanks to the bond of charity that unites us to them, we can make up for their inordinate attachments by practicing almsgiving. Let us then do them that favor by offering them our own detachment of things, it is as simple as that! Many do it naturally in including an offering with their November list of deceased. (Do note however that this offering *is not* a mass intention, it is an almsgiving). You may send that to your nearest priory or to the District house.

Let us imitate the great Judas Machabee who had a collection made to expiate the sins of his dead soldiers, “because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins. (II Macc. 12:45-46).

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News from the District:

- Oct. 8-9 *Journées Québécoises du Christ-Roi*, at Sandman Hotel, Longueuil, near Montréal, QC. Our second Congress in honour of Christ the King. (Come in great numbers!
- Nov. 18-26 Confirmation circuit across Canada by Bishop de Galarreta
- Feb. 15-20, 2017 : XIth Rosa Mystica Medical Mission in the Philippines. They are in need of doctors and nurses for this wonderful week of charity (3,000 patients in one week!) You can read various previous reports on the Mission’s blog www.rosamysticamission.blogspot.com . Those interested should write to me with their C.V.at d.couture@sspx.ca
- Finally, to encourage the prayer for vocations throughout the District, here are the words and music of the beautiful invocation we sing during all our pilgrimages, as Our Lord taught us to pray: “Send, Lord, workers into Thy harvest, for the harvest indeed is great but the workers very few!” (cf. Lk 10:2)

Mit - te Do - mi - ne o - pe - ra - ri - os
in mes - sem tu - am. Mes - sis qui - de - m mul -
- ta o - pe - ra - ri - i au - tem pa - - u - ci.

All for the glory of God and for the triumph of His Immaculate Mother.

Fr. Daniel Couture
District Superior