

Servants' Meeting  
April 23, 2017

# Why Do We Reject Purgatory?

# Outline

- What is it?
- Artistic Representations
- Catholic Justifications
  - Councils
  - Communion of Saints
  - Scripture
- Eastern Orthodox views
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- How it Contradicts Doctrine
- Scripture Contradictions
- Why then do we pray for the dead?

# What is Purgatory?

## 210. What is purgatory?

Purgatory is the state of those who die in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, but who still have need of purification to enter into the happiness of heaven.

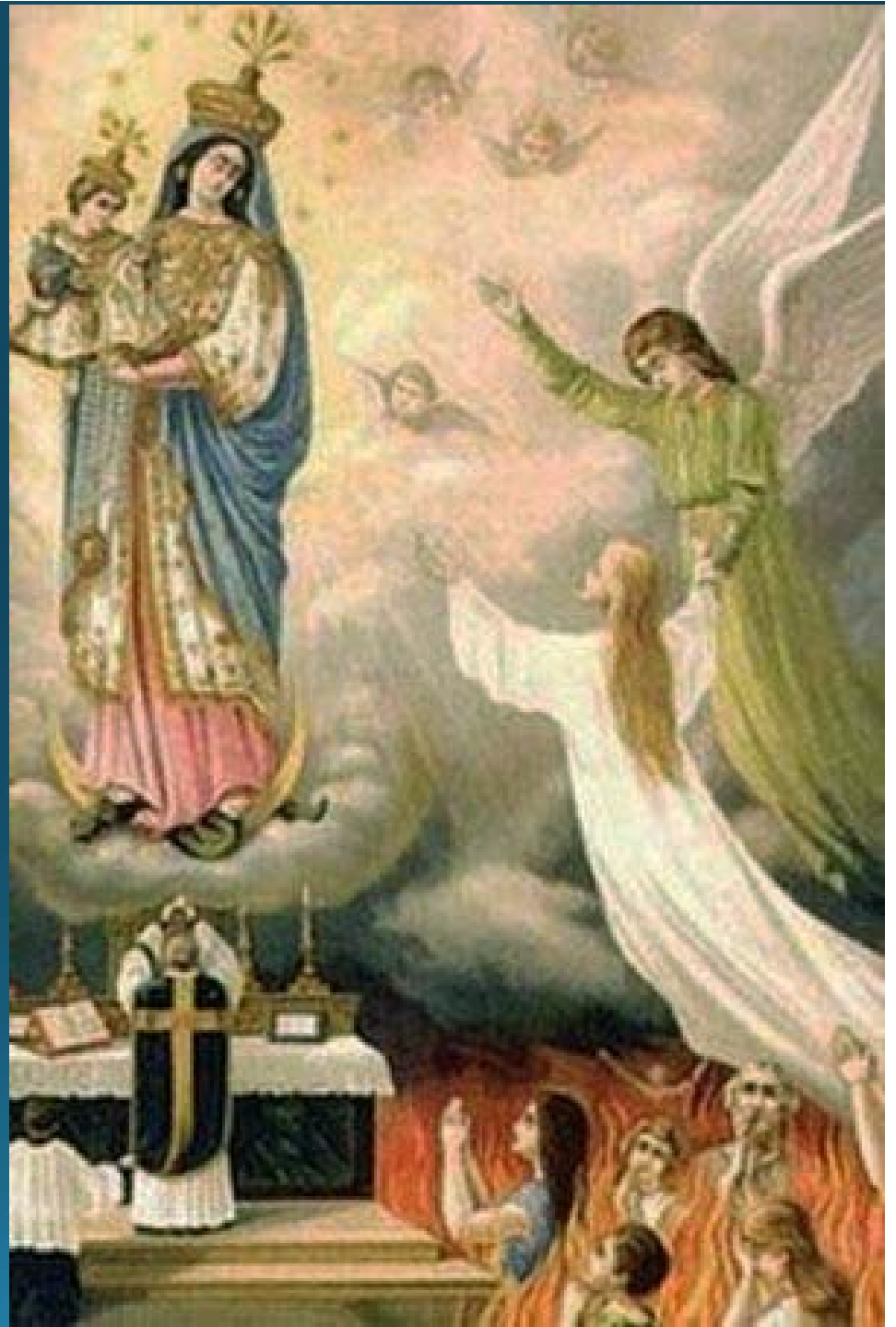
## 211. How can we help the souls being purified in purgatory?

Because of the communion of saints, the faithful who are still pilgrims on earth are able to help the souls in purgatory by offering prayers in suffrage for them, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice. They also help them by almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance.

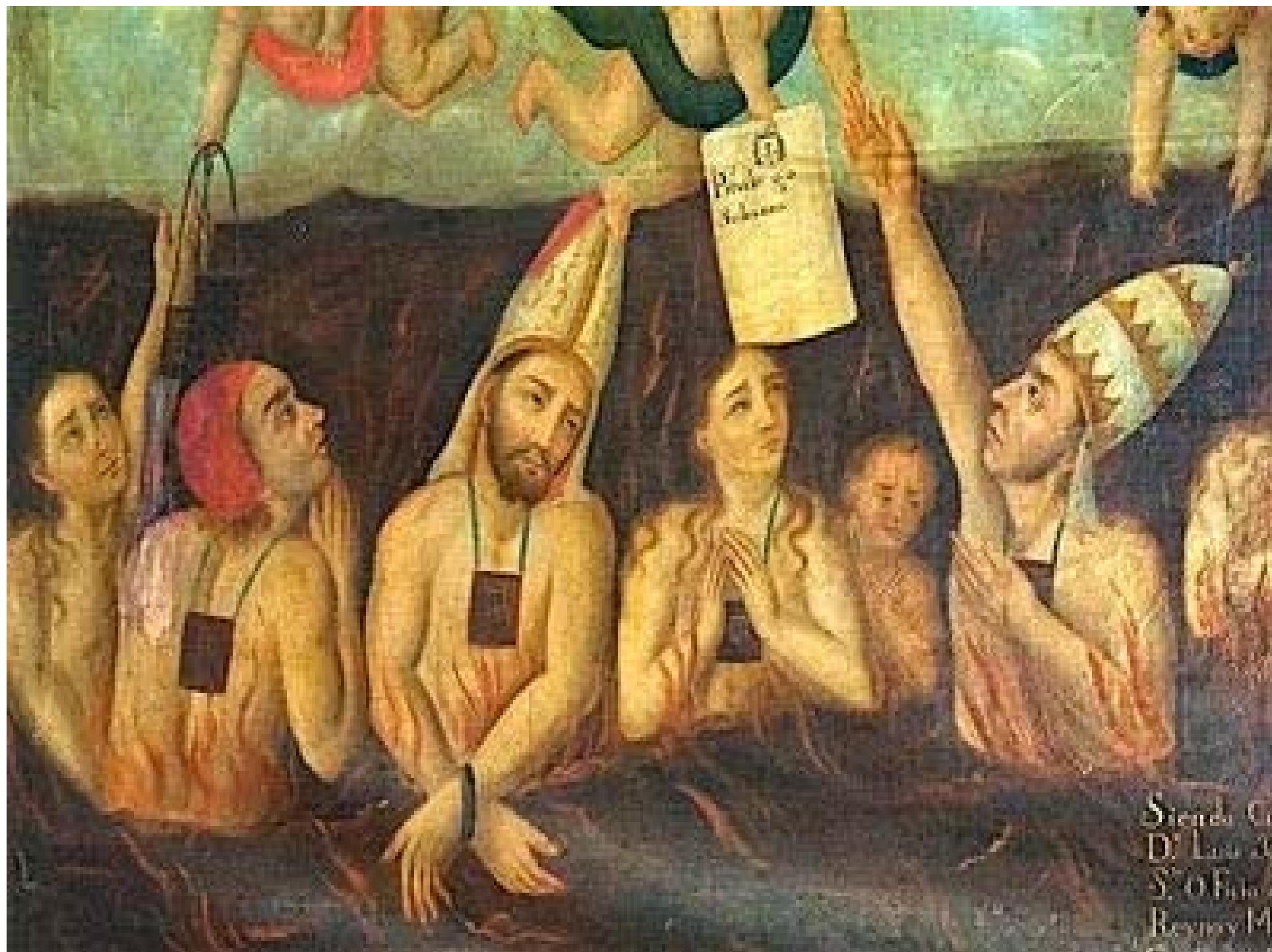
# What is Purgatory?

## Catholic Encyclopedia states:

- that the souls in Purgatory are “shut out for the time being from the sight of God.”
- only the pure in heart can see God
- since there is no sin in death, the souls know that they cannot lose eternal life by sinning
- they are also aware that their time there is temporary







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# Catholic Justification

- **Council of Trent 1545-1563**: “that purgatory exists, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages (prayers) of the faithful, but especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar”

# Catholic Justification

- Communion of saints:

- Now, as between the living, no Christian can deny the reality of this far-reaching spiritual communion; and since death, for those who die in faith and grace, does not sever the bonds of this communion, why should it interrupt its efficacy in the case of the dead, and shut them out from benefits of which they are capable and may be in need?

# Catholic Justification

- **Council of Florence in 1439**: “[We define] likewise, that if the truly penitent die in the love of God, before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for their sins of commission and omission, their souls are purified by purgatorial pains after death; and that for relief from these pains they are benefitted by the suffrages of the faithful in this life, that is, by Masses, prayers, and almsgiving, and by the other offices of piety usually performed by the faithful for one another according to the practice of the Church”

# Catholic Justification

## Arguments from Scripture (2 Mac 12:40-45):

40 Then under the tunic of every one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jam'nia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was why these men had fallen. 41 So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous Judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; 42 and they turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out. And the noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen.

# Catholic Justification

43 He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. 44 For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. 45 But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.

# Catholic Justification

## Matthew 12:31-32:

- 31 “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.
- 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”

# Catholic Justification

## Luke 12:58-59:

- “When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.
- I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have **paid the very last mite.**”
  - “paid the very last mite” does not imply purgatory
  - This is another way of saying that the person will never depart from there

# Catholic Justification

- This is similar to the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant... It ends with:

“And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.” (Matt 18:34)

Very similar wording. It means that he will never leave because the beginning of the parable indicated that he was unable to pay:

“But as he was not able to pay” (Matt 18:25)

# Catholic Justification

## 1 Cor 3:14-15:

“If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

To understand the passage and provide context, we need verses 11-13:

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

each one's work will become clear; **for the Day** will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.”

# Catholic Justification

- This passage is referring to the fire that will be used to **test each person's work or deeds** and not to burn individual spirits (ver 13)
- This fire, too, will appear on the Last Day ("Day") and not before then
- The fire will cause loss, but will not purify a faithful person in preparation for heaven
- So what is meant here is that the foundation laid in our hearts is the firm faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and what we build on that foundation is our deeds. Some build deeds resembling gold, silver, or precious stones, but some build not-so-good deeds resembling wood, hay, or straw. The fire, then, is a kind of test to determine the worth of our deeds and if they are in accordance with the foundation that was laid in our hearts.

# Catholic Justification

- Phrase “yet so as through fire” indicates that the individual will be scarcely saved as we say in the litanies of the Vespers: “If the righteous one is scarcely saved...”
- **Amos 4:11** “I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.”
- **Zech 3:2** And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”
- “Saved by the skin of one’s teeth”
- A narrow escape
- Many Early Fathers also understand this passage in the context of the servant and his efforts with converts

# Eastern Orthodox View

“One who has departed unrepentant and with an evil life cannot be helped by anyone in any way. But the one who has departed even with the slightest virtue, but who had no time to increase this virtue because of indolence, indifference, procrastination, or timidity, the Lord Who is a righteous judge and master will not forget such a one.”

—(St John of Damascus)

# Eastern Orthodox Views

Some Eastern Orthodox sources, including the **Ecumenical Patriarchate**, consider Purgatory to be among "inter-correlated theories, **unwitnessed in the Bible** or in the Ancient Church" that are not acceptable within Orthodox doctrine, and hold to a "condition of waiting" as a more apt description of the period after death for those not borne directly to heaven. This waiting condition does not imply purification, which they see as being linked to the idea "there is no hope of repentance or betterment after death." Prayers for the dead, then, are simply to comfort those in the waiting place.

# Eastern Orthodox Views

## Aerial Toll Houses

- After death, the soul is accused by demons during its ascent at stations of accusation where demons have the right to ask their victims to account for their wrongdoings. The soul is permitted to continue if good enough payment (victim's good deeds) is offered.



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МЫТНСТВО  
И





# Life of St. Anthony

"For once, when about to eat, having risen up to pray about the ninth hour, he perceived that he was caught up in the spirit, and, wonderful to tell, he stood and saw himself, as it were, from outside himself, and that he was **led in the air** by certain ones. Next certain **bitter and terrible beings stood in the air and wished to hinder him from passing through**. But when his conductors opposed them, they demanded whether he was not accountable to them. And when they wished to sum up the account from his birth, Antony's conductors stopped them, saying,

# Life of St. Anthony

'The Lord hath wiped out the sins from his birth, but from the time he became a monk, and devoted himself to God, it is permitted you to make a reckoning.' Then when they accused him and could not convict him, his way was free and unhindered. And immediately he saw himself, as it were, coming and standing by himself, and again he was Antony as before."

# Life of St. Anthony

- "...he beheld one standing and reaching to the clouds, tall, hideous, and fearful, and others ascending as though they were winged. And the figure stretched forth his hands, and some of those who were ascending were stayed by him, while others flew above, and having escaped heavenward, were borne aloft free from care. At such, therefore, the giant gnashed his teeth, but rejoiced over those who fell back. And immediately a voice came to Antony, 'Do you understand what you see?'

# Life of St. Anthony

And his understanding was opened, and he understood that it was the passing of souls, and that the tall being who stood was the enemy who envies the faithful. And those whom he caught and stopped from passing through are accountable to him, while those whom he was unable to hold as they passed upwards had not been subservient to him.”

# Twenty Toll Houses

- On the first aerial toll-house, the soul is questioned about the **sins of the tongue**;
- The second is the toll-house of **lies**;
- The third is the toll-house of **slander**;
- The fourth is the toll-house of **gluttony**;
- The fifth is the toll-house of **laziness**;
- The sixth toll-house is the toll-house of **theft**;
- The seventh is the toll-house of **covetousness**;
- The eighth is the toll-house of **usury**;

# Twenty Toll Houses

- The ninth is the toll-house of **injustice**;
- The tenth is the toll-house of **envy**;
- The eleventh is the toll-house of **pride**;
- The twelve is the toll-house of **anger**;
- The thirteenth is the toll-house of **remembering evil**;
- The fourteenth is the toll-house of **murder**;
- The fifteenth is the toll-house of **magic**;
- The sixteenth is the toll-house of **lust**;

# Twenty Toll Houses

- The seventeenth is the toll-house of **adultery**;
- The eighteenth is the toll-house of **sodomy**;
- The nineteenth is the toll-house of **heresy**;
- The twentieth toll-house is the toll-house of **unmercifulness**

# The Problems with Purgatory

## Doctrine of Atonement and Redemption

- The basic foundation is that human beings are totally incapable of satisfying God's divine justice. So, He came and took flesh to offer us unlimited atonement and forgiveness. The existence of a place meant to purify believers takes away from the Blood shed on the cross and indicates that it wasn't enough
- If human suffering could satisfy divine justice, then why the Incarnation and the cross?

# The Problems with Purgatory

## Divine Justice

- the spirit suffers, but the body lies in the grave
- how can a purified spirit be united with an unpurified body on the Last Day?
- we “**were bought at a price**” (1 Cor 6:20) which is the Blood of the Lord on the cross
- Purgatory implies that sins have to be paid for twice which contradicts divine justice

# The Problems with Purgatory

## God's Mercy:

- Human nature is not purged by punishment, but by God's grace and the work of His Holy Spirit
- Isaiah 1:18 “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.”
- Eze 36: 25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from **all** your filthiness and from **all** your idols.”

# Scripture Contradicting Purgatory

- 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us **from all sin**.
- 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us **from all unrighteousness**.
- Luke 7:42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, **he freely forgave them** both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"
- Eze 18:21-22 But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed... **None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him...**

# Scripture Contradicting Purgatory

- **Luke 23: 43** And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
- **1 Thes 4:16-17** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. **And thus we shall always be with the Lord.**
- **Luke 16:26** And besides all this, between us and you there is a **great gulf fixed**, so that those who want to pass from here to you **cannot**, nor can those from there pass to us.'

# Why Then Do We Pray for the Dead?

- Litany of the Departed
- **Liturgy**: Those, O Lord, and everyone whose names we have mentioned, and those we have not mentioned, those whom each one of us has in mind and those who are not in mind, who have fallen asleep and reposed in the faith of Christ—graciously, O Lord, repose all their souls in the bosom of our holy fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Sustain them in green pastures, beside still waters in the Paradise of joy, the place out of which grief, sorrow, and groaning have fled away in the light of Your saints.

# Why Then Do We Pray for the Dead?

2 Maccabees 12:40-45

## 2 Timothy 1:16-18

- 16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;
- 17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.
- 18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day --- and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

# Why Then Do We Pray for the Dead?

- We do not believe that they will be transferred from one place to another
- We pray for them that the Lord might give them patience in their waiting state
  - **Rev 6:10** And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"
- We pray for them that the Lord might ease their desire to be reunited with their glorified bodies
- It is possible that our prayers could lessen the suffering of those in Hades

# Why Then Do We Pray for the Dead?

- Our prayers reflect our fellowship with those who have departed
- Tertullian, Third century: “The widow who does not pray for her dead husband has as good as divorced him”
- St. Augustine, in 398 in his Confessions, prayed for the soul of his mother Monica
- St. Gregory the Great: “The Holy Sacrifice of Christ, our saving Victim, brings great benefits to souls even after death, provided their sins (are such as) can be pardoned in the life to come.”