

Novena For The Relief Of The Poor Souls In Purgatory

By a friend of the Suffering Souls.

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TO THE PIOUS READER.

We present this small treatise to pious persons, entreating them to peruse it.

Long ago, the Holy Ghost said: "It is a holy and wholesome thing to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." (2 Maccabees 12:46.) Our Lord shed tears in seeing the tomb of Lazarus, and the Church, well acquainted with the feelings of her Divine Founder, is incessantly recommending charity for the Souls suffering in Purgatory. One of her eminent doctors, Saint Thomas of Aquinas, has said that: "Of all prayers, the most meritorious, the most acceptable to God are prayers for the dead, because they imply all the works of charity, both corporal and spiritual."

But there are many people unconscious of the fact that charity for the "Poor Souls" is profitable to the living as well as to the dead. It is the teaching of the most learned theologians, namely: Saint Alphonsus Liguori, Francis Sylvius, Saint Robert Bellarmine, Martin Bonacina, and Francisco Suarez. "It is true," says Saint Alphonsus, "they are unable to pray or merit anything for themselves, yet, when they pray for others, they are heard by God." Let us refer to Saint Bellarmine: "The Souls in Purgatory," says he, "can pray for those who address to them their petitions, and obtain from God help, forgiveness, assistance against temptations, and, all favors, both temporal and spiritual, which they may need."

Many Saints have experienced this wonderful assistance. Saint Catherine of Bologna assured her Sisters that: "She obtained many favors by the prayers of the holy souls in Purgatory, which she had asked in vain, through the intercession of the Saints." Saint Theresa of Avila affirms that: "She always obtained the favors which she asked from God, through the intercession of the Poor Souls." We read also in the book of Saint Bridget's Revelations that: "Being one day conducted by an Angel into Purgatory, she heard a soul say: "Oh Lord, vouchsafe to reward those who assist us! Return hundredfold blessings to those who help us and introduce us into the light of Heaven." Saint Leonard of Port Maurice emphatically affirms that: "The blessed Souls, delivered by our prayers, will come down from Heaven to assist us in our temporal and spiritual affairs." The Venerable Cure d'Ars, (canonized in 1925) replying to a priest said: "If one knew what we may obtain from God by the intercession of the Poor Souls, they would not be so much abandoned. Let us pray a great deal for them, they will pray for us."

Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque had a special devotion for the Souls in Purgatory and has often accepted the charge of suffering for them. "Would that you knew," she said, "how my soul was replenished with joy, when speaking to those Souls, and seeing them, immersed in glory as in a deep ocean. As I requested them to pray for you, they replied: "An ungrateful soul is not to be found

in Heaven!" No, we cannot be deceived! If we have an ardent charity, a sincere piety, a true devotedness for the Poor Souls, we will be favored with their protection."

Let us try it! When we are in trouble, when we long for a favor, let us perform some pious or charitable work for the relief of the "Poor Souls." They will be grateful; they will plead for us, and present our requests to the Eternal Father, who loves them.

May God bless this humble work! May He deign to enkindle generous hearts with zeal for the "Poor Souls."

[In what follows, there is frequent reference to the Indulgences available with various prayers. We have preserved this information for the sake of historical interest. Since Vatican II, all Indulgences are now classified as either 'Plenary' or 'Partial'. References to 'number of days', 'quarantines' (the equivalent of 40 days' ecclesial penance) and so on, are no longer applied. Readers should be aware, however, that the Good God can never be outdone in Mercy and Generosity and so it is unlikely that any former Indulgence would attract any less spiritual benefit when recited today than it would have, if recited some years ago.]

INTRODUCTION.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew, 5:7.)

Prayers used each Day:

PREPARATORY PRAYER:

Act of Faith: My God, I believe in You, because You are Truth itself; I firmly believe the truths revealed to the Church.

Act of Hope: My God, I hope in You, because You are infinitely good.

Act of Charity: My God, I love You with all my heart, and above all things, because You are infinitely perfect; and I love my neighbor as myself, for the love of You.

(Indulgence of 7 years, 7 quarantines, each time. Benedict XIV, January 28, 1761. Plenary once a month, if said every day. Benedict XIII, January 15, 1728.)

DE PROFUNDIS. (Psalm 129 in the Vulgate; Psalm 130 in the Hebrew.) "Out of the Depths". First in Latin; the English translation follows immediately.

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine: Domine, exaudi vocem meam. Fiant aures tuae intendentes, in vocem deprecationis meae. Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine: Domine, quis sustinebit? Quia apud te propitiatio est; et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine.

Sustinuit anima mea in verbo eius; speravit anima mea in Domino. A custodia matutina usque ad nectem speret Israel in Domino. Quia apud Dominum misericordia; et copioso apud eum redemptio. Et ipse redimet Israel, ex omnibus iniquitatibus eius.

VERSICLE. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine!

RESPONSE. Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

VERSICLE. A porta inferi.

RESPONSE. Erue, Domine, animas eorum.

VERSICLE. Requiescant in pace!

RESPONSE. Amen.

VERSICLE. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

RESPONSE. Et clamor meus ad te veniat

VERSICLE. Dominus vobiscum.

RESPONSE. Et cum spiritu tuo.

Oremus:

Fidelium, Deus, omnium conditor et redemptor; animabus famulorum, famularumque tuarum remissionem cunctorum, tribue peccatorum; ut indulgentiam, quam semper optaverunt, piis supplicationibus consequantur: Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Requiescant in pace. Amen.

DE PROFUNDIS. – Out of the Depths.

Out of the depths, I have cried to You, O Lord: Lord hear my voice.

Let Your ears be attentive, to the voice of my supplication.

If You, O Lord, will mark iniquities; Lord, who shall stand it?

For with You there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of Your law, I have waited for You, O Lord.

My soul has relied on His word: my soul has hoped in the Lord.

From the morning-watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him plentiful redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel, from all his iniquities.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. From the gate of hell.

RESPONSE. Deliver their souls, O Lord.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace.

RESPONSE. Amen.

VERSICLE. O Lord, hear my prayer.

RESPONSE. And let my cry come unto You.

VERSICLE. The Lord be with you.

RESPONSE. And with your Spirit.

(Indulgence of 50 days, three times a day, to all who say the De Profundis with the VERSICLE and RESPONSE. "Requiem aeternam (Eternal Rest)." Leo XIII., February 3, 1888.)

Let us pray:

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, we beseech You to grant to the souls of Your servants, men and women, the remission of their sins, so that by our prayers they may obtain pardon for which they long, O Lord, who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.

May they rest in peace. Amen.

FIRST DAY.

Existence of Purgatory.

PREPARATORY PRAYER:

Act of Faith: My God, I believe in You, because You are Truth itself; I firmly believe the truths revealed to the Church.

Act of Hope: My God, I hope in You, because You are infinitely good.

Act of Charity: My God, I love You with all my heart, and above all things, because You are infinitely perfect; and I love my neighbor as myself, for the love of You.

(Indulgence of 7 years, 7 quarantines, each time. Benedict XIV, January 28, 1761. Plenary once a month, if said every day. Benedict XIII, January 15, 1728.)

MEDITATION: There is a place for the purification of Souls, which, after death, are yet stained with venial sins, or have not yet entirely satisfied for their pardoned sins. The Holy Catholic Church teaches it. I believe it firmly. By the light of the flames of Purgatory, I understand better Your holiness, Your Justice, Your Mercy, O my God! "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His Holy Place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart." (Psalm 23 in the Vulgate or Psalm 24 in the Hebrew.) "There shall not enter into Heaven anything defiled." (Apocalypse 21.) For You are Holy! Holy! Holy! O Lord, inspire my soul with the horror of sin! Grant me the grace to atone for my faults here below! You are just, O Lord, and Your judgments are right. Who will dare to say: "Do not condemn me: tell me why You judge me so?" (Job 10:2.) "To You only have I sinned, and have done evil before You." (Psalm 50:6 in the Vulgate or Psalm 51:4 in the Hebrew.) I have deserved eternal punishment, but Your mercy will follow me into the depth of death, and I will be spared.

Oh, Purgatory! Where reigns Hope! There I will say with the Prophet: "When I was in distress You have enlarged me!" (Psalm 4:1.) If there were no Purgatory, where would so many lazy, negligent, immortified souls go? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our tribulation." (2 Corinth 1:3- 4.)

PRACTICE: To pray the Divine Heart of Jesus that He deign to enkindle many souls with an ardent charity for the Souls in Purgatory.

RESOLUTION: Every day of my life, I will pray or do some good work for the "Poor Souls."

EXAMPLE: It is related in the Acts of Saint Perpetua, martyr, that, being thrown into prison, she was favored with a vision. She saw her young brother, Dinocrates, in a dark place. He was surrounded by flames, thirsty, his face was ugly, pale, covered with an ulcer, which caused his death, when seven years old. She prayed fervently for him during seven days, and then he appeared to her in a very different condition. He was bright, clothed with a beautiful white dress, and there was no ulcer on his face. She understood that he had been delivered.

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray for our departed parents:

O God, Who has commanded us to honor our Father and Mother, have pity on them, deliver them from the pains which they have deserved, and grant that I may see them in the glory of Heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

(300 days each time for saying these VERSICLES and RESPONSES, applicable only to the dead. [Saint] Pius X, February 13, 1908.)

SECOND DAY.

Pains of Purgatory.

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: Let us go with our Guardian Angel to Purgatory, to that place where the Divine Justice purifies Souls before they are admitted into Heaven.

There we will meet again our parents and our friends. Had this devotion no other advantage than that of reminding us of our departed ones, we should be grateful to God for such a consolation.

Oh, my father! Oh, my mother! Oh, brothers! Oh, sisters! Oh, friends! I had forgotten you! What do you suffer, beloved Souls? What shall I do to deliver you?

Our pains, they reply, are beyond description. When separated from our body, we saw the face of God, our Supreme Good, the Infinite Perfection. Then would we rush into His bosom, but we were driven back by His Justice and our awareness of our unworthiness! We were banished! Oh, no! On earth below, you will never understand our pain, our grief, because we are separated from God! Your troubles, your sorrows, are the mere shadow of our affliction. But we suffer through our fault. If we would return to our former place on earth, we would be glad to accept the hardest mortification in exchange for Purgatory. "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me!" (Job 19:21.) Appease the Divine Justice with your good works, pay our debts, hasten the day when we shall enter into Heaven, and then we will return our gratitude forever.

PRACTICE: Encourage all the works established for the relief of the Souls in Purgatory.

RESOLUTION: At night, in the examination of conscience, I will question myself: What have you done today for the relief of Poor Souls?

EXAMPLE: The soul of a pious lady, deceased at Luxemburg, appeared on All Saints' Day to a young girl of great piety, to beg the assistance of her prayers. When the latter was going to church, when approaching the holy rails, she was followed by the soul. Outside the church, it could not be seen. As the young girl inquired the reason for it, she was answered: "You cannot understand how painful it is to be away from God. I am attracted to God by impetuous transports, by intolerable anxiety, and I am condemned to live far away from Him. My sorrow is so intense, that the ardor of fire, which surrounds me, is a lesser suffering. To soothe my pain, God, in His mercy, has allowed me to come into this church, and to adore Him, veiled under the Host, until I might see Him face to face in Heaven." She entreated the young girl to pray for her deliverance. It was done with so much fervor, that, on the 10th of December, the soul appeared, as bright as the sun, going to Heaven.

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray for our benefactors and friends: O God, Who bestows forgiveness and salvation, we address Your clemency that, through the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, the Souls of our departed brethren, relatives and benefactors, may be admitted into the eternal glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

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THIRD DAY.

The Pain of Loss.

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: During the long captivity, God's people, sitting on the shores of the Euphrates, moaned and cried in remembering Sion. So the Souls in Purgatory, plaintive and doleful, long for the joys of the heavenly mansion. They have had a glimpse of its glory and happiness, but because they were too much attached to earthly pleasures, they will be deprived, perhaps for a long time, of the celestial joys. They remember all the negligence of their former life, which now obstructs their way to Heaven. What sorrows! What remorse! Because they have preferred a moment of pleasure to the enjoyment of Heaven. Then the poor, desolate Souls accuse themselves, saying with the Prophet: "I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me." (Psalm 50:5 in the Vulgate or Psalm 51:3 in the Hebrew.)

Since God has granted us the power of paying the debts of the "Poor Souls" with our works, let us appreciate this immense privilege. A noble heart should be delighted in relieving the poor, in consoling the afflicted, in bringing peace and happiness to those who suffer. Such is the privilege of those who assist the Souls suffering in Purgatory, because they deliver them from the hardest captivity and they open to them the gates of Heaven.

Moreover, our charitable deeds for the "Poor Souls" will secure for us the gratitude of God Himself. "When," said our Lord to His holy servant Gertrude, "a Soul is liberated by your prayers, I accept it, as if I had been Myself liberated from captivity, and I will assuredly reward you according to the abundance of My mercy."

PRACTICE: Perform today an act of mortification or obedience for the relief of the "Poor Souls."

RESOLUTION: Be faithful in little things. Everything is great which is done for the Glory of God.

EXAMPLE: At the close of September, 1870, there died at GH., France, a banker, renowned for his piety and his charity. By divine permission, his soul appeared to his daughter, a member of a sisterhood in Belgium, to implore the assistance of her prayers. At first, he was seen surrounded by flames, saying: "Have pity on your father, my child! If Purgatory were known, everyone would strive to escape its torments." Sometimes he would loudly complain: "I thirst! I thirst!"

Fervent prayers were offered for him at the convent, and he appeared again, enveloped in a dark cloud, but free from fire. He said to his daughter: "It seems that I am here during a century. My great suffering now is the thirst for the Vision of God and the enjoyment of His presence. I rush to Him and I am incessantly repulsed into the abyss because I have not yet paid all my debt to the Divine Justice." Prayers were continued and on Christmas night, he was seen in a halo of light, and addressing his daughter, said: "My pains are over. I owe this favor to the prayers offered for me. I come to thank you and your community. I will not forget you in Heaven."

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray for Bishops and Priests deceased: O God, Who has deigned to raise to the pontifical or sacerdotal dignity Your servants N. N., grant us the grace of enjoying with them eternal felicity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

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FOURTH DAY.

The Pain of Sense.

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: The pain of loss, the deprivation of the Vision of God, constitutes the supreme suffering in Purgatory. To this suffering of deprivation, other sufferings of a positive nature are added. These are conditioned by the number and gravity of the sins, which call for expiation and we have every reason to conceive of them as alike terrible and prolonged. Though the Church has not pronounced any decision on this point, it is the opinion of its doctors that the Souls in Purgatory are tormented by fire, which penetrates them and burns them as gold in the crucible (Proverbs 17:3) until it has reduced them to such a degree of purity, that they may be worthy to appear before God.

When a fire is raging, everybody is excited. The people rush to the spot and everyone tries to save those who are already surrounded by the terrible element. Why are we unmoved at the sight of so many Souls who are tormented in the fire of Purgatory and who claim our assistance? Let us not abandon them.

PRACTICE: Let us pray our Lord today to apply the merit of His death on the Cross to the Souls in Purgatory.

RESOLUTION: I will observe the abstinence and fast prescribed by the Church, unless prevented by sickness.

EXAMPLE: Two Spanish monks, bound together by a long and warm friendship, agreed that: if God would allow it, the one who should die first, would appear to the other to make known his condition in the other world. Some time later, one of them died, and appeared to his friend, saying: "I am saved, but condemned to suffer in Purgatory. It is impossible to describe such torments. Will you allow me to give you a sensible demonstration?" Then he placed his hand on the table and

imprinted on it a mark as deep as if it had been made by a red hot iron. This table was preserved at Zamora (Spain) up to within the last century, [the nineteenth].

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray for a deceased man: Hear, O Lord, the prayers which we address to Your mercy, and grant us that the soul of Your servant N. N., which is gone into another world, be received into the abode of light and happiness to enjoy the felicity of the Saints. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

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THE FIFTH DAY.

Duration of Purgatory

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: How long do the pains last in Purgatory? Nobody knows. God has allowed some Souls to appear to their friends and benefactors to announce their departure for Heaven, but it seldom happened, and we cannot draw any conclusion from such cases. The period of confinement in Purgatory is probably much longer than we are inclined to think. Oh! how much combustible matter — how many imperfections, venial sins and temporal punishments due to mortal and venial sins — do you think they took with them to be cancelled in the flames of Purgatory? Centuries may pass until Divine Justice is satisfied and the Poor Soul is so purified as to be admitted to the Vision of God. The Venerable Saint Bede relates that it was revealed to Saint Drithelm, a great servant of God, that the Souls of those who spend their whole lives in the state of mortal sin, and are converted only on their death bed, are doomed to suffer the pains of Purgatory to the day of Last Judgment; Father Faber, commenting on this subject, says very justly: "We are not to leave off too soon praying for our parents, friends or relatives, imagining with a foolish and unenlightened esteem for the holiness of their lives, that they are freed from Purgatory much sooner than they really are!"

Let us consider the purity, which is necessary to a soul, before being admitted into the presence of God! Let us remember the multitude of our venial sins, and see what light penance we have done for them. On the Day of Judgment, the book of our deeds will be opened, and then we will be obliged to pay the last farthing. How guilty we are in abandoning so easily the Souls who need our assistance so much! The Saints are wiser. Saint Monica, the mother of Saint Augustine, was dead for twenty years, and she was still remembered by her son in the Holy Sacrifice. Saint Ambrose promised solemnly and publicly to pray, during his entire life, for the soul of Theodosius the Great, Emperor of Rome.

And supposing that we had delivered the Souls of our relatives and friends, have we emptied the prison of Purgatory? How many poor, abandoned Souls linger in such horrible pains, imploring the assistance of some charitable heart. Cardinal Saint Robert Bellarmine has affirmed that: "Some Souls would suffer in Purgatory till the Day of Judgment, if they were not relieved by the prayer of the Church." Therefore, he authorizes the foundation of Masses to be said in perpetuity.

PRACTICE: Would it not be a holy thought to form, among relatives and friends, an association of seven members, so that, each would employ a day of the week for the relief of the "Poor Souls."

RESOLUTION: Each time I hear the clock strike, I will say:

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord. RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them. (50 days each time for saying this VERSICLE and RESPONSE. Applicable only to the dead. Leo XIII Brief of March 22, 1902.)

EXAMPLE: Sister Denis, one of the first members of the order of the Visitation, was a zealous promoter of the devotion of the "Poor Souls." It was revealed to her that a prince, one of her relatives, had been condemned to suffer in Purgatory until the Day of Judgment. She offered herself as a victim for the relief of this soul. On her death-bed, she said to the mother-superior that she had obtained for the poor soul the remittance of some hours of his pain. As the superior wondered at this fact, she replied: "O Mother, time in Purgatory is not counted as on earth; years passed here in sorrow, in poverty, in sickness, in suffering, are nothing, if we compare them with one hour in Purgatory!"

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray for a deceased woman: We humbly request You, O Lord, to grant mercy to the soul of Your Servant, N. N., in order that, being delivered from the contagion of sin, she may enter into eternal salvation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

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THE SIXTH DAY.

Obligation of Assisting the "Poor Souls."

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: The Souls in Purgatory cannot help themselves; they are unable to shorten their captivity. This reason alone should urge us to come to their assistance.

After death there is no more place for mercy, the time for justice commences. The soul is no longer free to choose between good and evil, therefore she cannot obtain any merit and her sufferings are accounted only as a payment for her debts. Alas! To be condemned to such sufferings, to be afflicted perhaps during centuries! How bad it is for those "Poor Souls!"

Could we see an unfortunate man, lying on the road, wounded, bleeding and would we pass and abandon him! We hold the key of a prison, crowded with prisoners; they crave for liberty and shall we leave them in their pitiable situation! So we have received from the mercy of God the privilege of liberating the Souls detained in purgatory. We may say that we are the Providence of the dead; we, and we alone, may open the gates of Heaven to the Souls who are longing for their deliverance. It is the teaching of the Church, that the prayer of the living can be applied to the Souls in Purgatory. As your prayers ascend to Heaven, graces come down as a refreshing shower, bringing to

the Souls forgiveness, liberty, and glory. The supplications of Mary and Martha obtained the resurrection of Lazarus. Let us address our prayers to the heart of Jesus, and we will deliver from their pains our dear departed ones. Shall we not be guilty if we do not employ our credit in favor of the unfortunate prisoners in Purgatory?

PRACTICE: Saint John Chrysostom recommended to every Christian family that they have a box at some convenient place in the house and that they put into it pennies, which will be used to have Masses said for the "Poor Souls."

RESOLUTION: Pray today for the most abandoned Souls.

EXAMPLE: At the Benedictine monasteries, when one of the monks died, his ordinary meals are distributed among the poor during thirty days. In the year 830, when a terrible plague was raging, many religious died. The abbot Blessed Rabanus Maurus gave the order to distribute the alms, according to the ancient usage, but the procurator did not obey. One night the stingy monk, having been delayed by his work, to shorten his way to his cell, passed through the Chapter room. There he was surrounded by all the monks, recently dead, who whipped him, leaving him half dead on the floor. Early the next morning he was found by the religious, who were going to the chapel. He related the event, made his confession, received the last rites and died two days afterwards.

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray: We humbly beseech You, O Lord, to release the Souls of Your Servants, in order that they may obtain the glory of the resurrection and that they may be joined to the saints and elect in Heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

(300 days each time for saying these VERSICLES and RESPONSES, applicable only to the dead. [Saint] Pius X, February 13, 1908.)

THE SEVENTH DAY.

Cruelty of Those Who Abandon the "Poor Souls."

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: Our Lord reproved the cruelty of the rich man, who refused even the crumbs of his table to poor Lazarus, while he himself was feasting sumptuously every day. Are they not imitating the wicked rich, who stand unmoved, seeing the sufferings of the "Poor Souls?" Those unfortunates, who appeal to our Compassion, are not strangers. Among them, there are our parents, our benefactors, our friends. Not long ago, they were living among us in the same house. We bear their names, we inherited their lands; and we forgot them! We abandon them! They may say with Job: "My kinsmen have forsaken me, and they that knew me have forgotten me. They that dwell in my house, and my maid-servants, have counted me as a stranger, and I have been like an alien in their eyes." (Job 19:15.) To forget the dead is a crime. Solemn promises were made at the death-bed. A child has said to his father and to his mother dying: I will not forget you! But where is the sign of this remembrance? Does it pray for them? Perhaps a vague, shadowy remembrance of the departed comes to its mind, but where is the profit to the "Poor Souls?" Useless and vain compassion! Empty

love! Where are the works, alms, and holy Masses to assist, to relieve, to deliver the "Poor Souls?" Those who forget them will also be abandoned! "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Saint Matthew 7:22.)

PRACTICE: After the Evening Angelus say: Our Father and Hail Mary, once; or the De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction), as a daily tribute to the "Poor Souls."

RESOLUTION: I will endeavor to propagate devotion to the "Poor Souls."

EXAMPLE: A poor servant-girl had the pious custom of having a Mass said every month for the Souls in Purgatory, and she prayed especially for the Soul that was nearest to Heaven. After a long, protracted illness, she was leaving the hospital and setting out in search of a position. On her way she passed a church and, remembering that her monthly Mass had not been said, she entered the sacristy, requesting the priest to say this Mass. When she left the church, a young man came up to her. He was tall and pale, and of a noble demeanor. "My good girl," he said, "I think you are looking for a position." "Yes," said the girl, somewhat surprised. "Well," said the young man, "if you go to Mrs. N. (here he named the street and number), I think you will find a good place;" and suddenly he disappeared among the crowd of passersby. The girl went, found the house, was introduced, and presented her petition. "But," said the lady of the house, "who could have sent you here? Nobody knows that I need a servant." Suddenly the girl, looking at the wall, noticed a portrait. "Look here, madam," said she, pointing to the picture, "that is the exact likeness of the man who told me to come here." At these words, the old lady turned pale. "Ah!" said she, "that is the portrait of my son, who died two years ago. You shall henceforward remain with me, not as a servant-girl, but as my daughter, and we will always pray together for the "Poor Souls" in Purgatory."

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray: May our prayers be profitable, O Lord, to the Souls of Your servants, that being absolved from their sins, they may have a share in the fruits of redemption. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

(300 days each time for saying these VERSICLES and RESPONSES, applicable only to the dead. [Saint] Pius X, February 13, 1908.)

THE EIGHTH DAY.

The Communion of Saints.

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: How grand and consoling is the doctrine of the Communion of Saints! While we, in this world, are struggling for the celestial crown, and assist our brethren in Purgatory, we are protected by those who are triumphing in Heaven. We form, in reality, but one and the same family here below, in Purgatory, and in Heaven. If a member of our body is suffering, all other members come to its assistance. God loves the souls in Purgatory as His dear spouses. He would open to them the gates of Heaven, but there are barriers. Let us present to His justice our prayers, our good works, and the obstruction will be removed; God will be satisfied.

It is often an obligation of justice to pray for the Poor Souls, but it is always a duty imposed by charity and by the compassion that we owe to one another.

There are in Purgatory Souls abandoned even by their parents and their friends, and for whom no one cares. Forgotten is their life, no thinking of it anymore; forgotten is their name; forgotten is their grave, which is visited no more; forgotten is their Soul, which is lingering in the fire of Purgatory. How their pain is increased by such neglect; They may say with the Prophet: "I am forgotten as one dead from the heart. I am become as a vessel that is destroyed." (Psalm 30:13 in the Vulgate or Psalm 31:12 in the Hebrew.)

PRACTICE: Let us pray often and do some good works for the most abandoned Souls. Let us be to them like a father, a mother, a sister, a friend.

RESOLUTION: To offer the abandonment of our Lord Jesus, in His passion, for the most abandoned Souls.

EXAMPLE: Catherine of Cortona was hardly eight years old when her father died. One day he appeared to her, wrapt in fire. "My daughter," said he, "I will be plunged in fire till you have done penance for me." Then the child, with a rare courage, decided to practice the hardest mortifications, in order to pay the spiritual debts of her father. She succeeded. Her father appeared again, as bright as a saint, saying: "God has accepted your suffrages and your satisfactory works, my daughter. I am going to enjoy eternal happiness. Do not cease to offer yourself as a victim for the salvation of Suffering Souls. This is the will of God."

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray for those who rest in the cemetery: O God, by whose mercy the Souls of the departed rest in peace, we beseech You to grant to Your servants, and to all who rest in the Lord, the forgiveness of their sins, and life everlasting. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace. RESPONSE. Amen.

(300 days each time for saying these VERSICLES and RESPONSES, applicable only to the dead. [Saint] Pius X, February 13, 1908.)

THE NINTH DAY.

Benefit of the Devotion to the "Poor Souls."

PREPARATORY PRAYER: As on the first day (which see.)

MEDITATION: This Novena is coming to a close. Do we understand the benefits and the consolation derived from devotion to the holy Souls? Do we need stronger motives to increase our zeal? Then let us consider that: Nothing is more glorious to God, nothing gives more honor to His Holy Name, nothing rejoices His Heart more, nothing is more pleasing to Him than charity for the "Poor Souls."

To open Heaven to the Poor Souls is to increase the number of those who praise and glorify God, the number of hearts that love Him. "Such a work," says Bourdaloue, "is an apostolate more noble, more meritorious than the conversion of sinners, and even of heathens."

How we will please the Heart of Jesus, Who loves the Souls redeemed by His precious blood! He would willingly come into this world again and offer Himself for their deliverance; but all justice must be accomplished, and the debts of the Souls must be paid. Therefore, He has inspired His Church with the practice of praying for the dead every time the Holy Sacrifice is offered.

The Blessed Virgin is the Queen of Purgatory and will be highly gratified when we contribute to the relief of the "Poor Souls."

Saint Joseph, the patron of a happy death, will also present our requests to the Lord, who has been called his Son. He will repay us generously if we come to the rescue of the suffering Souls.

What joy among the Saints in Heaven when they will see another elect — a Soul coming out of Purgatory! Her Guardian Angel, the Holy Patron, will welcome and congratulate her! It will be a great joy in Heaven. The Saints know the benefactors of the "Poor Souls," and they will, in return, protect them.

We have already said that the Saints in Purgatory will remember their benefactors. No, they cannot forget them! They will attentively provide for them in needs both temporal and spiritual. They will protect us and defend us in troubles, in dangers, in temptations. On our deathbed, they will surround us. At the tribunal of God, they will be our advocates; and, if we are cast into Purgatory, they will come to visit us, to console us, until the day of our entrance into a glorious eternity.

PRACTICE: Give alms to the poor; insure your soul with prayers and good deeds against the fire of Purgatory. Money will be useless at the hour of death, but your good works will follow you.

RESOLUTION: I will never miss the opportunity of assisting the "Poor Souls."

EXAMPLE: A pious lady was praying for the recovery of her health. She had exhausted every means and made novenas after novenas to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to Saint Joseph, et cetera, without success. But she was advised to commence novenas for the relief of the "Poor Souls" in Purgatory. She did so and entirely recovered. She was accustomed to say: "All that I ask through the intercession of the "Poor Souls" I obtain easily. With them I am never discouraged, and I hope against hope."

PRAYER: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – see the Introduction.)

Let us pray for all the faithful departed: O God, Creator and Redeemer of all men, we beseech You to grant to the Souls of Your servants the remission of their sins, so that by our prayers they may obtain the indulgence for which they long, O Lord, who reigns and lives, world without end. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace.

RESPONSE. Amen.

(300 days each time for saying these VERSICLES and RESPONSES, applicable only to the dead. [Saint] Pius X, February 13, 1908.)

The Practice of this novena is especially and earnestly recommended to those who mourn the death of their parents and friends. They should commence it on the very day of the death of the person and continue it during the nine following days. It will be a consolation for them and a relief for the dear departed one.

A PRAYER FOR THE POOR SOULS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK.

SUNDAY.

O Lord God Almighty, I pray You, by the Precious Blood which Your Divine Son Jesus shed in the garden, deliver the Souls in Purgatory, and especially that Soul amongst them all which is most destitute of spiritual aid; and vouchsafe to bring it to Your glory, there to praise and bless You forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.).

MONDAY.

O Lord God Almighty, I pray You, by the Precious Blood, which Your Divine Son Jesus shed in His cruel scourging, deliver the Souls in Purgatory, and that Soul especially amongst them all which is nearest to its entrance into Your glory; that so it may forthwith begin to praise and bless You forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.).

TUESDAY.

O Lord God Almighty, I pray You, by the Precious Blood which Your Divine Son Jesus shed in His bitter crowning with thorns, deliver the Souls in Purgatory, and in particular that one amongst them all which would be the last to depart out of those pains, that it may not tarry so long a time before it comes to praise You in Your glory and bless You forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.).

WEDNESDAY.

O Lord God Almighty, I pray You, by the Precious Blood which Your Divine Son Jesus shed in the streets of Jerusalem, when He carried the Cross upon His sacred shoulders, deliver the Souls in Purgatory and especially that Soul which is richest in merits before You that so, in that throne of glory which awaits it, it may magnify You and bless You forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.).

THURSDAY.

O Lord God Almighty, I pray You, by the Precious Body and Blood of Your Divine Son Jesus, which He gave with His own hands upon the eve of His Passion to His beloved Apostles to be their meat and drink, and which He left to His whole Church to be a perpetual sacrifice and the life-giving food of His own faithful people, deliver the Souls in Purgatory, and especially that one which was most devoted to this mystery of infinite love, that it may with the self-same Jesus Christ, Your Divine Son, and with Your Holy Spirit, ever praise You for Your love therein in eternal glory. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.).

FRIDAY.

O Lord God Almighty, I pray You by the Precious Blood which Your Divine Son shed on this day upon the wood of the Cross, especially from His most sacred hands and feet, deliver the Souls in Purgatory and in particular that Soul for which I am most bound to pray; that no neglect of mine may hinder it from praising You in Your glory and blessing You forever. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.).

SATURDAY.

O Lord God Almighty, I beseech You, by the Precious Blood, which gushed forth from the side of Your Divine Son Jesus in the sight of, and to the extreme pain of His Most Holy Mother, deliver the Souls in Purgatory, and especially that one amongst them all which was the most devout to her; that it may soon attain unto Your glory, there to praise You in her, and her in You, in the world without end. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.).

(100 days Indulgence, once a day. Leo XII, November 18, 1526.)

SHORT AND EFFICACIOUS PRAYER.

For the Faithful Departed.

O most compassionate Jesus, have mercy on the Souls, detained in Purgatory, for whose redemption You did take upon Yourself our nature and endure a bitter death. Mercifully hear their sighs, look with pity on the tears, which they now shed before You, and by virtue of Your Passion, release them from the pains due unto their sins. O most merciful Jesus, let Your Precious Blood reach down into Purgatory and refresh and revive the Captive Souls, which suffer there. Stretch forth unto them Your strong right Hand, and bring them forth into the place of refreshment, light, and peace. Amen.

Blessed Souls! We have prayed for you! We entreat you, who are so dear to God, and so certain of never losing Him, to pray for us miserable sinners, that are in danger of being damned and of losing God forever.

PIOUS EXERCISE.

It consists in meditating devoutly on the Passion and in saying for the Souls in Purgatory: Pater (the Our Father) and Ave (the Hail Mary) five times and this versicle:

VERSICLE. Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.

‘We therefore beseech You, help Your servants, whom You have redeemed with Your Precious Blood.’

(300 days indulgence once a day. A plenary indulgence if it is said every day during a month. Pius VII. Brief of February 8, 1817.)

PRAYER FOR THE DEAD.

VERSICLE. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.

RESPONSE. Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

(50 days indulgence each time, applicable only to the dead.

Leo XIII, Brief of March 22, 1902.)

VERSICLE. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.

RESPONSE. Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

VERSICLE. Requiescant in pace.

RESPONSE. Amen.

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

VERSICLE. May they rest in peace.

RESPONSE. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

Almighty God, with Whom do live the Souls of the perfect, and in Whose holy keeping are placed the Souls of those that depart hence in an inferior degree of Your grace, they being by their imperfect character rendered unworthy of Your presence, and therefore detained in a state of grief and suspended hopes, as we bless You for the Saints already admitted to Your glory, so we humbly offer our prayers for Your afflicted servants, who continually wait and sigh for the day of their deliverance. Pardon their sins, supply their want of preparation and wipe away the tears from their eyes, that they may see You, and in Your glorious sight eternally rejoice, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

HEROIC ACT OF CHARITY.

This heroic act of charity in behalf of the Souls in Purgatory consists in the voluntary offering made for their relief, of all our works of satisfaction during life, as well as of all suffrages which may be offered for us after death. This offering we place in the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that she may distribute its merits to those holy Souls whom it is her good pleasure to deliver from the pains of Purgatory.

Let it be understood, however, that we offer hereby only the special and personal portion of the satisfactory merit of our good works, so that we are not prevented from offering our good works, prayers, the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, et cetera, for other intentions. It is also to be remembered that, though this act is sometimes called a vow, yet it induces no obligation binding under sin.

The following indulgences were granted to those who make this heroic offering: Pope Benedict XIII, August 23, 1728, made the first grant of indulgences for this act.

Pius VI, December 12, 1788, afterwards confirmed it, and [Blessed] Pius IX again renewed and specified the indulgences in a decree dated September 30, 1852, and on November 20, 1854; [Saint] Pius X, on February 20, 1907 renewed it.

1. All priests who take this vow, have the indult of a privileged altar, personally, every day of the year, at whatever altar they celebrate Mass for the faithful departed.
2. All the faithful who have made this obligation, can gain a Plenary Indulgence, applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, every time they receive Holy Communion, provided they visit a church or public oratory and pray according to the intention of His Holiness.
3. All the faithful, who have made this obligation, can apply a Plenary Indulgence to the faithful departed every Monday, by hearing Mass for this intention, provided they go to Holy Communion and visit some church and pray to the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

4. All indulgences granted, or to be granted, even though not stated as applicable to the departed when gained by those who have made this obligation, can be applied to the Souls in Purgatory.
5. For those whose duties prevent their hearing Mass on Monday, the Mass heard on Sunday is sufficient to gain the Indulgence of Number 3.

For those who do not yet approach the holy table, or who are unable to receive Holy Communion, some other good work may be appointed by confessors, authorized by their respective bishops, to gain the Plenary Indulgence as above.

FORM OF OBLATION.

O eternal and most merciful Father, accept the oblation, which I make to You, in union with the Most Sacred Heart of Your Divine Son Jesus, of all the merits of the life, sufferings, and death of the same Jesus, our Lord and Savior, in behalf of the Souls, suffering in Purgatory. I offer to You, O Heavenly Father, for their deliverance from suffering, for their admission to the joys of Heaven, the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the immense and superabundant merits of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, of all the holy martyrs, and of all the saints in Heaven and on earth.

I offer, also, and resign entirely, in favor of those suffering Souls, all my satisfactory works, and those of others applied to me in life or death, and after my passage to eternity; and in order to render this poor offering of mine more acceptable to You, and more beneficial to the Souls for whom I make it, I unite it to the infinite and most pleasing homage which the Divine Heart of Jesus is continually paying to Your Majesty. I place it in the most pure hands of Mary Immaculate, that she may present it to You, as a pleasing holocaust, and distribute according to her good pleasure the graces, favors and relief obtained from Your infinite mercy.

Note. — It is not necessary to make use of the set formula, since in order to share in the said indulgence no more is required than a heart-felt act of the will.

THE ROSARY FOR THE POOR SOULS.

It is a practice earnestly recommended to all persons who desire to assist the "Poor Souls." It is said on any ordinary beads.

On the Cross: De Profundis (Out of the Depths – for the words see the Introduction.) or Pater (the Our Father) and Ave (the Hail Mary).

On the Large Beads:

VERSICLE. Eternal rest give to them, O Lord.

RESPONSE. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

Act of Faith: My God, I believe in You, because You are Truth itself.

Act of Hope: My God, I hope in You because You are infinitely good.

Act of Charity: My God, I love You with my whole heart and above all things, because You are infinitely perfect.

(Indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines each time. Benedict XIV, January 28, 1766. Plenary, once a month, if said every day. Benedict XIII, January 15, 1728.)

(Plenary, in articulo mortis — ill to the point of death — if frequently used during life. Benedict XIV, January 28, 1766.)

On the Small Beads: Sweet Heart of Jesus, be my love.

(300 days indulgence once a day. Leo XIII, May 21, 1892.)

Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation.

(300 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, September 30, 1852. Plenary, once a month.)

At the end: Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Yours.

(300 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, Motu Proprio brief of January 25, 1868; [Saint] Pius X, September 15, 1905.)

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us.

(100 days indulgence each time. [Saint] Pius X, Brief of July 9, 1909.)

Saint Joseph, model and patron of those who love the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

(100 days indulgence once a day. Leo XIII, Dec. 19, 1891.)

DO NOT FORGET that, by all means, the Holy Sacrifice of Mass is the most efficacious means to help, to relieve, to deliver the "Poor Souls" in Purgatory.

Three Thousand Days of Indulgences for the relief of the "Poor Souls" in Purgatory to be obtained by saying the following ejaculations:

The sign of the cross.

(50 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, July 28, 1863.)

The sign of the cross if made with holy water.

(100 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, March 23, 1866.)

May the Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere.

(100 days indulgence once a day, [Blessed] Pius IX, Motu Proprio brief of September 23, 1860.)

Praised be Jesus Christ forevermore.

(60 days indulgence each time. Clement XIII, September 6, 1759.)

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart unto Yours.

(300 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, Motu Proprio brief of January 25, 1868. [Saint] Pius X, September 15, 1905.)

Sweet Heart of my Jesus, make me love You ever more and more!

(300 days indulgence each time. Plenary, once a month. [Blessed] Pius IX, November 26, 1876.)

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, earth is full of Your glory, Glory be to the Father, Glory be to the Son, Glory be to the Holy Ghost.

(100 days indulgence once a day, and three times on Sunday, and during the octave of the Holy Trinity. Clement XIV, June 6, 1769.)

Sweet Heart of Jesus, be my love.

(300 days indulgence once a day. Leo XIII, May 21, 1892.)

Sweetest Jesus, be to me not a judge but a Savior.

(50 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, August 11, 1851.)

My Jesus, mercy!

(100 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, September 24, 1846.)

O Jesus, my God, I love You above all things.

(60 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, Motu Proprio brief of May 7, 1864.)

Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!

(300 days indulgence each time. [Blessed] Pius IX, September 30, 1852.)

Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the most blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

(300 days indulgence each time. Leo XIII, Brief of September 10, 1878.)

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us.

(100 days indulgence each time. [Saint] Pius X, Brief of July 9, 1904.)

Blessed and praised every moment be the most holy and divine Sacrament.

(100 days indulgence once a day, three times on Thursday, and during the octave of Corpus Christi. Pius VI, Memo May 24, 1776.)

May the Heart of Jesus, in the most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored, and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the Tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time. Amen.

(100 days indulgence once a day. [Blessed] Pius IX, Motu Proprio brief of Feb. 23, 1868)

The Cross is my sure salvation. The Cross I ever adore. The Cross of my Lord with me. The Cross is my refuge.

(300 days indulgence once a day. [Blessed] Pius IX, Motu Proprio brief of January 21, 1874.)

O Mary, who did enter the world free from stain, do You obtain for me from God, that I may pass out of it free from sin.

(100 days indulgence once a day. [Blessed] Pius IX Briefs of March 27, 1863.)

Eternal Father, I offer You the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in satisfaction for my sins, and for the wants of the Holy Church.

(100 days indulgence each day. Pius VII, Rescript of September 22, 1817.)

May the most just, most high, and most adorable will of God be in all things done, praised, and magnified for ever.

(100 days indulgence once a day. Pius VII, May 19, 1818.)

Eternal Father, we offer You the Blood, Passion, and Death of Jesus Christ, and the sorrows of the most holy Mary and Saint Joseph, in payment for our sins, in suffrage for the holy Saints in Purgatory, for the wants of our holy Mother the Church, and for the conversion of sinners. Amen.

(100 days indulgence once a day. [Blessed] Pius IX, Motu Proprio brief of April, 1860.)

Angel of God, my Guardian dear! To whom His love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

(100 days indulgence each time. Pius VI, Brief of October 2, 1795.)

My loving Jesus, out of the grateful love I bear You, and to make reparation for my unfaithfulness to grace, I (N. N.) give You my heart, and consecrate myself wholly to You; and with Your help I propose never to sin again.

(100 days indulgence once a day. Pius VII, Memo June 9, 1807.)

Saint Joseph, model and patron of those who love the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

(100 days indulgence once a day. Leo XIII, December 19, 1891.)

Dear Lord Jesus, grant them (him or her) eternal rest.

(300 days indulgence each time. [Saint] Pius X.)
