



NOVEMBER

MONTHLY THEME
Holy Souls in Purgatory
Monthly Virtue:
Prayer

Respect Life

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Presentation
On End of Life Issues
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Our King

JESUS CHRIST
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ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + NOVEMBER 2025

The Importance of Praying for the Dead

EWTN — *In an article published online on October 28, 2024 entitled "Exploring the Mysteries of Purgatory and the Importance of Praying for the Dead," EWTN Vatican Bureau's Hannah Brockhaus interviewed Father Paul O'Callaghan of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. Father shared his insights into purgatory and the Catholic tradition of praying for the deceased not yet entered into the joys of heaven.*



Testament and early Christianity. "From the very beginning, Christians have prayed for the dead. It goes back a long way," he said, "People prayed for the dead because they realized that the deceased could be helped by us here on Earth. That is where the doctrine of purgatory arises."

Understanding the Doctrine of Purgatory

When asked to explain purgatory, Father O'Callaghan described it as "one of the greatest

Why Catholics Pray for the Dead

Catholics are familiar with the custom of praying for deceased loved ones, but few may fully understand its theological foundations. "It's one of the things that we do as Christians, as Catholics, with great naturalness," explained Father O'Callaghan. "When somebody dies, we say, 'I prayed for you, for your family, for the deceased.' And it's beautiful because it means the person who has died and is now on the other side of life, with God, can be helped by our prayers."

Father O'Callaghan highlighted the significance of this tradition, which is rooted in both the Old

signs of God's mercy." He elaborated, saying, "It's essentially God providing us with an opportunity for final purification after death. We all reach the end of our lives with regrets and shortcomings, but God, in His mercy, allows for a process where we can be fully purified before entering heaven."

The Church didn't formally define purgatory until the Middle Ages, even though the concept had been widely accepted among Christians from the earliest days. According to Father O'Callaghan, this delay was not due to any doubt about the doctrine but rather because it had never been disputed. "The Church speaks when *(Continued on page 2)*

. . . Praying for the Dead

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things need to be said,” he clarified, “But when something is taken for granted, the Church just gets on with the business of living.”

Citing early Church Fathers such as Augustine and Gregory the Great, he noted that “they spoke about prayer for the dead and purgatory in various ways, though it wasn’t formally defined until later.”

The Power of Prayers for the Souls in Purgatory

How do our prayers assist those in purgatory? Father O’Callaghan explained that sin damages not only our relationship with God but also has ripple effects on others. “When we misbehave, we do damage to other people. Prayers offered by others

help us overcome the ‘temporal punishment’ due to sin — a kind of moral debt we accumulate during our lives,” he said.

This communal aspect of purgatory underscores the interconnectedness of the Church, both living and deceased. “Purgatory is not an individualistic doctrine,” he continued, “It’s something the whole Church does together. As we pray for the dead, we’re also acknowledging our hope that someone will pray for us. Together, we help each other resolve our shortcomings.”

As we remember the faithful departed this November, let us unite in prayer, offering support for the souls in purgatory and cherishing the shared journey toward holiness within the Communion of Saints [The Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant]. +

Praying for the Dead and Gaining Indulgences

On the first of November the Church celebrates the Solemnity of All Saints, a Holy Day of Obligation, honoring all those faithful in heaven. The feast begins the traditional Octave of All Saints, November 1-8. November 2nd is All Souls Day, commemorating the Faithful Departed shifting the Church’s focus to pray for all the dead, through November. This is expressed in public and private prayers but especially in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the repose of souls.

Indulenced Acts for the Faithful Departed

There are many indulgences, applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, that can be obtained during the month of November.:

1. *A plenary indulgence*, applicable only to the souls in purgatory, is granted to the faithful who,

+ on any and each day from November 1 to 8, devoutly visit a cemetery and pray, if only mentally, for the departed;

+ on All Souls’ Day (or, according to the judgment of the ordinary, on the Sunday preceding or following it, or on the solemnity of All Saints), devoutly visit a church or an oratory and recite an Our Father and the Creed.

2. *A partial indulgence*, applicable only to the souls in purgatory, is granted to the faithful who,
+ devoutly visit a cemetery and at least mentally pray for the dead;

+ devoutly recite lauds or vespers from the Office of the Dead or the prayer *Requiem aeternam* (Eternal rest). The "Eternal Rest" prayer gains a partial indulgence and can be prayed all year.

Eternal rest grant to 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.

Gaining an Indulgence for the Departed

To gain a Plenary Indulgence (only one per day), the faithful must be in the state of grace, have complete detachment from sin; receive the sacrament of confession; receive Holy Eucharist (it is certainly better to receive it while participating in Holy Mass) and recite prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father (one Our Father and one Hail Mary is suggested as a minimum, but any other additional prayers may be added). If some of the above conditions are not fulfilled, the indulgence becomes partial.+



Respect for Life Corner

By Rebecca Minninger



End of Life Issues

For those of us who attended the End of Life Care presentation at Corpus Christi Parish on October 22, we were privileged to hear Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk from the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. It was a large and receptive crowd of well over 200 people eager to gain perspective and insight on the complex subject of managing end of life issues from a Catholic perspective.

We were not disappointed! Father Tad spoke about moral and medical and spiritual issues in a pertinent, practical, and personal way, sometimes illustrated with humor. He stressed that we must do due diligence and turn to God because He has the answers in the murky, complicated, and confusing circumstances of helping our dear ones live out their last days with the dignity that each person deserves.

With modern medical technology, we must balance ordinary means versus extraordinary means to treat and preserve life. We must factor in all the details and individualize care for each person based on key criteria of Benefit versus Burden. Will the treatment be successful based on a standard of care, or, is it a clinical trial? Is it worth the time and cost of recovery? Will the person have the fortitude for the struggle and the amount of care required? The patient and family will need good prudential, moral, and spiritual judgment and discernment as situations are usually complex.

Father Tad weighed in on Living Wills and Health Care Proxies, stressing that Living Wills and the “Five Wishes” are like a blank check used in the changing circumstances of an unpredictable future. He said that they are not realistic and that the driving energy behind them is often fear. He recommended staying away from them and Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment forms.



Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk

Instead, he strongly recommended appointing a known trusted Christian with whom you have had many conversations, to be your Health Care Proxy to carry out your wishes in the unfolding circumstances. A real person to connect with the medical team is the more prudent and effective course. If you want to be the person who makes the decisions and not the medical doctors, you must decide what you want your course to be, state it, and trust your proxy to carry it out if you are unable.

Father Tad described several case studies to illustrate his information and took several questions. He advised us not to short-circuit the dying process as it is a growing time, and, that this is *sacred* time. He stated that persons may call the NCB center for a free consultation with concerns at this number: 215-877-2660.

Important Sources

He recommended downloading the *Catholic Guide to the End of Life* for a small fee from the National Catholic Bioethics Center website: NCBCenter.org. His website is FatherTad.com.

Getting Ready for the New Church Year

*Time to Make Some New Year's Resolutions as November 30th
Is the First Sunday of Advent, the Start of the New Church Year!*

By Janet M. Daly

In the October issue of *The Magnificat*, Philosophy and Theology Professor Ronda Chervin wrote: "All repetitive forms of expression run the risk of becoming automatic, lifeless habits." That struck a note with me as I had found my longstanding morning prayers had become that. Her idea made me think that maybe with Advent beginning on the last Sunday of this month, it was time to make some changes so my life with Christ was revitalized.

The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans that we began reading in October focuses on those of us in the pews, noting: "If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through His Spirit that dwells in you."

So where to begin?

We are *commanded* to attend Mass on Sundays and Days of Obligation. So why not begin there. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian life (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1324). The Eucharist is not an object but a person who is alive and transforms lives. In the Eucharist, we truly encounter the Lord Jesus and are plunged into his Paschal Mystery, and through this encounter our lives are transformed (cf. *Desiderio Desideravi*, nos.10–11, 21).

So maybe it is time to add daily Mass to our weekly routine — if not every day than

at least one or two days a week — in order to find the Lord's peace and serenity throughout the course of our day.

As St. Josemaria Escriva notes: "If we attend Mass well, surely we are likely to think about Our Lord during the rest of the day, wanting to be always in His presence, ready to work as He worked and to love as He loved. And so we learn to thank Our Lord for His kindness in not limiting His presence to the time of the sacrifice of the altar. He has decided to stay with us in the Host which is reserved in the tabernacle."

That leads to adding time for Adoration perhaps. At St. Francis, we have Eucharistic Adoration Monday through Friday from noon to 3 p.m. But Jesus is in the tabernacle though not exposed in the Monstrance for us to spend time throughout the day. St. Faustina says: "A Holy Hour before the Most Blessed Sacrament so pleases the Heart of Jesus, that every man, woman and child on earth receives a new effect of God's graces."

Let's turn to our prayers

A recent Catholic Life daily reflection on the Sunday Gospel parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector asked this question: "When you pray, how do you pray? What is the disposition of your heart and for what do you pray? Begin by considering the physical position in which you pray. Though we can pray standing, sitting, kneeling or even lying down, there is *Continued on page 5*)

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Leo XIV, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father. . .

Getting Ready . . .

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something very good about kneeling or even lying prostrate. It doesn't mean we have to do so the entire time we pray, but it is a good practice to kneel, bow your head or fall down prostrate before God at least for a moment each day. Do you do this? If not, consider making this a daily habit." Another question followed: "When you pray, do you begin your prayer with humility?"

The answer: "We begin the Mass by examining our conscience and confessing our sins. This is a good example of how to begin your prayer every time you pray. Humble yourself by calling to mind your sins and weaknesses. Confess them to God and acknowledge the fact that, because of your sins, you are unworthy of God's mercy.

"Humility like this will help you to see yourself as God sees you, and this will help you open yourself to the grace you need from God to grow in holiness."

Let us draw strength from our daily prayers — morning and evening — to sanctify our daily work, to convert our weaknesses and faults into blessings, and overcome all difficulties.

St. Teresa of Avila explains: "Mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him Who, we know, loves us."

As Father Mark Mary Ames, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, often says, let's take it "*Poco a Poco*, little by little." +

Ida Friederike Gorres, was a well known Catholic author in German-speaking Europe, Britain, and the U.S. in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1971, her funeral eulogy was offered by the young Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI.



A mediation of hers in the October *Magnificat* for the feast of St. Simon and Jude was startling. It's about the goal of this column — growing in faith. Here's how it started: "For me, the saint is the most important person, not only in the Church. The saint is the decisive answer to the big riddle. What is a human being? The saint is the terrifying statement: humans are *sanctificabilis*, 'holy-able' . . . The human is created and called to be perfected in such holiness and to exist in it for eternity. Is there a greater, more exciting claim about us? "

I decided to see how her eulogist, Pope Benedict, might have found this 'exciting claim' of hers that all of us are able to be holy.

In his homily at All Saints Day 2006 Mass, he noted: " 'Let us all rejoice in the Lord.' The liturgy invites us to share in the heavenly jubilation of the Saints, to taste their joy. The Saints are not a small caste of chosen souls but an innumerable crowd to which the liturgy urges us to raise our eyes. This multitude not only includes the officially recognized Saints, but the baptized of every epoch and nation who sought to carry out the divine will faithfully and lovingly. We are unacquainted with the faces and even the names of many of them, but with the eyes of faith we see them shine in God's firmament like glorious stars. . . .

"...[T]he meaning of today's Solemnity: looking at the shining example of the Saints to reawaken within us the great longing to be like them; happy to live near God, in His light, in the great family of God's friends. Being a Saint means living close to God, to live in His family. And this is the vocation of us all, vigorously reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council and solemnly proposed today for our attention.

"But how can we become holy, friends of God? We can first give a negative answer to this question: to be a Saint requires neither extraordinary actions or works nor the possession of exceptional charisms. Then comes the positive reply: it is necessary first of all to listen to Jesus and then to follow Him without losing heart when faced by difficulties. . . ."

And so Pope Benedict offers this: "To the extent that we accept His proposal and set out to follow Him — each one in His own circumstances — we too can participate in His blessedness. With Him, the impossible becomes possible and even a camel can pass through the eye of a needle (cf. Mk 10: 25); with His help, only with His help, can we become perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect (cf. Mt 5: 48)." +

Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Reflections on Celebrating this Feast on November 23rd

On the last Sunday of each liturgical year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, or Christ the King, according to the Religious Liberty Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

That article notes: “Today, religious freedom for many people means that we can believe whatever we want in private, but when we enter the public square or the marketplace, we may not speak of anything that relates to our faith. However, the Church acknowledges the reign of Christ, not only privately, but publicly. This solemnity encourages us to celebrate and live out our faith in public.

“Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1925 with his encyclical *Quas primas* (“In the first”) to respond to growing secularism and atheism. He recognized that attempting to ‘thrust Jesus Christ and His holy law’ out of public life would result in continuing discord among people and nations. This solemnity reminds us that while governments come and go, Christ reigns as King forever.

Thus by sermons preached at meetings and in churches, by public adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed and by solemn processions, men unite in paying homage to Christ, whom God has given them for their King (Quas primas, 26).

“During the early 20th century, in Mexico, Russia, and some parts of Europe, militantly

secularistic regimes threatened not just the Catholic Church and its faithful but civilization itself. Pope Pius XI’s encyclical gave Catholics hope and—while governments around them crumbled—the assurance that Christ the King shall reign forever. Jesus Christ *is very truth, and it is from Him that truth must be obediently received by all mankind. (Quas primas, 7).*



Jesus, King of the Universe

The Church calls us to acknowledge Christ’s kingship with our whole lives: He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect sub-mission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn

natural desire and love God above all things, and cleave to Him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, ‘as instruments of justice unto God.’ — Quas primas, 33

The Rationale

Michael Ruzsala’s article, from November 19, 2016 on Ascension Press’ website, explains: “Pope Pius XI wanted to send an enduring reminder to future generations of a core universal truth that regardless of the circumstances, Christ is ever King. Many decades into the future, an encyclical might only be remembered by scholars and **(Continued on page 7)**

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some clergy. . . . But a Sunday feast could annually reawaken the consciousness of especially the lay faithful for generations.

“Thus came the inspiration for the Feast of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In connection with Christ’s Last Judgement, the feast was originally celebrated on the last Sunday of October, just before All Saints’ Day. In 1969, with his new liturgical calendar, Pope Paul VI renamed it the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, and moved it to the final Sunday of the Church year. . . . With either placement on the calendar, Christ the King Sunday has a theme of finality. It celebrates how all things will be ordered to their end or purpose in Christ.”

Pope Benedict’s Thoughts

In November 2006, on the Feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, at the Angelus, Pope Benedict XVI, focused on this being the last Sunday of the liturgical Year, noting: “Today’s Gospel proposes to us anew part of the dramatic questioning to which Pontius Pilate subjected Jesus when He was handed over to him, accused of usurping the title, ‘King of the Jews.’

“Jesus answered the Roman governor’s questions by declaring that He was a king, but not of this world (see Jn 18: 36). He did not come to rule over peoples and territories but to set people free from the slavery of sin and to reconcile them with God. And He added: ‘For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice’ (Jn 18: 37).

“But what is the ‘truth’ that Christ came into the world to witness to? The whole of His life reveals that God is love: so this is the truth to which He witnessed to the full with the sacrifice of His own life on Calvary.

“The Cross is the ‘throne’ where he manifested His sublime kingship as God Love: by offering Himself in expiation for the sin of the world, He defeated the ‘ruler of this world’ (Jn 12: 31) and established the Kingdom of God once and for all. It is a Kingdom that will be fully revealed at the end of time, after the destruction of every enemy and last of all, death (see 1 Cor 15: 25-26). The Son will then deliver the Kingdom to the Father and God will finally be ‘everything to everyone’ (1 Cor 15: 28).

“The way to reach this goal is long and admits of no short cuts: indeed, every person must freely accept the truth of God’s love. He is Love and Truth, and neither Love nor Truth are ever imposed: they come knocking at the doors of the heart and the mind and where they can enter they bring peace and joy. This is how God reigns; this is His project of salvation, a ‘mystery’ in the biblical sense of the word: a plan that is gradually revealed in history.

“The Virgin Mary was associated in a very special way with Christ’s kingship. God asked her, a humble young woman of Nazareth, to become Mother of the Messiah and Mary responded to this request with her whole self, joining her unconditional ‘yes’ to that of her Son, Jesus, and making herself obedient with Him even in His sacrifice. This is why God exalted her above every other creature and Christ crowned her Queen of Heaven and earth.

“Let us entrust the Church and all humanity to her intercession, so that God’s love can reign in all hearts and His design of justice and peace be fulfilled,” the Pope concluded. +

On eight occasions during his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI delivered reflections on the Solemnity of Christ the King, noting the feast was “the crown of the liturgical year.”



Words ^{OF}
WISDOM

Quotations from Saints who have a devotion to the souls in purgatory . . .

“I come to tell you that they suffer in Purgatory, that they weep, and that they demand with urgent cries the help of your prayers and your good works. I seem to hear them crying from the depths of those fires which devour them: ‘Tell our loved ones, tell our children, tell all our relatives how great the evils are which they are making us suffer. We throw ourselves at their feet to implore the help of their prayers. Ah! Tell them that since we have been separated from them, we have been here burning in the flames!’”

— **St. John Vianney**

“I do not think that apart from the felicity of Heaven, there can be a joy comparable to that experienced by the souls in Purgatory. An incessant communication from God renders their joy more vivid from day to day: and this communication becomes more and more intimate, to the extent that it consumes the obstacles still existing in the soul... On the other hand, they endure pain so intense, that no tongue is able to describe it. Nor is any mind capable of comprehending the smallest spark of that consuming fire, unless God should show it to him by a special grace.”

— **St. Catherine of Siena**

“The more one longs for a thing, the more painful does deprivation of it become. And

because after this life, the desire for God, the Supreme Good, is intense in the souls of the just (because this impetus toward Him is not hampered by the weight of the body, and that time of enjoyment of the Perfect Good would have come) had there been no obstacle; the soul suffers enormously from the delay.”

— **St. Thomas Aquinas**

“If only you knew with what great longing these holy souls yearn for relief from their suffering. Ingratitude has never entered Heaven.” — **St. Margaret Mary**

“He who saves a soul saves his own and satisfies for a multitude of sins.”

— **St. James the Apostle**

“If, during life, we have been kind to the suffering souls in purgatory, God will see that help be not denied us after death.”

— **St. Paul of the Cross**

“By assisting them we shall not only give great pleasure to God, but will acquire also great merit for ourselves. And, in return for our suffrages, these blessed souls will not neglect to obtain for us many graces from God, but particularly the grace of eternal life. I hold for certain that a soul delivered from Purgatory by the suffrages of a Christian, when she enters paradise, will not fail to say to God: ‘Lord, do not suffer to be lost that person who has liberated me from the prison of Purgatory, and has brought me to the enjoyment of Thy glory sooner than I have deserved.’”

— **St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori**

“In our prayers, let us not forget sinners and the poor souls in Purgatory especially our poor relatives.”

— **St. Bernadette**

Words of WISDOM

Quotations from Saints whose feasts are in November . . .

“Compassion is preferable to cleanliness, With a bit of soap I can clean my bed, but think of the flood of tears I would require to clean from my soul the stain that harshness against this unfortunate would leave.

— **St. Martin de Porres**

“If we wish to make any progress in the service of God we must begin every day of our life with new eagerness. We must keep ourselves in the presence of God as much as possible and have no other view or end in all our actions but the divine honor.”

— **St. Charles Borromeo**

“For the man who loves God, it is sufficient to please the One he loves and, there is no greater recompense to be sought, than the loving itself. For love is from God, by the very fact that God Himself is love. The good and chaste soul is so happy to be filled with Him that it desires to take delight in nothing else. For what the Lord says is very true: ‘Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.’”

— **St. Leo the Great**

“Lord, if your people still have need of my services, I will not avoid the toil. Your will be done. I have fought the good fight long enough. Yet if you bid me continue to hold

the battle line in defense of your camp, I will never beg to be excused from failing strength. I will do the work you entrust to me. While you command, I will fight beneath your banner.”

— **St. Martin of Tours**

“Please God I will give my life for the holy union, for the supremacy of Peter and of the Holy Father, his successor . . . Lord, grant me the grace to shed my blood for the unity of the church and in behalf of obedience to the Holy See.”

— **St. Josaphat**

“I will go anywhere and do anything in order to communicate the love of Jesus to those who do not know Him or have forgotten Him.”

— **St. Francis Xavier Cabrini**

“The surest and quickest way to attain perfection, is to strive, for purity of heart. Once the obstacles have been removed, God finds a clear path and does wonders, both in and through the soul.”

— **St. Albert the Great**

“How could I bear a crown of gold when the Lord bears a crown of thorns? And bears it for me!”— **St. Elizabeth of Hungary**

“Let's try not to be exacting with other people, but rather to pass over in silence those thousand little annoyances that tend to irritate us. For we know that no one is perfect in this life, and we must put up with the defects of others as they put up with ours.”

— **St. Rose Philippine Duchesne**

“O Jesus, good King, I await the sword for Thy sake; do Thou deign to receive my spirit, and to show mercy to those who honor my memory.” — **St. Catherine of Alexandria**

The Month of November 2025

Theme: The Holy Souls in Purgatory



November is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory whose feast is November 2. The culmination of the liturgical year is the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe on November 23. As we come to the end of the Church year—the last Sunday of the month begins Advent, the beginning of a new Church year—we are asked to consider the end times, our own as well as the world's.

Prayer Intention: Prevention of Suicide

Let us pray that those who are tempted to commit suicide might find the support, care, and love they need and be open to the beauty and meaning of life.

Virtue of the Month: Prayer

This month, the nation celebrates Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving is a major prayer style and a lifelong virtue that acknowledges God's goodness and our reliance on Him, fostering humility, gratitude, and strengthening faith.