

It was during the month of November when the door bell of a rectory rang on a cold weather day. The priest on duty opened the door and saw an old and tired woman who looked homeless. The priest, tired too, of a long and busy day, welcomed her and willing to help her. For a moment there was silence. She quietly looked at him with a gentle look. He thought that now she will be asking for food, money, or clothing. She did not ask what the priest was thinking. With a very calm voice she said: "Father, my dear friend who lived with me on the street for twenty years died yesterday. I want to offer a Holy Mass for the repose of her soul." There was more silence for a few moments. The priest saw tears on her suffering face. He never expected to hear that from her. She said that the pain of losing someone dear was more painful than living on the streets for more than twenty years. As he was listening, he felt very embarrassed. Instead of hearing from her a request for food, money, or clothing, she was asking to offer a holy Mass for her friend and expressing her pain of losing a dear one. He consoled her and said: "Yes, of course, come tomorrow morning and I will celebrate a Mass for your dear friend." She thanked him. And then with her teary eyes she asked: How much should I pay for the Holy Mass Father? At that moment the priest felt as if the ceiling fell on top of his head. For him it was impossible to believe what was happening. He was moved by these words and for a moment he could not speak because of these strong emotions. After he recollected himself, he said: "Please, do not think about that. It is free, come tomorrow and I will celebrate the Mass for the repose of her soul." Suddenly, she took from her pocket a dirty plastic bag filled with coins. Quietly, she looked at him first, and then she placed that little bag on the table saying: "Father this is my treasury, and I want to offer for the repose of her soul." Moved by this amazing experience the priest insisted to put the bag back in her pocket. The priest placed that little dirty plastic bag into her hands. She thanked him promising that the next morning she will be there to attend the Holy Mass for her friend.

The next day, early in the morning the priest patiently was waiting for her to start the Holy Mass, but she never came. Who knows what happened to her? Only God can answer that question. The priest waited for awhile and then he realized there was not much time for the next scheduled Mass, so he started celebrating the Holy Mass alone in that early morning. During the celebration he deeply felt the mystery and the power of Christ on the altar uniting the living and the dead. In that silent and peaceful celebration, he thought of the unknown homeless women whose Mass was being offered for the repose of her soul. In his mind the face of the tired homeless woman with her teary eyes was very powerful, too. The humble, noble, and moving gesture of her friend touched his heart and mind. As he stood before the sacred host and the precious blood of our Redeemer on the altar, he deeply felt the presence of the one who was gone from this world, and the other woman who was in pain losing her friend. They were united in that divine mystery of the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The beauty and the power of the Holy Mass of that early morning became very special to him. He deeply felt that the soul of that unknown homeless woman to him, received the mercy of God through the Holy Mass of that early morning. For centuries our Catholic faith has taught us a great lesson giving and receiving is possible even after our dear ones are gone to Eternal rest. It is such a powerful example for many of us today to hear a story that it seems impossible for our time. Through that early holy mass celebrated alone by the priest the two homeless women through the mystery of Christ exchanged a sign of love and kindness, a gesture of gratitude and even a request for pardon! Yes, indeed, it is through the power of the sacrifice of Christ on the Altar that the two homeless women were united, the living and the dead. For some of us who probably never thought to offer a Holy Mass for someone it is a time to think that our prayers, our almsgiving, our offering of a holy mass can ease the purifications of our faithful departed to reach the Heavenly Kingdom. May the homeless woman, our beloved faithful departed known and unknown to us may they rest in peace. May we who continue to live on this valley of tears, may we discover the power of this Divine Action placed into the human hands for our salvation. Saint padre Pio said: "The world can survive without the sun, but the world can never survive without the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass." It was November, the month of holy souls.

May all the faithful departed through the Mercy of God may they rest in Peace.

