Liturgical Living: Month of the Holy Souls

In the Catholic Church, the month of November is devoted to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, also known as the Church Suffering. Appropriately, we also celebrate the Solemnity of All Souls' Day on November 2, when we remember to pray for the faithful departed and all of the souls in Purgatory.

The Catechism teaches: *"All who die in God's grace and 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."*

Those suffering but hopeful souls whom our prayers assist will someday be in heaven and will pray for us as we continue our journey. And so, November is an ideal time to help the Holy Souls through prayer and acts of love and charity. Praying for the souls of the dearly departed is a Spiritual Work of Mercy.

What are some ways to honor the Holy Souls this month?

- Pray the Eternal Rest Prayer every day in November.
- Pray the St Gertrude prayer. It is piously believed that 1,000 souls are released from purgatory by praying this prayer with the heart.
- Pray the Litany of the Saints, or you can pray the sung version.
- Visit a cemetery and pray for the dead.
- Pray a novena for the Holy Souls in Purgatory.
- Offer your sufferings or Mass intentions for the Holy Souls.
- Prepare a dinner to honor a lost loved one - serve their favorite meal and tell stories about them around the dinner table.
- Remember your lost loved ones at the Thanksgiving table - when giving thanks before the meal, recall each of those loved ones by name.

From November 1-8, the faithful can obtain plenary indulgences for the souls in purgatory by visiting a cemetery and praying there for the dead. In order to obtain the indulgence, a Catholic in the state of grace must have the intention to obtain it and fulfill the following conditions:

- Visit a cemetery and pray there for the dead, even if only mentally
- Make a sacramental confession (a single confession, within about 20 days before or after, will suffice for all the indulgences a person obtains within that time period)

- Receive Holy Communion (once for each indulgence obtained)
- Recite at least one Our Father and one Hail Mary for the Holy Father's intentions
- Be free from attachment to all sin, including venial
- *One plenary indulgence can be obtained each day!* The indulgence is partial if the conditions are partially fulfilled.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.