



Home Rituals

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St. Ignatius Loyola Parish

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Introducing Rituals into your Home.

- * All Saints, All Souls & Praying for Dead
- * A Pastoral Approach, Pope Francis Video
- * Purgatory
- * Prayers
- * The Art of Dying
- * Nature examples

Inside this issue:

All Saints, All Souls	1
A Pastoral Approach	2
Eucharistic Prayer for the Dead	2
Purgatory	3
Nature as the First Bible	4
Judi's House	4

All Saints, All Souls & Praying for the Dead



Communion of Saints Tapestries at the Cathedral of Los Angeles, photo from giftshop website.

One of our fundamental beliefs as Christians and as Catholics is our belief in the resurrection. Just how and when this resurrection happens for the individual is not very clear. There is a sense that something happens immediately, that grandpa is now in heaven. Yet there is also the tension that all will rise at some future point. Throw in the whole notion of purgatory as well as prayers that say "eternal rest" or "rest in peace" and we find ourselves quite confused. As the Church has often said, it is a **mystery**. That is, we often don't know how it all works, only what God reveals to us. But there are a couple of bedrock principles that we can hold onto.

First, Scripture: Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me." The statement of dwelling places prepared for us would lead us to believe that somehow life continues in much the same manner as now. Yet we have Jesus answer to the Pharisees when they pose the problem of the seven brothers all

married to the same woman. He says "When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven." (Mk 12:25) As a result we often pray at the time of funerals, "Have heart, life is changed, not ended." We do not know how it all works, but we have faith knowing that all will be revealed. And in the end "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 Jn 3:2)

Second, prayer and liturgy: It has long been a tradition of the Church to pray for the dead. We even find the practice as a part of our Jewish heritage. One of the readings suggested for funeral liturgies is from the second book of Maccabees (12:43-46) where Judas (the ruler of Israel) took up a collection and sent it as an offering on behalf of the dead, that they might be freed from sin. In effect, this is just what we are doing during the funeral liturgy, offering prayers instead of money. Needless to say, the funeral liturgy is full of prayers offered on behalf of the one who has died. "...**hear our prayers on behalf of your servant N., whom you have called out of this world.**" Or "**We are assembled here in faith and confidence to pray for our brother/sister N.**"

A Pastoral Approach

At a parish gathering in Rome, Pope Francis was asked by a little boy what happened to his dad who recently died. He was worried because his father was not Catholic and whether he would be able to go to heaven. This is a wonderful little video showing the pastoral approach of Pope Francis as well as his style of answering questions, not so much from the catechism, but from his own experience of God in prayer.

<https://youtu.be/bRbUTfSdsOU>

Eucharistic Prayer III

In Masses for the Dead, the following prayer is said as part of Eucharistic Prayer III.

Remember your servant (Name),
whom you have called
from this world to yourself.
Grant that he/she who was united with
your Son in a death like his,
may also be one with him
in his Resurrection,
when from the earth
he will raise up in the flesh those who
have died,
and transform our lowly body
after the pattern of his own glorious body.

To our departed brothers and sisters, too,
and to all who were pleasing to you
at their passing from this life,
give kind admittance to your kingdom.

There we hope to enjoy for ever the
fullness of your glory,
when you will wipe away every tear
from our eyes.

For seeing you, our God, as you are,
we shall be like you for all ages
and praise you without end,
through Christ our Lord,
through whom you bestow on the world
all that is good.

All Saints, All Souls & Prayer for the Dead cont.



To put it succinctly, the way we pray leads to the way we believe. That our prayers in some way help, well it is part of our heart and soul as a believing community.

Third, our experience and our tradition. Yes, we celebrate All Saints and All Souls. But in many instances folks have experienced at least a sense that the dead are still a part of our lives. We further believe (and pray) that the saints and souls that have gone before us, pray for us, intercede for us, and somehow offer us aid. It is the basis of our custom of patron saints (both for names and for occupations) and it is the basis for so many devotional practices.

For those who have not seen them, there are some wonderful tapestries of saints that line the walls of the Cathedral of Los Angeles. The tapestries represent various saints but the intent is to create a sense of the communion of saints praying with us and for us. <https://olacathedral.org/tapestries>

The question for us is how do we take this belief and add it to our home?

1. Share the scripture readings on the resurrection.

(For children's funerals: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/bereavement-and-funerals/first-readings-baptized-children>.)

2. Learn the various prayers for those who have died.

(See The Art of Dying Well: <https://www.artofdyingwell.org/losing-loved-one/relationships/catholic-prayers-dead/>)

3. Consider devotional practices of our culture and that of others that honor the dead.

(Orange County Catholic: <https://es.ocatholic.com/los-espacios-sagrados-en-el-hogar/> let Google Translate for you.)

4. Work with art and images that speak to you about the resurrection.

5. Reinforce the memories and experiences of love and connection to our own beloved who have passed.

Whatever happened to Purgatory?

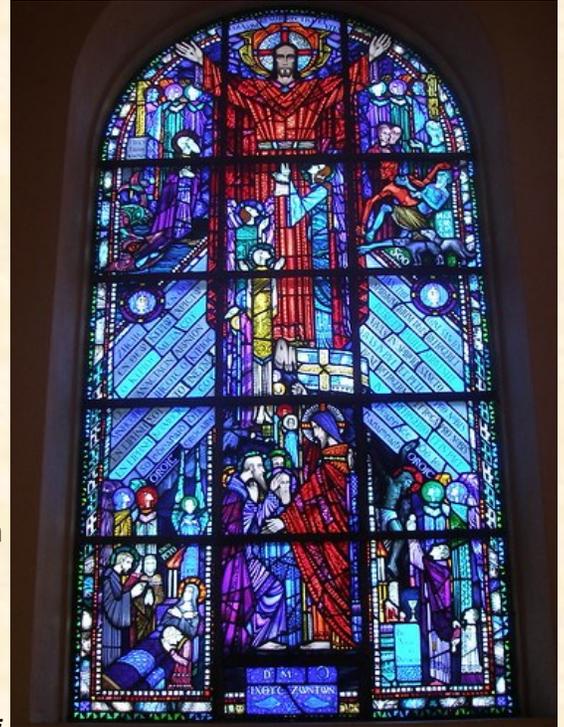
Well, the concept of purgatory has not disappeared. Although we have the story from scripture of the separation of the sheep and goats, a story that seems to imply only two options, we have received the tradition that there are many good people who have died that are destined for heaven but need of purification before they can enter.

Is it a purification by fire? While there have been centuries of imaginings about purgatory that are replete with hell-fire and brimstone, such imaginings are considered second-hand speculation and not an essential part of the doctrine of purgatory. Rather, some have considered purgatory as our own self-correction. As Wikipedia quotes Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict, *"Purgatory is not, as Tertullian thought, some kind of supra-worldly concentration camp where man is forced to undergo punishment in a more or less arbitrary fashion. Rather it is the inwardly necessary process of transformation in which a person becomes capable of*

Christ, capable of God, and thus capable of unity with the whole communion of saints." (Joseph Ratzinger (2007). [Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life](#). CUA Press. p. 230. ISBN 9780813215167.) Purgation is not seen as an extended punishment, but rather as a continued cleansing and transformation of self to be our best selves, fully capable of living as children of God.

The Wikipedia article is very good at bringing out this evolving understanding of purgatory through the various councils that have defined and refined the doctrine. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purgatory#The_purgatory_of_Catholic_doctrine The analogy to recovery from addiction with the continual effort of rehabilitation is a more wholesome and helpful presentation and leads us to consider other ways in which purgatory is not so much punishment but reconciliation which isn't always an instant thing. And, although the Council of Trent recommends avoidance of speculation and questions on the nonessential elements of purgatory, it still seems helpful for us to consider just how we might be aiding our loved ones through prayer and through acts such as almsgiving.

Personally I favor the notion of someone coming to trust in God's love and goodness through our encouragement and through our remembrances of the graced moments of someone's life. These kinds of prayers would, of course, be helpful to those who have passed but indeed helpful to us as well in our own growth towards holiness. Indeed, they would continue to strengthen the bond that we have had in this life, a worthy endeavor in and of itself.



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Finding God in All Things

Judi's House

I've been told that just down the street is a resource for families to help children work through grief and loss. It's called Judi's House (<https://judishouse.org>), located at 1741 Gaylord. Yep, right down the street. Their story:

When former NFL quarterback Brian Griese was just 12 years old, his mother Judi died of breast cancer. Along Brian's path to healing, he realized he wanted to give back to children and young adults who were also grieving the loss of an important person in their lives. In 2002, Brian and his wife, Dr. Brook Griese, a clinical psychologist specializing in childhood trauma and loss, founded Judi's House in Denver. Judi's House is a community-based nonprofit bereavement center for children and families with the vision that no child should be alone in grief.

Their website offers resources like home-grief-activities

<http://judishouse.wpengine.com/find-support/homebased-grief-activities/>

And various handouts to help you with your support of grieving children:

https://judishouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Pathfinders-Caregiving-Skills-Handout-FINAL_English.pdf

This site was recommended to us. We are not endorsing them as the answer to your needs. We are simply passing along options that we have been made aware of.

God's First Bible

I don't know if you have ever heard of nature described as God's First Bible. If one thinks of the created world as revealing God and God's love, then it makes sense that Jesus would often compare the Kingdom to aspects of the physical world. We too can draw such "hints" of the Kingdom from our own surroundings. So, just as Jesus spoke of the need for the seed to fall to the ground and die in order to produce fruit, we might consider our own death in terms of such tangible transformations. And they may just be good metaphors to speak about death with our children. Imagine them watching us plant seed to see new



and wonderful life, imagine them considering the new life that grandma or grandpa are experiencing. (Note: the same might be true for the lost gold fish or hamster,)

It is no accident that Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 "*There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.*" is often used at funerals. The lessons of nature can be of great comfort. That might include the transformation of the caterpillar into a butterfly, tadpole into frog and even the

development of an egg into a chick. That and the turning of seasons from summer to winter to spring, the return of day after night and the restoration of the earth after the rains.

