

## 31 SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

*Wisdom 11:22 to 12:2 2 Thessalonians 1:11 to 2:2 Luke 19:1-10*

### HOMILY

Today, I choose to overlook the Gospel and the readings of today in preference for ushering the theme of REMEMBRANCE that runs throughout THIS November month.

This month gives us an opportunity **to understand** what we mean by **“CHURCH”**.

I say so because we have already begin celebrating one of the **most fundamental** and **most consoling** truths of Catholicism: **“the Communion of Saints.”**

We express this truth in the Apostle’s Creed.

What do we mean by believing in **“the Communion of Saints”**?

Let us unpack what we mean by **“the Communion of Saints”**

The Communion of Saints is a reference to the **three arms** of the church:

- Two days ago was **All Saints: this is one arm** of the Church, known as the **“Triumphant Church”**.
- Yesterday was **All Souls Day**, which is the **2<sup>nd</sup> arm** of the Church known as the **Suffering Church**, and
- Today, since this Mass is being offered for the People of the Parish – that is **All of Us**, and all of us form the **3<sup>rd</sup> arm of the Church** best known as: **the Church Militant**.

Of the three arms of the church I would want to dwell **“All Souls”** because the month of November is dedicated to them.

In this month we pray for the **Church Suffering**.

- When you say the Church Suffering you are talking about Purgatory.

**Q: Is there a purgatory?**

Many people today deny that there is a purgatory.

**Q: Anyone having problems with purgatory? .....**

- If you deny purgatory and **pray for the dead** it means that there is a Purgatory.

Such people believe only in **heaven** and **hell**, fine.

- But if you pray for the dead it means that the hell you believe in is **only temporary** and that is just what Purgatory is.

Therefore, the truth of the matter is that such people believe in heaven and purgatory, not hell.

### REASON FOR PURGATORY

Reason says that there SHOULD be.

- We know that **we are not perfect enough** for heaven and **not wicked enough** for hell.
- ❖ So there must be a **middle state** of purification.

According to the New Catholic Catechism: **“All who die in God’s grace and friendship but imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”**

### TRADITION FOR PURGATORY

Tradition testifies that from the beginning **Christians have prayed** for the dead.

If you pray for the dead **it is presumed** that there is a purgatory because **souls in heaven do not need prayers** and the souls in hell **cannot be helped** by prayer anyway.

### SCRIPTURE FOR PURGATORY

Scripture has no explicit mention of purgatory, but it is implicitly contained in the **Second Book of Maccabees, chapter 12**.

- Jews use this in their celebration of Hanukah.
- But the Protestants **do not have this book** in their Bible.

**What is purgatory like?**

- It is a place of **great joy**.
- They realize that **they have won the victory** and they are **being prepared** for heaven.
- This is **where I would want to be**.

- I want to be purified before I see God.
- Of course there is **no purification without pain**, without suffering.  
**(No mussels from cutting butter)**
- *“Fire”* is a metaphor, the fire of love which purifies.

## CONCLUSION

- a. All Souls Day is a solemn celebration in the Roman Catholic Church commemorating all of those who have died and **are now being made pure** before entering into the presence of God in Heaven.
- b. On All Souls Day, we **not only remember the dead**, but **we apply our efforts**, through prayer, almsgiving, and the Mass, to their release from Purgatory.
- c. Praying for the dead is a Christian obligation.

The Church devotes the month of November to pray for those on their way to heaven.