

Extract of the Ninth Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope Peter III on the Holy Souls in Purgatory

We, Peter III, Sovereign Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Saint Peter, Servant of the servants of God, Patriarch of Palmar de Troya, de Glória Ecclesiæ, Herald of the Lord God of Hosts, Good Shepherd of souls, Aflame with the Zeal of Elias and Defender of the Rights of God and of the Church.

By means of this Apostolic Letter We wish to instil into Palmarian faithful the desire to respond faithfully to the absolute need to show the greatest charity towards the Holy Souls of Purgatory.

Let us recall the Palmarian Catechism regarding Purgatory or the Suffering Church:

1. This is the state of temporal expiation of souls that need to be purified before going to Heaven.

2. Purgatory, then, is not a place, but a state of purgation commensurate with the degree of purification that each individual needs. The Holy Souls of Purgatory are scattered about the immense space of the Universe; but their freedom of movement is subject to divine permission.



Each Holy Soul is an individual kingdom of peace, harmony and unspeakable purgative suffering, forming one family together with the other souls in that state of expiation, by virtue of their enthronement in one another. Notwithstanding, no soul in Purgatory shares the sufferings of the rest.

3. To Purgatory go those who, at particular judgement, have not been wholly purified of the temporal punishment due to their mortal or venial sins, whether forgiven in life or at that judgement.

4. The pains suffered by the Holy Souls of Purgatory are temporal and of three kinds:

Essential pain of loss, which is to be deprived of the vision of God, the greatest suffering of all.

Essential pain of sense, which is to suffer simultaneously the fire and the cold of purification.

Accidental pain, which is to have other sufferings.

The fire and the cold are produced by the Soul of Christ in each soul that needs purifying.

5. The Holy Souls of Purgatory see the three forms of the

Universe from the seventh dimension, though not with the perfection and harmony of the Blessed of Heaven.

6. The Holy Souls of Purgatory love God intensely, suffer terribly and have full assurance of afterwards going to Heaven.

7. Purgatory will end at the Second Coming of Christ.

This is the doctrine in which we believe. Nonetheless, we often let ourselves forget these holy souls who suffer so terribly and need our help. As a remedy, We shall set out here some true stories on Purgatory, as we know that examples are easier to understand and make a deeper impression than solely doctrine.

“Take pity on me, take pity on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord has touched me.” That is the moving entreaty which the Suffering Church sends to her friends on earth. Let us reply with generosity to that deepest anguish. Many depend on our prayers.

It is incomprehensible that some Catholics, including those who, in one way or another, are devout, shamefully disregard the souls of Purgatory. It almost seems that they do not believe in Purgatory. Certainly their ideas on it are very vague. Days and weeks and months pass by without their giving them any help! Seldom do they hear Mass for them, seldom do they pray for them, seldom do they give them a thought! Meanwhile they enjoy full health and happiness, are busy at their work, they amuse themselves, while the poor souls suffer unspeakable agonies in their couches of flames. What is the cause of this dreadful insensibility? Ignorance: gross, inexplicable ignorance.

People do not realize what Purgatory is. They cannot conceive the frightful pains, nor have any idea of the long years for which souls are retained in those horrible flames. As a result, they do little or

nothing to avoid Purgatory themselves, and even worse, cruelly ignore the poor souls who are still there and who depend entirely on them for help.

What is Purgatory? It is a prison with purifying fire and cold, in which almost all saved souls are

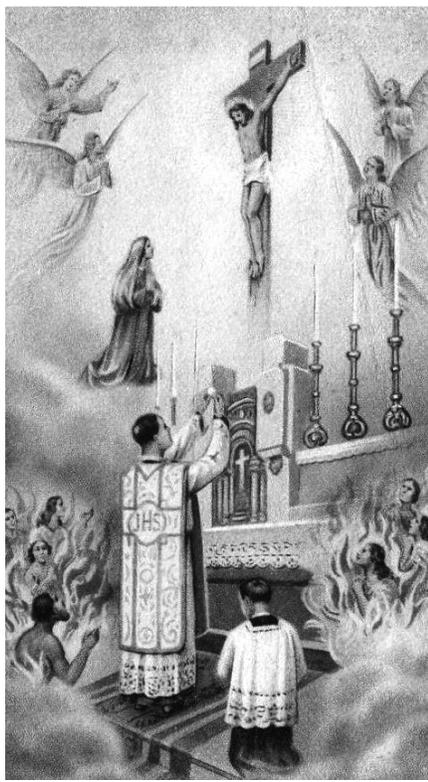


immersed after death, and in which they suffer the severest pains. This is what the greatest Doctors of the Church tell us regarding Purgatory: so pitiful is their suffering that one minute of that dreadful fire seems a century. Saint Thomas Aquinas, called the prince of theologians, says that the fire of Purgatory is equal in intensity to the fire of Hell, and that the slightest contact with it is more horrifying than all possible sufferings on earth! Saint Augustine, one of the great holy Doctors, teaches that, in order to be purified of their faults and before being accepted into Heaven, after death, souls are subjected to a fire and cold more penetrating and more terrible than anyone can see, feel or conceive in this life. This fire and this cold are destined to cleanse and purify the soul, and are more acute than anything else we might bear on earth. Saint Cyril of Alexandria does not doubt in saying that “it would be preferable to suffer all possible torments on earth up to the last day, rather than spend one single day in Purgatory.” Another great saint says: “Our fire, in comparison with the fire of Purgatory, is a fresh breeze.” Other holy writers speak in identical terms of that dreadful fire.

The mortal and venial sins of those who are saved are of necessity forgiven in life or at particular judgement, but forgiveness does not necessarily entail the complete remission of the temporal pain due to those sins. For those who arrive at true death without complete remission of temporal pain, the purifying fire of Purgatory purges them in their condition of Holy Souls.

In Purgatory there are two kinds of pains: To be deprived of the beatific vision, or pain of loss; and the pain of sense, which consists in the fire and other torments more rigorous than all the sufferings of this present life. The intensity and duration of those pains are proportionate to the guilt of each soul.

To be separated from God, the ardent desire to possess God, whom they do not yet possess, is the pain of loss, and is incomparably the greatest torment of Purgatory. Why? Because God is the infinite Good; and the privation of an infinite and necessary good produces a pain as great as God Himself. This torment especially afflicts the souls who in their lives on earth had little desire to go to see God in Paradise. The pains of Purgatory are not equal for all souls, but proportionate to the nature and number of the sins of each: however more guilty, so much the more do they suffer.



The souls of the blessed fully enjoy the beatific vision without any veil; and the souls of Purgatory have the beatific vision veiled as long as they remain in that place of expiation. In turn, the Lumen Glóriæ produces the purifying fire of Purgatory, which is of the same nature as that of Hell, which burns without consuming and purges the Holy Souls to prepare them for Eternal Blessedness, and which is extinguished in each of them at the end of their purification. This one fire of Purgatory inhabits simultaneously in all those souls, with different intensity, according to each soul’s degree of expiation. And together with that fire, they are purified by a cold of the same nature as that of Hell, and which also dwells in them.

In Hell and in Purgatory, neither the fire annuls the effects of the cold, nor does the cold annul the effects of the fire; and this fire and this cold are the pain of sense for the damned and for the Holy Souls, and mean unimaginable suffering. But they also have the pain of loss, that of finding themselves deprived of the vision of

God: those in Hell forever, and those in Purgatory for a time. And this is the pain that produces the greatest suffering. The innate desire of happiness having been impressed by God in each Angel and in each human being, there is an unwavering will to reclaim this right in them all. Hence the pain of loss for the damned is the anguished and desperate desire to see God in order to be happy and, at the same time, the obstinate refusal to see Him out of the hatred they bear Him and so as not to humble themselves by asking forgiveness for their sins. But for the souls in Purgatory, the pain of loss is the vehement desire to see God and the inability to do so owing to the temporal pains not yet expiated; yet these souls have no desire to abandon that state prior to their complete purification.

Saint Catherine of Genoa explains that the divine presence is so unimaginably pure and full of light, that a soul with the least imperfection would rather plunge itself into a thousand hells rather than appear thus in God's presence. We cannot understand all that Purgatory means, which is willingly and thankfully accepted by the soul conscious that suffering matters little compared to the impediment of sin.

How come the pains of Purgatory are so severe? The fire we see on earth was made by God's goodness for our benefit and wellbeing. Sometimes it is used as a torment, and is the most terrible we can imagine.

The fire of Purgatory, on the contrary, is made by God's justice to chastise and purify us, and is therefore incomparably more severe.

Our fire, at most, burns until consuming our body, made of matter; on the contrary, the fire of Purgatory acts on the soul, which is spirit and inexplicably more sensitive to pain.

However more intense the fire, the quicker is the victim destroyed, who consequently ceases to suffer; in contrast, the fire of Purgatory inflicts the most acute and most violent pain, but never kills the soul nor dulls its sensibility.

As severe as the fire of Purgatory is, more severe is the pain of separation from God, which the soul in Purgatory suffers as well, and is its greatest torment. The soul separated from the body longs with all the intensity of its spiritual nature to be with God. It is consumed by the intense desire to fly to Him; but is held back, and there are no words to describe the anguish of that unsatisfied yearning.

So, for an intelligent being such as man, what madness it is to leave out any precaution whatsoever to avoid such a frightful destiny.

It does not help to say that it cannot be, that we cannot understand, that it is better not to think or speak of it. Whether we believe it or not, the fact is that all the pains of Purgatory are beyond whatever we can imagine or conceive. Those are Saint Augustine's words.

Can all this be true? The existence of Purgatory is so certain that no Catholic should ever have the slightest doubt. It was taught by the Church from the remotest times and accepted without the least kind of doubt, with great faith, when the Word of God was preached. By the firm belief in the existence of Purgatory, in the Old Testament, the Caudillo Judas Machabee ordered prayers and sacrifices to be made in suffrage for the souls of his deceased soldiers, so that God might take pity on them and soon free those to be found in Purgatory from their temporal pains. It is a doctrine revealed in Sacred Scripture and has been believed by millions upon millions of people of all times.

Even so, just as we have remarked, some people's ideas are so vague and superficial on this subject of such importance, that they are like those who close their eyes and walk purposely along the edge of a cliff.

They would do well to recall that the best way of shortening our stay in Purgatory – or better still, avoiding it altogether – is to have a clear idea of it, meditate well on what it means and adopt the remedies which God offers us to avoid it. Not to think of it is fatal. It is to dig one's own grave, and prepare a terrifying, long and rigorous Purgatory.

The Polish prince. There was a Polish prince who was exiled for political reasons from his native country and, having reached France, bought a beautiful castle. Unfortunately, he had lost the Faith of his childhood and was at the time busy writing a book against God and the existence of eternal life. While on a walk one night in his garden, he encountered a woman weeping bitterly. He asked her the reason for her grief. "O prince! – she replied – I am the wife of Jean Marie, your steward, who died two days ago. He was a good husband and a devoted servant of Your Excellency. His illness was long and I

spent all our savings on doctors, and now I have no money to offer Masses for his soul.” The prince, touched by the woman’s sorrow, spoke some words to her and, though he did not believe in eternal life, gave her some gold coins to offer a Mass for her deceased husband

Some time later, also at night, the prince was in his study working feverishly on his book. He heard a loud knocking at the door, and without raising his eyes from his writings, invited whoever it was to enter. The door opened and a man entered and stood facing his desk. On raising his eyes, what was the prince’s surprise to see Jean Marie, his deceased steward, who was gazing at him with a sweet smile. “Prince – he said – I have come to thank you for the Masses which, by your help, my wife was able to have said for my soul. Thanks to the Saving Blood of Christ, offered for me, I now go to Heaven, but God has allowed me to come here and thank you for your generous alms.” He then solemnly added:



“Prince, there is a God, a future life, a Heaven and a Hell.” This said, he disappeared. The prince fell to his knees and recited a fervent Creed (“I believe in God the Father Almighty...”)

Saint Antonine and his friend. What follows is a narrative no less instructive. Saint Antonine, the illustrious Archbishop of Florence, relates that a pious gentleman friend of his had died. Several Masses were offered in suffrage for his soul. The Saint was deeply troubled when a long time later, the soul of the deceased appeared to him, greatly suffering. “O my dear friend – exclaimed the Archbishop – are you still in Purgatory, you, who lived such a pious and devout life?” The poor sufferer answered: “So it is, and I will have to stay here a long time, for in my earthly life I was negligent in offering suffrages for the souls of Purgatory. God in His just judgement now applies the suffrages which should have been applied to me in favour of those for whom I should have prayed. God, in His justice, will give me the merits of all my good works when I enter Heaven; but, beforehand, I must expiate my grave negligence in not remembering others.” Sure indeed are the words of Our Lord: “With the rule you measure by, you shall be measured.” Remember, you who read these lines, that

the terrible fate of this pious gentleman will be that of those who neglect to pray for and refuse to help the Holy Souls.

How long do souls stay in Purgatory? The length of time that souls spend in Purgatory depends on: the number of their faults; the malice and deliberation with which they were committed; the penance done or not, and the satisfaction given or not, for sins committed during life; it also depends on the suffrages offered for them after their deaths. What can be said with certainty is that, as a general rule, souls spend far longer in Purgatory than what people can imagine.