

FALL 2013

Looking Beyond...

The Shepherds of Compassion Bereavement Ministry

Saint Germaine Catholic Church

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 02, 2013 *All Souls*

December 14, 2013 *Christmas Party*

If you are in need of counseling or know of someone in need; contact the Church Office at (928) 772-6350

The Days of the Dead

The entire month of November is devoted to the Poor Souls in Purgatory, and Rosaries for the dead are offered during this time (with the Eternal Rest prayer replacing the Fatima prayer as above). The month-long devotion to the Souls in Purgatory begins with the three consecutive "Days of the Dead" at the end of October and early November:

The Days of the Dead are:

- [All Hallows' Eve](#): 31 October, the day on which we *unofficially* recall the realities of Hell and how to avoid it;
- [All Saints Day, or All Hallows' Day](#): 1 November, the day on which we *officially* honor God's Saints of the Church Triumphant; and
- [All Souls Day](#): 2 November, the day on which we *officially* commemorate and pray for all the faithful departed of the Church Suffering.

One of the most commonly recited of Catholic prayers in times past, this prayer has fallen into disuse in the last few decades. Prayer for the dead, however, is one of the greatest acts of charity we can perform, to help them during their time in Purgatory, so that they can enter more quickly into the fullness of heaven.

If you are offering the prayer for a particular person, you can substitute "him" or "her" for "them."

Eternal Rest

Eternal rest grant unto 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.



Mission

Statement

*TO ASSIST THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A
LOVED ONE IN LITURGY, PRAYER, AND
SUPPORT*

*TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK AT
GRIEF FROM MANY PERSPECTIVES AND TO
HELP EACH PERSON FIND THEIR OWN
AVENUE OF EXPRESSION*



Heroic Act of Charity

An "Heroic Act of Charity" is the offering of the satisfactory value (*not* the merits) of *all* of our sufferings and works for the rest of our lives *and* of any time we may spend in Purgatory for the relief of the souls in Purgatory. We do this by first deciding to do so, and then praying (using our own words or the more formal prayer below) to offer these things to God through Mary's hands.

Doing this is not a matter of taking a vow; it doesn't bind under pain of sin, and it is revokable (unless one vows never to revoke the Act). But it is a tremendous sacrifice, hence the name. It is truly heroic, a giving up of one's own earned relief from the temporal effects of sin -- even relief of the sufferings of Purgatory -- for the good of others.

In addition to asking God to use their satisfactory works for the souls in Purgatory, those who make this Act also receive a plenary indulgence (under the usual conditions) for the souls in Purgatory each time they receive Communion, and each time they hear Mass on Mondays for the sake of the departed. Words to a formal Act of Heroic Charity are as follows:

O Holy and Adorable Trinity, desiring to aid in the relief and release of the Holy Souls in Purgatory, through my devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I cede and renounce, on behalf of these souls, all the satisfactory part of my works, and all the suffrages which may be given to me after my death. In their entirety, I offer them to Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God, that she may use them, according to her good pleasure, for those souls of the faithful departed whom she desires to alleviate their suffering. O my God, deign to accept and bless my offering which I make to Thee through the most august Queen of Heaven and Earth. Amen.



Because we can't know, aside from those the Church has beatified or canonized, who is already in Heaven, who is in Purgatory for a time, or who is damned, we pray for the dead for the rest of our lives -- assuming they are in Purgatory, while hoping they are in Heaven and not damned.

We also ask those who've died to pray for us. While those whom the Church has deemed to be of the Church Triumphant (the canonized Saints) are in Heaven for certain and are, therefore, in no need of our prayers for them, we've always asked for them to pray for us. As to the Church Suffering in Purgatory, Aquinas teaches that they are not able to know, by themselves, our prayers; however, it is piously believed, and taught by St. Alphonsus Liguori, that God makes our prayers known to them -- not directly, as they are deprived of the Beatific Vision until they enter Heaven, but by infusing this knowledge into their souls. St. Bellarmine teaches that because the Church Suffering is so close to God -- much closer than we are and having the great consolation of knowing they are saved -- their prayers for us are very effective. So, as you pray for your dead loved ones, ask them to pray for you, too!

As to the damned, there is no hope; no prayer can help them and we can't pray formally for those in Hell. The problem, of course, is that we can't know who is damned, and so we pray generally for "all the faithful departed." For those who've died outside of visible Communion with Christ's Church or for those Catholics who've died seemingly without repentance and in scandal, public prayer cannot be offered, but we can most certainly still pray privately with the hope that they've died in a state of grace (i.e., those who are denied a Catholic funeral can't be prayed for liturgically, publicly, but they can most definitely be prayed for -- and should be prayed for -- privately). Priests can even offer Masses for such people privately, without naming them.