

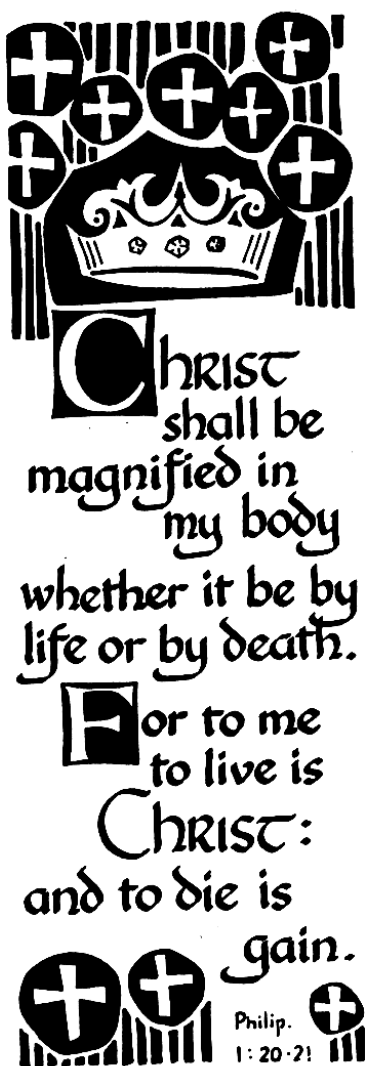
PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

adapted from the writings of Catherine Doherty

Death has been conquered by Jesus Christ, through his own sacrificial death, offered with unspeakable love for our redemption. Death is now the passage to an amazing life that he himself has thus described to us: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor is it in the mind of man to imagine, what God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Cor 2:9)

It is of the greatest importance to pray for the souls of our loved ones. For we are all sinners and most of us still need purification after our death. St. Catherine of Genoa, a mystic who wrote a treatise on purgatory, says that when a soul sees the beauty and perfection of God, it casts itself into purgatory rather than find itself stained in the presence of the Divine Majesty. The soul accepts the place of purification as though it were a mercy.

The holy souls in purgatory are saved and can never be lost. They have been judged worthy of everlasting happiness and they are keenly aware of this. They



can no longer be tempted against God or his law. This is a great consolation and makes them inexpressibly happy even in their suffering — which arises chiefly from the realization that they are delayed for a time from the happiness of heaven, through their own fault.

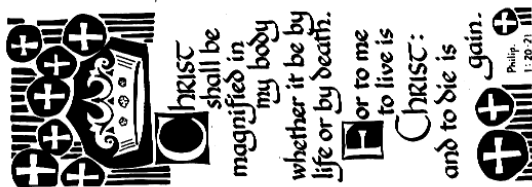
Christ wants to take his servants and friends into everlasting happiness as quickly as possible. He wants them to be united with himself as soon as they are cleansed from all stain of sin. He says, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am..." (John 17:24), and "All that the Father gives to me shall come to me, and he who comes to me I will not turn away." (John 6:37)

The Church intercedes powerfully that the souls of our loved ones join the community of heaven's citizens as speedily as possible. The Church tells us that we are the mystical body of Christ. We are urged to pray for our deceased brethren, in virtue of the supernatural bond which unites in

PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

adapted from the writings of
Catherine Doherty

Pass It On! #31



Please feel free to make copies
and pass them on!

Additional issues of Pass It On
can be found on the Internet at:
www.madonnahouse.org/publications



Madonna House Publications
www.madonnahouse.org/publications

Penny a copy — 1¢

Pass It On!

#31

Jesus all those in heaven, in purgatory and on earth. It is our duty in charity to relieve our neighbor's needs as if they were our own. It is a great charity to pray for the dead, both those we knew and those we didn't; for those who may have died unprepared and for persons who may not have believing friends or relatives to pray for them.

We keep the family custom of writing the names of our deceased friends and relatives in a notebook and placing it near some holy object, such as a crucifix or statue or sacred image. This reminds us of our privilege of helping the dead through our prayer and almsgiving and sacrifices offered in their favor — since they can no longer help themselves. This forges another link in the body of Christ.

Masses offered for the dead are an ancient practice in the Church, as recorded already in the fifth century. In the Mass the priest offers officially to God the ransom

for souls, that is, the blood of the Savior. And Christ himself, under the elements of bread and wine — which recall to the Father his sacrifice on Golgotha — prays God to apply to these souls the atoning value of his sacrifice of love for us. "The Son of man came... to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

Christ rose from the dead, and promised us that we, too, will rise again. His words to us are a great comfort: "It is my Father's will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and that I should raise that person up on the last day." (John 6:40)

While the Church traditionally emphasizes the month of November as a special time of praying for the dead, she urges us to pray for them at all times.

Catherine Doherty (1896-1985), born in Russia, was foundress of Madonna House and a prolific writer and teacher. Her passionate zeal impelled her to pass on her faith in God, and she is now being considered for sainthood by the Catholic Church.