

PURGATORY:

A tragic travesty of Acts 13:

In **Acts chapter 13** the Apostle Paul during the course of his sermon in Antioch outlines some of the history of God's dealings with the people of Israel and in **verse 23** he declares how God has fulfilled His promise in that He **"raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."** The people and religious leaders did not recognise the coming of the one who had been predicted and promised by the prophets of God and promptly rejected him and in so doing they actually fulfilled the prophetic scriptures – **"For they that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him"** (verse 27).

Paul then trumpets forth the victorious resurrection of Christ and in the wake of this tremendous truth he says **"And we declare unto you glad tidings"** (verse 32). What are these "glad tidings" which Paul is so anxious to declare – we find the answer in **verses 38-39** **"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; And by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."**

The **"glad tidings"** which Paul wanted to convey to his listeners were that through the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a person can have, without reliance on their own part to perfectly keep God's law, **"forgiveness of sins"** and be **"justified"** before God. These **"glad tidings"** of **"forgiveness"** and being **"justified"** are **"through this man"** ("Jesus Christ and Him Crucified" 1 Corinthians 2:2) and not through any personal self-effort/self-righteousness ("by the law").

Like **"they that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers"** the Roman Catholic people and their ruling clergy sadly **"know him not"** and are ignorant of the true, biblical **"glad tidings"**. This is made abundantly clear when it comes to Rome's teaching on **PURGATORY**. The (Roman) **Catholic Encyclopaedia** defines **PURGATORY** as follows on this link –

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12575a.htm> -

Purgatory (Lat., "purgare", to make clean, to purify) in accordance with Catholic teaching is a place or condition of temporal punishment for those **WHO**, departing this life in God's grace, are, not entirely free from venial faults, or **HAVE NOT FULLY PAID** the satisfaction due to their transgressions.

In the early days of **'Take Heed' Ministries** I wrote and published a number of leaflets dealing with aspects of belief held by various religious groupings. The leaflets were in effect designed, not only to be informative, but also to be used for outreach to those who subscribed to the beliefs examined in the leaflets. One of those leaflets was entitled **'Purgatory Before Death'** and I want now to set out the text of that leaflet as I begin this article on **PURGATORY**.

"Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool".

Isaiah 1:18

INTRODUCTION

Any visitor to Ireland doesn't have to travel very far before realising that this is a land where religion plays a major role in the life of every city, town and village. Even the poorest of communities have down through the years made great sacrifices to ensure that the 'House of God' has been kept neat, tidy and in a good state of repair. In many instances it is in fact the dominant building in a particular area or location. This is especially true in the Republic of Ireland where Roman Catholicism would be the largest religious denomination and where the local chapel would be lovingly maintained by the faithful. It is with sincere people such as these in mind that this leaflet has been written – not to ride roughshod over a sincerely held belief but rather to confirm the absolute necessity of finding **PURGATORY**, but not a **PURGATORY** that is arrived at after death which is **the popular view**, but rather a **PURGATORY** that is found before death, which is **the proper view** according to God's guide, the Holy Bible.

THE PURPOSE OF PURGATORY

Irrespective of which view a person takes concerning **PURGATORY**, whether it is found in this life before death or is arrived at in the next life after death, **there is agreement** as to **the purpose** of **PURGATORY**, namely that it is **a place where cleansing from sin takes place**. The **Roman Catholic Catechism** drawn up by Dr. James Butler and approved by the 4 Roman Catholic Archbishops of Ireland gives this definition on page 32 – **'PURGATORY – a place of cleansing'**. Sin stains our lives and God is repelled by the sight. The prophet Habakkuk expressed this truth when under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he wrote concerning God "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). In the 21st chapter of the book of Revelation the Apostle John describes the future eternal state – the "new Jerusalem" (v2) and we learn that this "new Jerusalem" is in fact "a bride adorned for her husband" (v2) and more than that it is "the Lamb's wife" (v9). This bride is made up of "them which are saved" (v24) and "which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (v27). In verse 27 we also learn this concerning those who will share eternity with Christ – "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie". Quite simply nothing unclean shall enter heaven or dwell in the presence of God so **if we wish to spend eternity with Christ we need to be thoroughly and permanently cleansed from our sins, totally purged and in fact clothed with the righteousness of God**. Is there a **PURGATORY** where this can take place? This question we shall now examine and answer.

THE POPULAR PURGATORY

When I refer to **'The Popular Purgatory'** I am referring to the PURGATORY which is most widely known by that name – the place referred to in Roman Catholic teaching and which is said to be arrived at after death. As already stated the purpose of PURGATORY is cleansing and what I now want to examine is how the necessary cleansing is apparently effected. During their lives, faithful Roman Catholics are taught that by observing certain sacraments a person becomes a Christian, obtains ongoing pardon for sins and is prepared for the life hereafter. However, few who die are reckoned to be fit to enter directly into the presence of God and the vast majority of Roman Catholics expect to go first to PURGATORY either on account of dying 'in venial sin' (Butler's Catechism p32) or being 'indebted to God's justice on account of mortal sin' (Butler's Catechism p33). Cleansing in PURGATORY is apparently necessary for such people. Having died they cannot do this for themselves but the Roman Catholic church teaches that the cleansing can be effected by the 'prayers and... good works of those still alive' (Butler's Catechism p33). Another aspect of a person's stay in PURGATORY is mentioned in relation to question 3 (Butler's Catechism p33) and that is 'temporary punishment' in PURGATORY. So, the teaching is that cleansing from sin and relief of the 'temporary punishment' of souls in PURGATORY is effected by the prayers and good works of the living. One of the most common ways relatives and friends seek to relieve the souls of their loved ones is by giving money for masses to be offered on their behalf. Concerning this practice, Loraine Boettner, in his book 'Roman Catholicism' wrote (p223) **'It is due in no small measure to this doctrine of PURGATORY that the Roman Catholic church has been able to... build magnificent Cathedrals... even in regions where the people are poor'**. Later on the same page he makes this challenging statement **'If any of us actually had the power to release souls from PURGATORY and refused to exercise that power except in return for a payment of money he would be considered cruel and unchristian – which indeed he would be'**. Can the living, by prayers and good works release the souls of those said to be in **'The Popular Purgatory'**? I want to answer that by looking at what I call **'The Proper Purgatory'**.

THE PROPER PURGATORY

Often the visible effects of sinful excesses can be seen in the physical bodies of those who so indulge themselves. The Apostle Paul wrote "Be not deceived: neither fornicators... nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9). We live in an age which because of aids and cirrhosis of the liver knows full well the dangers of pursuing such life styles. The cleansing however required for eternity does not relate to our physical dimension but relates to the invisible, eternal soul of man which also bears the scars of sin. The lovely negro spiritual 'Balm in Gilead' expresses it very well when it refers to 'the sin-sick soul'. It is the soul of man which needs to be dealt with to enable him to spend eternity with Christ, clothed in a new incorruptible body as explained by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:35-58.

In the book of Leviticus we learn of sacrifices which priests were to offer on behalf of the nation of Israel and individual Jews as well. Chapter 17 verse 11 declares "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul". The "blood" referred to came of course from the animal which died as a substitute for the repentant Jew and which was sprinkled on his behalf on the altar by the priest. What does the expression "that maketh an atonement" actually mean? Simply, it means to have our sins "COVERED" or removed from God's sight and memory. For over a year David wrestled with a guilty conscience because of his adultery with Bathsheba and other crimes which followed, and his anguish and desire to be right with God are recorded in Psalm 51. "Have mercy upon me, O God... blot out my transgression" (v1). "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (v2). "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean" (v7).

Knowing the joy of sins forgiven, David subsequently wrote in Psalm 32 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is COVERED" (v1). "I acknowledged my sin unto thee... and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (v5). Sins which can cause our soul to be lost for ever in hell need to be atoned for; they need to be "COVERED". The sacrifices described in the Old Testament could never effect such an atonement but were constituted by God to point to a coming, all-sufficient sacrifice which would FULLY atone for sin. In Hebrews chapter 10 verse 4 we read "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (referring to the Old Testament sacrifices) but in verse 12 we read "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (This refers to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross).

Is the shed blood of Jesus a sufficient atonement or "COVERING" for sins? The Apostle Paul writing to the believers in Rome said "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11). Their atonement or "covering" for sin was received direct from Jesus Himself, the One who is "the mediator of the new testament" (Hebrews 9:15).

Listen to Jesus as He states exactly what this "new testament" is. Lifting up the cup of wine which symbolically pointed to His blood which would be shed on the Cross He said "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). An unbloody sacrifice cannot take away sins for we read "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). The sacrifice of Jesus was "finished" (John 19:30) "for ever" and cannot and does not need to be ritually perpetuated. The merits of that full and complete sacrifice are brought to men by Jesus himself for "there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the only priest we need "seeing then we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (Hebrews 4:14). We need no other mediator or earthly priest.

Can we trust in the shed blood of Jesus to fully atone for and "COVER" all our sins? The Apostle John wrote "the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from ALL sin" (1 John 1:7).

Going back to David's desire for forgiveness I want to look again at what he said in verse 7 of Psalm 51 "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean". Hyssop was a bush used to sprinkle the blood of the Passover lamb slain in Egypt and also the blood used for the cleansing of a leper's house (Exodus 12 and Leviticus 14). Here the blood provided protection and cleansing. David realised he couldn't cleanse himself – only God could do it. It is the same today; neither we nor our friends or loved ones can cleanse us by any means from sin or its due punishment. Only God Himself can cleanse us.

Has such a cleansing been effected on our behalf? Look at God's Word concerning Jesus "Who... when he had BY HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). There is 'The proper Purgatory'. At CALVARY is found full cleansing from sin and its due punishment for ever through faith alone in the finished work of Christ on the Cross.

That is the true Gospel "I declare unto you the gospel... Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1&3). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (His finished work) and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Is there cleansing from sin and its due punishment after death? Listen to the words of Abraham to the rich man who died "between us and you there is a great gulf FIXED: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26).

Death seals our eternal destiny. In Revelation 22 verse 11 we read “He that is unjust let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still”.

Are we viewed as “righteous” by God by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work? Paul wrote “the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto ALL and upon ALL them that believe” (Romans 3:22).

CONCLUSION

‘The Popular Purgatory’ of Roman Catholicism conflicts with the Word of God which teaches that sin must be dealt with in this life. Concerning those who die ‘in sin’ Jesus said “Whither I go ye CANNOT come” (John 8:21). Trust Christ alone, through His finished work, for full forgiveness and full cleansing and then you can testify like Paul of “the Son of God who loved ME and gave himself for ME” (Galatians 2:20). Paul had, before his death, found full forgiveness and full cleansing through faith alone in Christ’s work at Calvary – **‘The Proper Purgatory’**.

In Ireland there is a place of pilgrimage/retreat known as **‘St. Patrick’s Purgatory’**. For a very long time it has drawn people who go there and go through 3 days of intense personal repetitive prayer, sleep deprivation, barefoot hardship and other outward means of suffering and penance. Much of these requirements can be read in detail under the heading of **‘Modern Pilgrimage’** located on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Patrick%27s_Purgatory

It is one thing to read on this link that –

“It is a three-day pilgrimage open to pilgrims of all religions, or none, who must be at least fifteen years of age, in good health and able to walk and kneel unaided. Pilgrims, who should begin fasting at the previous midnight, assemble at the Visitor Centre on the shore of Lough Derg early in the day (between about 10 am and 1 pm). From there a boat ferries them on the brief trip out to Station Island. Once on the island they are assigned a dormitory room, and barefoot they begin a specified and almost continuous cycle of prayer and liturgies”

It is quite another thing to watch people actually doing this and I invite you now to watch two videos that show what happens when people go on this pilgrimage to

‘SAINT PATRICK’S PURGATORY’

This first video link details the experiences of a collective group of pilgrims

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HtFT9B0r0Q>

I want to highlight the following **devastating comments** made in that video. At **18.50** the narrator says, '**Purgatory is a place of cleansing punishment before the sinner's soul can enter heaven**'. Shortly afterwards, from **19.18** the Prior, **Richard Mohan**, says, '**We just don't think that we can get into heaven that easily... I think everybody is kind-of fascinated with the idea of how do we, how do we cleanse ourselves or purgate ourselves or purify ourselves in some way in order to be fit to enter heaven? I suppose that's the very basic idea of a Purgatory**'. What **A TRAGIC DENIAL** of the "glad tidings" of Acts 13.

This second video link details the experience of an individual pilgrim **Gaye Ortiz**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmOs6YZ93lg>

As we heard, **GAYE ORTIZ** was raised briefly as a Southern Baptist before converting to Roman Catholicism. Between about **1.25-1.35** into the video we learned that she obviously has an extremely 'skewed' understanding of the Southern Baptist creedal view of 'atonement for sin' if she sees it paralleled in Roman Catholicism, as she appears to imply. An Internet search has revealed that **GAYE ORTIZ** is no longer a Roman Catholic but has become an ordained minister of the '**Unitarian Universalist Church of Georgia**' in America as you can read on

<http://uuaugusta.org/contact/about-us/uuca-staff/rev-dr-gaye-ortiz-my-spiritual-journey/>

Basically a '**Statement of Faith**' for this Unitarian Universalism grouping is found on <http://uuaugusta.org/membership/what-is-unitarian-universalism/>

And it is clearly not a 'Christian' denomination when you read things like these –

'UU draws from many sources... Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life... Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit; Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.'

There is not one direct reference to either **The Bible** or **The Lord Jesus Christ** to be found anywhere in this '**Statement of Faith**' so **GAYE ORTIZ** has sadly, spiritually speaking, been going from 'darkness' to 'outer darkness' since her very early days amongst Southern Baptists.

It was heartbreaking in both these videos to watch poor deceived Roman Catholic people going through physically and mentally challenging exercises and disciplines in the hope of somehow achieving peace with God. Similar acts of '**penance**' are carried out at shrines at **FATIMA** as can be seen (**1.57-2.20**) on the video on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbvQvqOPxVo&list=UUY6K5SN-Z7IIOKmXcIB51jQ> and at **LORETO** as can be seen (**23.00 until the end**) on the video on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsSiSNgjoBU&list=UUY6K5SN-Z7IIOKmXcIB51jQ>

One of several public debates that I organised in the mid 1990's was between **ROB ZINS** and '**FATHER**' **PATRICK McCAFFERTY** and this one took place in Enniskillen. There they debated 4 topics and the first topic debated was **PURGATORY**. You can see what they had to say on that issue of **PURGATORY** by going to this link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRFz7b3BsFw&list=UUY6K5SN-Z7IIOKmXclB51jQ> and watching from **9.10 – 34.50**.

I would especially draw attention to a very concise but crucial statement made by **ROB ZINS** from **27.24 – 27.49** that identifies, what I believe is the horrible and inevitable destructive reality, of what Rome's teaching on **PURGATORY** amounts to.

Just over a decade later in June 2008 I was invited to give a series of talks on various aspects of Roman Catholicism in Ballynahinch Congregational Church. On Friday 6th June I spoke on '**The Papacy**'. On Saturday 7th June I spoke on '**Mary**'. On Sunday morning 8th June I spoke on '**The Mass**' and on Sunday evening 8th June I spoke on '**Purgatory**'.

The presentation on **PURGATORY** was mainly taken up with showing the video of the testimony of former trainee Roman Catholic priest, **Frank Eberhardt**, who had previously been my guest in the Province in 1997.

I began that presentation by reading the following Scriptures –

Hebrews 1:

⁽¹⁾ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ⁽²⁾ Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ⁽³⁾ Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, **when he had by himself purged our sins**, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Hebrews 10:

⁽¹²⁾ But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; ⁽¹³⁾ From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. ⁽¹⁴⁾ **For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.** ⁽¹⁵⁾ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, ⁽¹⁶⁾ This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; ⁽¹⁷⁾ **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.** ⁽¹⁸⁾ Now where remission of these is, **there is no more offering for sin.**

Just as an aside and this was not part of my presentation, I think it is worth noting what **John Gill** wrote in his commentary on the portions I have highlighted in red.

Hebrews 1:3

“when he had by himself purged our sins”

‘the Son himself, who of himself, and by himself alone, and by the sacrifice of himself, made atonement for the sins of his people; which is meant by the purgation of them: he took their sins upon himself, and bore them, and removed them far away, and utterly abolished them’

Hebrews 10:14

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified”

‘Christ, by his sacrifice, has perfected, and has perfectly fulfilled the law for them; he has perfectly expiated their sins; he has obtained the full pardon of all their sins, and complete redemption; he has perfectly justified them from all things, and that for ever; which shows the continued virtue of Christ's sacrifice, in all generations, to all the elect of God, and the fullness and duration of their salvation; and so Christ by his one sacrifice did what the law, and all its sacrifices, could not do, (Hebrews 10:1).

Hebrews 10:17

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”

‘The words are cited to a different purpose here than there (Hebrews 8:10) ; the principal thing for which they are cited here, is to observe God's promise of non-remembrance of sin; which is no other than remission of sin’,

Hebrews 10:18

“there is no more offering for sin”

‘there may be other offerings, as of praise and thanksgiving, but none for sin; "there is no need", as the Syriac version; or “there is not required”, as the Arabic version; there is no need of the reiteration of Christ's sacrifice, nor will he be offered up any more’ (Cecil – no ‘Sacrifice of the Mass’)

Returning again to my presentation on **PURGATORY**, after reading those Scriptures I then gave official Roman Catholics definitions of **PURGATORY** taken from a ‘**Pocket Catholic Dictionary**’ compiled by Jesuit priest **S J Hardon**. This is what I quoted –

‘PURGATORY. The place or condition in which the souls of the just are purified after death and before they can enter heaven... The souls are certainly purified by atoning for the temporal punishments due to sin by their willing acceptance of suffering imposed by God. The sufferings in Purgatory are not the same for all, but proportioned to each person's degree of sinfulness. Moreover these sufferings can be lessened in duration and intensity through the prayers and good works of the faithful on earth... Purgatory will not continue after the general judgment, but its duration for any particular soul continues until it is free from all guilt and punishment. Immediately on purification the soul is assumed into heaven. (Etym. Latin *purgation*, cleansing, purifying)’.

I then cited the official definition from the same ‘**Pocket Catholic Dictionary**’ of ‘**Temporal Punishment**’ that the souls supposedly in **PURGATORY** must make ‘atonement’ for. This is what I quoted –

‘TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT. The penalty that God in his justice inflicts either on earth or in Purgatory for sins, even though already forgiven as to guilt’.

I then posed the question – **Is belief in PURGATORY optional or compulsory?** – And answered it by this quote from **The Council of Trent: Sixth Session: Justification** –

'CANON 30. If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema'.

Having read the Scriptures and quoted Rome's definition of **PURGATORY** etc I then showed the video of former Roman Catholic trainee priest, **FRANK EBERHARDT'S** testimony. You can now watch that video by going to the following link and as you watch and listen it will become clear as to why I used it when dealing with the topic of **PURGATORY**. The link to the video is –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebHndqRqrc4>

After the video presentation, and also in the light of the Scriptures I had read before it, I then closed by citing what I believe was a very apt quotation from **C H Spurgeon** – Mr Spurgeon said –

'How can God's people go to purgatory? For if they go there at all, they go there for sins which God does not remember, and so He cannot give a reason for sending them there. Does God forgive and forget and yet punish? When you die you shall either go to heaven or to hell and that immediately. Your state in either case will be fixed eternally without the possibility of change'.

In the providence of God this article is being posted to the ministry web site at the beginning of November (2014) and in Roman Catholic circles **November** is often referred to as **'The Purgatorial Month'**. On this link there is the text of sermon given by the author of the **'Pocket Catholic Dictionary'**, **S J Hardon SJ** (that I have already quoted from) and it draws attention to this **'Purgatorial Month'**. The link is –

http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Mystical_Body/Mystical_Body_001.htm

And I noted in particular the following statements by Mr Hardon

'Today is the feast of All Souls. It comes on the day after All Saints. Between these two feast days, we remember all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ: the Church Triumphant in heaven, the Church Militant on earth, and the Church Suffering in purgatory. Over the centuries the month of November has been dedicated to the Poor Souls. No doubt the reason is because November is the last month of the liturgical year, even as purgatory is the last stage of human existence before a soul reaches heaven...'

The Poor Souls are the souls of those people who died in the friendship of God. But they still have some suffering to undergo for the sins they had committed during their lives on earth. It is the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church that there is a purgatory. As the word itself indicates, purgatory is the state of those who still have to be cleansed of the penalty which they owe for their past offenses against God. The Poor Souls are poor because they are in suffering and need our help...'

On our side **we are to do everything we can to help the Poor Souls** in the Church Suffering. The sufferings in purgatory are not the same for all. They depend on each person's degree of sinfulness. St. Thomas Aquinas held that the least pain in purgatory is greater than the worst pain in this life. St. Bonaventure held that the worst suffering after death was greater than the worst suffering on earth, but the same could not be said regarding the least pain in purgatory. In general, however, we should say that the pains of purgatory are greater than those on earth...

But the most effective offering we can make for the Poor Souls is the Holy Eucharist at the Sacrifice of the Mass, Holy Communion and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Over the centuries, the Catholic faithful have by now offered countless Masses for the Poor Souls. In the Society of Jesus, we priests are expected to offer one Mass each month for all the deceased Jesuits. This amounts to over sixteen thousand Masses that are to be said every month for the members of the Society of Jesus who are still in purgatory. May I offer a recommendation? **During the month of November, I suggest that we make a list of all the deceased persons whom we wish to specially remember in our Masses, prayers and sacrifices for the repose of their souls.** Add to this list as those enter eternity whom you wish to specially commend to the mercy of God.

Every time you say the grace after meals, be sure to add the invocation, "May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen." In every Rosary you recite, do not forget to say after each decade, " O, my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and bring all souls to heaven, especially those who are in most need of thy mercy."

Remember that devotion to the Poor Souls is really a covenant between them and us. **We pray and sacrifice for them. They can pray and suffer for us. They appreciate whatever help we give them, to lessen their suffering and to shorten their stay in Purgatory.** They will continue to show their appreciation when we join them in a heavenly eternity'.

Some equally unscriptural and Roman Catholic sentiments can also be found in 'Prayers for Souls in Purgatory' located on –

<http://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/prayers-for-souls-in-purgatory.html>

There it states –

'Prayers for souls in purgatory can help them... In purgatory, the souls of many of those who have died in God's grace undergo purification so that they may enter heaven... The Prayer of St. Gertrude, below, is one of the most famous of the prayers for souls in 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...

November is traditionally an especially important month to pray for those in purgatory, and many visit the graves of the departed on All Souls' Day, November 2nd... While the souls in purgatory can do nothing for themselves, their purification "pays for the damages" of their sins. It makes whatever restitution remains for these sins to God... Thus, when it comes to purgatory the expression "No pain, no gain!" seems apt...

Remember that our prayers for souls in purgatory, along with our sacrifices and sufferings bared with grace, can shorten their time there (and perhaps ours as well). **Christmas is known to be one of the biggest days of the year for the release of souls from purgatory to heaven. What better gift can we give them than our prayers?'**

FINAL THOUGHTS

I have to confess that as I have typed up these Roman Catholic thoughts and teachings on **PURGATORY** they have had a much greater impact upon me than ever before. They are just so 'foreign' and 'unscriptural' and so demeaning and detrimental to the all-sufficient saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ who died to **"save his people from their sins"** (Matthew 1:21).

John Heading in his book **'Types and Shadows in the Epistle to the Hebrews'** wrote on page 136 – **'And what a work has been done for us! "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"... "Perfected for ever" is our standing, a faultlessness that can never be called into question'**.

I'll finish now with some extracts from the book **'Escape from Purgatory'** that was written by former Roman Catholic (for 38 years) **Joseph R Schofield Jr.** Mr Schofield wrote (pp 89-91) –

"Purgatory" exemplifies the entire breadth of the mistruths of tradition in the Catholic church... These are the traditions we must leave behind, clinging instead to Christ, His atonement and His word... Purgatory is but one of the Catholic church's teachings that I had a difficult time reconciling as I began to read through the Bible. Purgatory is the notion that initially caused me to doubt the integrity of the Catholic church. What does the Bible say about death and judgment? Hebrews states that "it is appointed unto man once to die but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)... there is no intercession, no intermission, nor any intervention between death and judgment... The Old Testament also makes clear "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalm 49:7)... PURGATORY challenges the integrity of the Catholic church's teachings and doctrines. PURGATORY challenges man's traditions. PURGATORY is an open and closed case Scripturally speaking. If you open the Word, you will not find it. Case closed!"

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 1st November 2014

POSTSCRIPT

When I first recorded the programmes on **'St Patrick's Purgatory'** I did write on a couple of occasions to the then Prior, **Richard Mohan**. I had felt so intensely saddened by this obviously sincere but terribly deluded man that I really had a very strong desire to set before him the glorious **"glad tidings"** of the true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ who **"loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood"** (Revelation 1:5). With my letters I also enclosed appropriate literature. I never heard back from him but I have on occasions continued to pray for him.

In recent years he has been moved from **'St Patrick's Purgatory'** and he is now a parish priest in **Clones, Co Monaghan**.

If any former Roman Catholic, but now a Christian, reading this article, would like perhaps to send a gracious word of testimony to this man, **Richard Mohan**, his address appears to be **Rt. Rev Mgr. Richard Mohan, PP, Parochial House, Clonkeen, Clones, Co. Monaghan, Republic of Ireland.**

