



Holy Souls Sodality

For Heaven's Sake

www.PrayForSouls.org

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Dear Members,

This month I had the chance to sit down with Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, to talk about his connection to the Holy Souls.

Did you know that the most powerful and effective prayer that can ever be offered for your departed loved ones is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass?

In the "Decree on Purgatory," we read, "The Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit and in accordance with Sacred Scripture and the ancient Tradition of the Fathers, has taught in the holy Councils and most recently in this ecumenical Council that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained there are helped by the acts of intercession ... of the faithful and especially by the acceptable Sacrifice of the altar" (*Council of Trent, 1563*).

At every Holy Mass, then, we enter into the timeless reality of the perfect and acceptable Sacrifice of Christ to the Father for our sake. And from that Sacrifice, immeasurable graces flow for all people and especially for those for whom we have offered the Mass. This is particularly the case for the departed who may be undergoing purification in purgatory to prepare them for the joy of heaven.

What made your first Mass so special?

As if it were yesterday, I recall how much this reality meant for me in remembering the souls of my deceased parents when I was ordained a priest on June 20, 1987, and then celebrated my first Mass the following day, June 21.

With the approval of my superiors in America, I had returned to my native Poland for my ordination in the cathedral of my home diocese and then my first Mass in



FR. FELIX CARROLL

As the Marians' Director of Evangelization and Development, Fr. Kazimierz Chwalek, MIC, played a pivotal role in starting the Holy Souls Sodality.

my family parish. To my great joy, I received special consolation at my ordination and then in prayer at the grave of my dear parents, whom I lost when I was a seminarian. These favors from the Lord made my first Mass a very special occasion.

At my ordination, my heart was bursting with gratitude at receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders — the great gift of the ministerial priesthood. I wished that my parents were alive to see it. A thought then came to my mind: "Ask the Lord to give them a special grace to see it."

I asked, and I believe that God granted them this special favor to see me ordained a priest in the way that is possible for those who are in the Lord. I had a deep assurance that was true because the

Church teaches us that the bond between those who have died — whether in heaven or in purgatory — and those on this earth is never broken.

As you can imagine, the next day, when I celebrated my first Mass, my heart was full. I wanted to offer my first Mass in gratitude to God for all His blessings and in a special way for the souls of my dear departed parents. I wanted to share with my parents the greatest treasure of our Christian faith: the merciful love of Jesus Christ made present in the Holy Eucharist. As a newly ordained priest, I wished to offer them that redemptive grace which our Lord gained for us by His suffering, death, and resurrection, so that purified from sin by Christ's merciful

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love, they may be united with Him forever in heaven.

On that special day, I realized that I could not offer my parents anything better. All the riches of this world paled in comparison.

What else did you learn that day and from all the other Masses you said since?

My first Mass gave me such an appreciation for the infinite value of the Holy Mass offered for departed loved ones. I have now celebrated many Masses and offered many intentions for departed loved ones.

Many times, I receive letters and, at times, calls from our Marian Helpers requesting that a Mass be celebrated for the intention of a recently departed loved one. Many people have even shared with me the immediate, shattering news of the tragic loss of a loved one — typically through some sudden illness or an accident.

In such cases, I work with my brother priests in our worldwide Congregation to schedule Masses for the departed loved ones. In my correspondence, I remind people that we also will remember their



COURTESY OF FR. KAZIMIERZ CHWALIK, MIC

Father Kaz says offering his first Mass for the souls of his deceased parents was his greatest gift to them.

departed loved ones in our communal and individual prayers as Marians.

Why did we decide to launch the Holy Souls Sodality?

The call to remember the faithful departed in prayer, especially at Holy Mass, is an essential part of our call as the

Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. It is one of the main reasons why our founding director of beloved memory, Fr. Walter Pelczynski, MIC, started the Association of Marian Helpers in 1944. With the support of the Marian community at that time, he wanted to make it possible to enroll in our prayerful union or association not only those who are living but also those who have died. Now we are taking it one step further with the creation of the Sodality and its related website.

The main spiritual benefit of the Sodality is that all of the members and the particular Holy Souls they entrust to the Marians are remembered in daily Mass celebrated by a Marian priest from the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass.

Sincerely in The Divine Mercy and Mary Immaculate,

Fr. Joseph, MIC

Fr. Joseph, MIC

Tips for June

As part of your vacation, plan to visit cemeteries as you travel. At each, pray for the Holy Souls.

Take a “prayer stroll” through your local cemetery to pray for all those buried there. Bring holy water to sprinkle on the graves. (Holy Water refreshes the Holy Souls.)

As a loving remembrance, decorate the graves of your loved ones with their favorite flowers.

Pray the Eternal Rest Prayer on your rosary beads. (Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.)

Pray the Seven Penitential Psalms (seven psalms that express sorrow for one’s sins: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143).

How I help the Holy Souls



Sharon Turner has prayed for the Holy Souls for years. “I started in the ’80s when we lived on a military base,” she says. “I got a Catechism book that had black-and-white pictures and divided the week up for different prayers. Monday was for the Poor Souls. I used to pray in November, but then I started to notice a difference in my life. I was looking forward to Mondays.

“I love to read about purgatory. I read about Blessed Stanislaus and found out that it was a principal charism for the Marians. That really made me like him. I wrote to the Marians and asked if they still prayed for the Holy Souls and found out that the Marian Fathers were starting the Sodality. I am so thankful to be part of the Sodality. I can’t wait to read the newsletter each month.

“I really like to pray for the Holy Souls. They are thankful for what we do. There are so many people on this earth who feel very much alone. I’m a lonely one. My husband and my parents have all passed away. I need this Sodality more now. There are souls that need you. And praying for the Holy Souls makes me feel needed. The Holy Souls appreciate the prayers. I pray the St. Gertrude prayer every day.

“And I love [St.] Padre Pio. He reminds me the dead never leave us.”

