



# Adsum

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## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Throughout this month of November, we continue that spiritual work of mercy which was practiced in the Old Testament by God's Chosen People and in the New Testament by the Catholic Church—to offer prayers and sacrifices for the faithful departed.

Yes, the practice of praying for the dead “that they may be loosed from their sins” dates back to the Old Testament. Yes, the doctrine of purgatory was held by the Catholic Church even from the earliest ages. Yes, our belief in Purgatory and our practice of praying for the faithful departed is very much a part of Sacred Scripture and Tradition. And why is this important today? The reason is that not only do the Protestants flatly deny the doctrine of Purgatory, but also the modern Church of Vatican II has down-played it by the replacement of the Requiem Mass (the Mass of the Dead) with the new “Mass of the Resurrection.” The impression this new “Mass of the Resurrection” gives is that there is no need for atonement and expiation for sins.

When we consider the theological basis from Sacred Scripture and Tradition for the doctrine of Purgatory and for the spiritual work of mercy to pray for

the dead, we begin with the Chosen People of the Old Testament. They offered prayers for their departed, and this ancient practice is even continued by the Jews of today.

We find reference for prayers for the dead in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which was used by the Chosen People several centuries

before the coming of Jesus Christ. This Septuagint version was most often quoted by Our Divine Lord when he made reference to the Old Testament. This version was also used by the Apostles and the early Church. In the Septuagint, we find the Second Book of Machabees, and we read there that Judas Machabeus sent a large sum of money to Jerusalem so that sacrifices would be offered for his slain soldiers:

“Making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead.” He did not regard their sins to be grievous,

“because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them.” The sacred writer then expresses the doctrine involved herein: “It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins.” (2 Mach. 12:43-46)

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ taught that there are certain sins which would not be forgiven in this



world nor in the next:

“And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the world to come.” (Matt. 12:32)

Thus, Our Lord implied that some sins are forgiven in the next. This is the understanding of St. Augustine and Pope St. Gregory the Great on this passage.

St. Paul also makes reference to the sufferings in the next life whereby man’s sins are atoned for by fire. In his letter to the Corinthians, he tells us that “every man’s work shall be manifest” on the Lord’s day. “The fire,” he continues, “shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide,” that is, if his works are righteous, “he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work burn,” that is, if his works are faulty and imperfect, “he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.” (I Cor. 3:13-15)

In the catacombs of St. Calixtus under the hills of Rome, there are a number of inscriptions which still echo the last words of the dying Christians: “In your prayers remember us who have gone before you.” “Mayest thou have eternal light in Christ,” was the answering prayer of those who remained behind. “Inscriptions such as these,” Monsignor Barnes writes, “are found upon the tombs of many Christians in the first three centuries.” (The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments, pp.149-157)

This custom of praying for the dead is frequently referred to in the writings of the Fathers of both the East and the West. Tertullian (160-240) in two different passages speaks of anniversary Masses:

“We make on one day every year oblations for the dead, as for their birthdays.” (De Cor. Mil., 3) “The

faithful widow prays for the soul of her husband, and begs in the interim for his repose, and a participation in the first resurrection, and offers prayers on the anniversary of his death.” (De Monag., 10)

In the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, we find that St. Monica had one last request of her son, St. Augustine:

“Lay this body anywhere; let not the care of it in any way disturb you. This only I request of you, that you would remember me at the altar of the Lord, wherever you be.” (*Confessions*, Book 9)

And in response to her request, St. Augustine composed this prayer for his dear mother with the petition that all those who would read his *Confessions* might also remember her in their prayers:

“I, therefore, O God of my heart, do now beseech thee for the sins of my mother... and inspire, my Lord... Thy servants, my brethren, whom with voice and heart and pen I serve, that as many as shall read these words may remember at Thine Altar, Monica, Thy servant...”

These are just a few examples to demonstrate that the early Church assisted the souls of the faithful departed by their prayers and sacrifices, especially at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

How important it is for us, the Church Militant, to have a lively faith—a faith that is put into practice. We believe in the doctrine of Purgatory. How often do we remember to pray and sacrifice for our departed relatives and friends? Do we believe ourselves in the doctrine of Purgatory by doing voluntary penance to atone for our past sins? Purgatory and the souls suffering there are realities of our Faith which we cannot afford to forget. Let us be generous in our efforts to assist our departed brethren and let us be solicitous to willingly suffer here on earth in order to avoid a long Purgatory.

With our prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

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## *The Words of Christ to His First Priests*

**“Come follow Me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19)**

**“Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel...” (Mark 16:15)**

**“As the Father sent Me, I also send you.” (John 20:21)**

## *St. Francis Xavier, Patron of Foreign Missions*

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Ever since Jesus Christ gave to His Apostles the command to “Go, therefore, and teach ye all nations” (Matthew 28:19), there have been very few men who have more zealously and successfully fulfilled this injunction of Our Lord than St. Francis Xavier. It has been estimated that he traveled three times the circumference of the globe, visited over two hundred kingdoms, and baptized with his own hand, more than one million, two hundred thousand people.

Francis was born of noble parents at the castle of Xavier in Spain in 1506. After he had earned his Master of Arts degree at the University of Paris at the age of twenty-four, he went on to teach philosophy at a college. Just when Francis was on the threshold of a brilliant worldly career, he met Ignatius of Loyola, whose spiritual influence changed his entire course of life. Ignatius would frequently remind Francis of Our Divine Master’s warning, “What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?” These words opened Francis’ eyes to the only real important thing in life. Under the guidance of St. Ignatius, he vowed himself to the service of God, and became one of the first members of the newly-founded religious order, the Society of Jesus.

Thereupon, he embarked upon a brilliant career of quite another kind; his goal was now bodily mortifications and the subjugation of his pride. He never allowed himself meat or wine; he ate only the coarsest foods and often fasted for two or three days without any food. He often used the discipline and limited his sleep to a few hours each night.

God rewarded such holy austerity and humility by bestowing upon Francis extraordinary gifts and favors. As a missionary to the East Indies, he would preach in one language to the people of several nations, and each heard him speak in their own native tongue. He was granted the gift of prophecy and among his many miracles is that of raising several dead men to life.

Yet despite these wonderful gifts, his humility was as remarkable as his apostolic endeavors were extraordinary. When congratulated for his missionary success, Francis’ only reply was, “If God works any good through me, it is due to the prayer and merits of my brethren in Europe.” In his letters from the Far East, he would often entreat St. Ignatius, his Superior (to whom he always corresponded on his knees out of respect), to send someone to watch over, direct and motivate him. When certain young Jesuits ex-



pressed their desire to follow him to India, he replied, “I highly approve of your zeal, but be not deceived; no one can excel in great matters who has not first excelled in lesser ones.”

Francis Xavier was the first to introduce the Faith to Japan, and afterwards made plans to preach the Gospel in China, even though it was forbidden under pain of death or imprisonment for foreigners to set foot in that country. Nevertheless, God did not allow Francis’ holy ambition to be realized, as he died at the age of forty-six, just off the coast of China. As he died he fixed his eyes on the crucifix and he breathed forth his last words, “In Thee have I hoped. I will not be confounded forever.”

When we consider the extraordinary zeal of St. Francis Xavier, let us recall that it was the result of his deep interior life of prayer and meditation. He would rise early to meditate upon the infinite goodness and love of God for His sinful creatures. He was in continual communication with God, and often repeated his favorite ejaculation, “O Most Holy Trinity!”

St. Francis Xavier is an excellent example of zeal for our seminarians to imitate. As our future priests, they will share in the mission of the Church to “teach all nations.” May they always remember the great esteem that God has for this work. As St. Denis wrote, “Of all divine works, the most divine is to cooperate with God in saving souls.”

# *Father Connell Answers Moral Questions*

*by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.*

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## **Computation of Time**

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**Question:** When daylight-saving time is in use, may a priest eat meat immediately after midnight of Friday (daylight-saving time) and yet use some of this same hour period (before one o'clock daylight-saving time) to complete his breviary for Friday? The argument is that one may follow one system of time with reference to the law of Friday abstinence and another system with reference to the obligation of saying his Office.

**Answer:** For a long time this problem was controverted by theologians. Finally, however, a decision was given on March 29, 1947, by the Commission for the interpretation of the Code. According to this decision, a person may follow different systems of time to his own advantage in fulfilling precepts that are formally different—as in the case described. Hence, a priest may eat meat immediately after midnight (according to daylight-saving time) and yet use a portion of this time (before one o'clock daylight-saving time) to complete his breviary.

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## **“Souvenirs” from Restaurants**

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**Question:** What is the morality of taking spoons, napkins, towels, etc., from restaurants, hotels, motels, and other such establishments, as “souvenirs”? Apparently many persons regard this as a perfectly lawful custom, and I have been told that such establishments make provision for such “souvenir-collecting” by regularly replenishing their supply of equipment.

**Answer:** It would seem that this manner of collecting “souvenirs” is nothing else but theft. The mere fact that a restaurant or hotel makes provision for such purloining on the part of the guests by arranging to purchase extra equipment at regular intervals is no proof that the owners or managers give permission. It would seem merely to indicate that they know that many of their guests are dishonest and that they cannot take adequate measures against their thefts. Sometimes the statement is made that the owners and managers condone the collecting of “souvenirs” by their guests on the ground that these articles, spread through the country, will serve as good advertising material for their establishments. But this seems like a far-fetched argument. If these persons are willing to advertise in this way, they should make an announcement to that effect.

The manager of a large hotel whom I consulted on this matter informed me that the taking of “souvenirs” occurs every month to the extent that of thousands of dollars. He also assured me that the management does not grant any permission to guests to make off with the equipment, but accepts the situation as something that inevitably is going to happen. It would be advisable for priests in their instructions to point out the sinfulness of this custom, which apparently is regarded by so many persons as perfectly lawful.

It must be pointed out, however, that if it were known that the managers raised the rates for all guests to a sum above a just price in order to make up for the loss they are sustaining from this custom of thievery, an individual guest would not sin against justice by taking something equivalent to this extra price. However, until it were proved that such a situation actually exists, the guest would not be entitled to this form of occult compensation.

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**MATER DEI SEMINARY**  
7745 Military Avenue  
Omaha NE 68134-3356