



209 U.S. Highway 206
Branchville, New Jersey
07826

www.olqpbranchville.org
office@olqpbranchville.org
973-948-3185

Nov. 2, 2024
All Souls Day

Dear Parish Family,

Below, please find a clear and somewhat concise presentation on the specific Catholic spiritual practices that we are meant to engage in each November. We begin this special month by turning our focus on the heavenly glory of the saints and we see in them the fulfillment of Christ's promise to us: to share in His eternal life in our true and eternal homeland. We see their example of orienting themselves toward the cross and resurrection and away from the fading glories of fame, fortune, power, pleasure, and prestige and can draw strength from them in our own life knowing that it can be done by a sinner since every saint is a sinner just like us.

Then, we turn our gaze toward praying for the holy souls in Purgatory that they may receive their eternal reward with God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Angels and Saints in heaven. Through our communion with all the Saints in heaven, and all the holy souls who have died with charity in their hearts toward Christ, but need further purification before they can behold God face-to-face, we pray for these souls exercising our common priesthood of the baptized and confirmed, and especially the ministerial priesthood through the offering of the Mass.

Lastly, at the end of the month of November, each year, we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King of the Universe – the Last Sunday of Ordinary Time – seeing that all time and space is subject to His authority and that the gift of time and this universe that He created is meant to be enjoyed, but never as an end in itself. Rather, we experience the good things of this world as foretastes of the heavenly kingdom to come and ever looking toward Jesus' all-important Second Coming, when Heaven and Earth will be reunited, death and evil will cease, and all will be resurrected from their graves and enjoy endless life and glory with God. Hence, we orient ourselves toward the Kingdom of God, facing that most perfect future, and journey toward our heavenly homeland through acts of faith, hope, and love.

Thus, I provide you these two reflections to help you understand why the month of November is the "Month of the Dead" and why we engage in the special spiritual practices that we do during this month.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Philip-Michael F. Tangorra, S.T.L., J.C.L., Pastor

Fr. Yohan Serrano, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Jennifer Durso, Office Manager and Pastoral Assistant
Mrs. Barbara A. Tangorra, Confirmation Director
Mrs. Lauren Dexter, Youth Minister
Mrs. Diane Ruggiero, Cantor and Children's Choir Director

Fr. Ruben Castillo, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Barbara Dennis, Coordinator for Religious Education
Mrs. Kelly Janiec, Youth Minister and Social Media Coordinator
Mrs. Sharon Craig, Organist
Mrs. Kim Sanderson, Superintendent of Parish Facilities



209 U.S. Highway 206
Branchville, New Jersey
07826

www.olqpbranchville.org
office@olqpbranchville.org
973-948-3185

Purgatory

Sadly, there are those Catholics who think that purgatory doesn't exist or that the Church no longer teaches that purgatory exists. This is wrong. The current Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the existence, nature, and purpose of Purgatory in numbers 1030-1032. The teaching of the Catholic Church concerning purgatory was defined as a Doctrine and Dogma at the Council of Florence in the Sixth Session, on July 6, 1439, in the decree for the Greeks *Laetentur caeli*: "if truly penitent people die in the love of God before they have made satisfaction for acts and omissions by worthy fruits of repentance, their souls are cleansed after death by cleansing pains; and the suffrages of the living faithful avail them in giving relief from such pains, that is, sacrifices of masses, prayers, almsgiving and other acts of devotion which have been customarily performed by some of the faithful for others of the faithful in accordance with the church's ordinances." Here, we have a clear definition given by the Church concerning our belief in purgatory in three main articles: 1) The cleansing of souls who have died with venial, but not mortal sins; 2) That this purification is painful because the fire of God's love is what is purifying, thus experiencing God's overwhelming love for us and at the same time our withholding of love for Him because of our sinfulness and desire for sin, we thus experience pain; and lastly, 3) The prayers of the Christian faithful are of aid to these holy souls. It is helpful, now, for us to understand these three articles.

When we die our superior soul, where the operations of the will and the intellect occur, is separated from our body and its inferior soul, which animates the unconscious activities of our human existence remains with the body. If we die and are in a state of mortal sin, then there is only one outcome: hell. (See Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), 1033-1037) If we die and are in a state of grace without any sin, mortal or venial, then we go straight to heaven. This can occur if we receive the Anointing of the Sick, Viaticum and the Apostolic Blessing (i.e., Last Rites) on our death bed. However, most of us will die with some form of venial sin on our soul and the affections/desires for sin(s). These venial sins and affections for sin(s) create spiritual "blotches" on the "eye" of our soul that impede our ability to behold the vision of God (beatific vision). (See CCC, 1863) Purgatory, derived from the word "purge", is the spiritual place that brings about the purification of the superior soul, through the fire of God's love, from all venial sins and attachments to sin. (See CCC, 1031) After which, we can then enjoy the full vision of God, true beatitude in heaven.

The period of our existence where the superior soul is being purified in purgatory and then beholds the vision of God, but our bodies lie in wait in their graves is a part of the intermediate state, which in its entirety include all time where our superior soul and body are separated. A human person is the union of body and soul. (See Lateran Council IV, constitutions *De fide catholica* 1; Council of Vienne, decrees *Fidei catholicae fundamento* 1; CCC, 327) The experience of death is unnatural, since it

Rev. Fr. Philip-Michael F. Tangorra, S.T.L., J.C.L., Pastor

Fr. Yohan Serrano, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Jennifer Durso, Office Manager and Pastoral Assistant
Mrs. Barbara A. Tangorra, Confirmation Director
Mrs. Lauren Dexter, Youth Minister
Mrs. Diane Ruggiero, Cantor and Children's Choir Director

Fr. Ruben Castillo, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Barbara Dennis, Coordinator for Religious Education
Mrs. Kelly Janiec, Youth Minister and Social Media Coordinator
Mrs. Sharon Craig, Organist
Mrs. Kim Sanderson, Superintendent of Parish Facilities



209 U.S. Highway 206
Branchville, New Jersey
07826

www.olqpbranchville.org
office@olqpbranchville.org
973-948-3185

separates the superior soul from the body rendering the body and soul incapable of physical acts since without a body the superior soul is incapable of act since the soul is the form of the body – the soul (“*anima*” in Latin from which we derive the English “animate” or “animation”) is what moves the body to action. (See Aristotle, *De Anima*, Bk. II, Ch. 1, §§240-241; St. Thomas, *S.Th.* I, q. 76 a. 1; Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1988) 119-161) The body separated from the superior soul, which brings about motion / action to the body, is called “dead” because it is incapable of physical actions. Thus, the body and inferior soul lying in its grave yearn for reunification with the superior soul and the superior soul with its body so that it is capable of physical actions. This state of being, where the body awaits the resurrection and re-constitution with the superior soul, and when the superior soul is sustained in its existence through the beatific vision of God and the constant thought of God beholding it, is called the intermediate state. And we are called to pray for all the souls of those who have gone before us and are not yet in heaven beholding God face-to-face, while likewise respecting their mortal remains as they lie in wait for the Second Coming of Jesus when He will resurrect all the dead from their graves.

The Church is the Communion of Saints: “Because all the faithful are one body, the good of one member is communicated to another: ‘And every one members, one of another’ [Rm 12:5]. So, among the points of faith which the Apostles have handed down is that there is a common sharing of good in the Church. This is expressed in the words, ‘the Communion of Saints’. (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio in Symbolum Apostolorum*, art. 10)” The heavenly goods are showered upon the holy souls in purgatory for their purification and on the Church Militant on earth for our sanctification during our pilgrimage of life. Furthermore, the Church Militant is called upon to offer prayers, suffrages, penance, and the Mass for the sake of the holy souls in purgatory. It is through this communion that the Church in Heaven, Purgatory and on Earth interacts and nourishes each other. (See CCC, 954-959) This teaching also shows that the relationships that we sow in this life are not unraveled in death, but perdure.

November is the “Month of the Dead” in which we pray for all the holy souls that have gone before us. It is appropriate to visit and pray for the dead in a cemetery. It is appropriate to offer prayers, fasting, abstinences, penances, suffrages and especially the intention of a holy Mass for the sake of the purification of the holy souls during the month of November.

Prayers for the Dead

On June 30, 1968, three and a half years after the close of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pope St. Paul VI promulgated the *Creed for the People of God* to summarize the faith of that Council and to correctly transmit the faith of the Church to

Rev. Fr. Philip-Michael F. Tangorra, S.T.L., J.C.L., Pastor
Fr. Yohan Serrano, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Jennifer Durso, Office Manager and Pastoral Assistant
Mrs. Barbara A. Tangorra, Confirmation Director
Mrs. Lauren Dexter, Youth Minister
Mrs. Diane Ruggiero, Cantor and Children’s Choir Director

Fr. Ruben Castillo, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Barbara Dennis, Coordinator for Religious Education
Mrs. Kelly Janiec, Youth Minister and Social Media Coordinator
Mrs. Sharon Craig, Organist
Mrs. Kim Sanderson, Superintendent of Parish Facilities



209 U.S. Highway 206
Branchville, New Jersey
07826

www.olqpbranchville.org
office@olqpbranchville.org
973-948-3185

the people of our times. In this apostolic letter *Solemni Hac Liturgia*, Pope St. Paul VI affirms the traditional teaching of the faith about the communion of saints: "We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are attaining their purification, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion the merciful love of God and His saints is ever listening to our prayers, as Jesus told us: Ask and you will receive. Thus, it is with faith and in hope that we look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." The People of God, the Church, as a communion of saints, is intimately bound to each other and the prayers that we offer for each other have a real effect.

In the ever true and applicable doctrinal teachings of the Ecumenical Council of Trent, in its twenty-second session, chapter 2 teaches: "Therefore it [the Mass] is quite properly offered according to apostolic tradition not only for the sins, penalties, satisfactions and other needs of the faithful who are living, but also for those who have died in Christ but are not yet fully cleansed." Who are those who have died in Christ but are not fully cleansed? All of those yet to receive their eternal reward in Heaven, the holy souls in purgatory.

It is the definitive dogmatic teaching of the Church that those who have died in Christ, but who had venial sins on their soul or who had not perfect charity in their heart are purified from all affection for sin in Purgatory. (See Council of Florence, Decree for the Greeks: D, 693) The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (CCC, 1030)" Our prayers for the dead, especially by having the holy sacrifice of the Mass offered for their purification, has a real effect upon the purification of the holy souls in purgatory and assists them on their pilgrimage to heaven. "This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: 'Therefore Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.' From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. (CCC, 1032)"

It is for these reasons that it is appropriate that Masses and other prayers, sacrifices, penances, and suffrages be offered to God frequently for our brothers and sisters in Christ who have gone before us. Why? Because our prayers do count!

Rev. Fr. Philip-Michael F. Tangorra, S.T.L., J.C.L., Pastor

Fr. Yohan Serrano, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Jennifer Durso, Office Manager and Pastoral Assistant
Mrs. Barbara A. Tangorra, Confirmation Director
Mrs. Lauren Dexter, Youth Minister
Mrs. Diane Ruggiero, Cantor and Children's Choir Director

Fr. Ruben Castillo, Chaplain to Hispanic Mission
Mrs. Barbara Dennis, Coordinator for Religious Education
Mrs. Kelly Janiec, Youth Minister and Social Media Coordinator
Mrs. Sharon Craig, Organist
Mrs. Kim Sanderson, Superintendent of Parish Facilities