

## All Souls Day (2025)

Here is a hypothetical, but not unusual, conversation that often takes place on November 2 between Catholics and Non-Catholics, or even between two Catholics. It probably goes something like this.

Non-Catholic: So, you're a Roman Catholic?

Roman Catholic: That's right. I'm even a Notre Dame fan.

NC: Do you believe everything the Church teaches?

RC: Well, yes, I guess so.

NC: Even purgatory?

RC: I think so.

NC: Well, let me get this straight. You believe in an all-loving God, don't you?

RC: Yes.

NC: Do you believe that this God sent His only begotten Son to die for you?

RC: Sure!

NC: So let me get this straight: You believe in an all-loving God, who loved you so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for you, so that you can go to heaven when you die. Yet, this loving God first sticks you in a cosmic oven and bakes you for a couple of hundred years or so until you're done.

RC: Well, I've never really thought about it that way.

NC: Where in your Bible does it say purgatory?

At about this time, our Catholic friend is looking for a place to hide.

During our human life, we either accept or reject God's offer of divine grace. Once we die, our choice is definitive. We cannot change our minds after death. (*Catechism*, 1021)

Purgatory is simply a transitional state for those who have merited heaven.

The purification is necessary because, as Scripture teaches, nothing unclean will enter the presence of God in heaven (Rev. 21:27) and, while we may die with our mortal sins forgiven, there can still be many impurities in us, specifically venial sins and the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.

The souls in Purgatory are assured of salvation. They've died in God's grace and friendship and will end up in heaven. But they're not yet in a complete state of holiness — the holiness that's necessary to behold God "face to face" in heaven. (*Catechism*, 1030)

Purgatory in no way should be viewed as a second chance, by which those who did not believe and follow Christ can somehow suffer their way into heaven. The hidden mystery behind the teaching of purgatory is our calling and God's desire that we live with God for all eternity.

Our Lord told St. Gertrude that reciting the following prayer with love and devotion will release 1,000 souls from purgatory.

*“Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.”*