

Tridentine Community News

November 30, 2014 – First Sunday of Advent

The Heroic Act of Charity

On this last Sunday of November, the month of the Holy Souls, it is fitting to mention one of the greatest acts of spiritual kindness one can offer in this earthly life, the “Heroic Act of Charity”. This is a solemn offering to God of all of the Indulgences that you will gain during your lifetime, as well as those that others will apply to you after your death, to the Souls in Purgatory.

A somewhat frightening thought, one who makes the Heroic Act effectively offers to spend time in Purgatory on behalf of others, as he renounces all opportunities to remit temporal punishment for himself. Yet writers have maintained, as seen below, that one need not fear a lengthy Purgatory if one makes this most generous commitment.

The following is an explanatory passage about the Heroic Act, excerpted from *Purgatory: Explained by the Lives and Legends of the Saints* by Fr. F.X. Schouppe, SJ, pp. 265-268:

This act consists in ceding to them [the Holy Souls in Purgatory] all our works of satisfaction, that is to say, the satisfactory value of all the works of our life and of all the suffrages which shall be given to us after our death, without reserving anything wherewith to discharge our own debts. We deposit them in the hands of the Blessed Virgin that she may distribute them, according to her good pleasure, to those souls which she desires to deliver from Purgatory.

It is an absolute donation in favour of the souls of all that we can give them; we offer to God in their behalf all the good we do, of what kind so ever, either in thought, words, or works, all that we suffer meritoriously during this life, without excepting anything that we may reasonably give them, and adding even those suffrages which we may receive for ourselves after death.

It must be well understood that the matter of this holy donation is the satisfactory value of our works, and in no way the merit which has a corresponding degree of glory in Heaven; for merit is strictly personal, and cannot be transferred to another.

...in order to dissipate all subsequent fear which might arise in the mind, we add three remarks:

1. This act leaves us perfect liberty to pray for those souls in whom we are most interested; the application of these prayers is subject to the disposition of the adorable will of God, which is always infinitely perfect and infinitely loving.

2. It does not oblige under pain of mortal sin, and can at any time be revoked. It may be made without using any particular formula; it suffices to have the intention, and to make it from the heart. Nevertheless it is useful to recite the formula of offering from time to time, in order to stimulate our zeal for the relief of the holy souls by prayer, penance, and good works.

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3. The Heroic Act does not subject us to the direful consequences of having to undergo a long Purgatory ourselves; on the contrary, it allows us to rely with more assured confidence on the mercy of God in our regard, as is shown by the example of St. Gertrude.



Venerable Denis, the Carthusian, relates that the Virgin, St. Gertrude, had made a complete donation of all her works of satisfaction in favour of the faithful departed, without reserving anything wherewith to discharge the debts which she herself might have contracted in the sight of God. Being at the point of death, and, like all the saints, considering with much sorrow the great number of her sins on the one hand, and, on the other, remembering that she had employed all her works of satisfaction for the expiation of the sins of others, she was afflicted, lest, having given all to others and reserved nothing for herself, her soul, on its departure from this world, should be condemned to horrible suffering. In the midst of her fears our Lord appeared to her and consoled her, saying: “Be reassured, my daughter, your

charity towards the departed will be no detriment to you. Know that the generous donation you have made of all your works to the holy souls has been singularly pleasing to Me; and to give you a proof thereof, I declare to you that all the pains you would have had to endure in the other life are now remitted; moreover, in recompense for your generous charity, I will so enhance the value of the merits of your works as to give you a great increase of glory in Heaven.”

Formula of the Heroic Act

O Holy and Adorable Trinity, desiring to cooperate in the deliverance of the souls in Purgatory, and to testify my devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I cede and renounce in behalf of those holy souls all the satisfactory part of my works, and all the suffrages which may be given to me after my death, consigning them entirely into the hands of the most Blessed Virgin, that she may apply them according to her good pleasure to those souls of the faithful departed whom she desires to deliver from their sufferings. Deign, O my God, to accept and bless this offering which I make to Thee at this moment. Amen.

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Mon. 12/01 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Joseph* (Feria of Advent)

Tue. 12/02 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *Holy Name of Mary, Windsor* (St. Vivian, Virgin & Martyr)

Fri. 12/05 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Joseph* (Sacred Heart of Jesus) [First Friday]

Sun. 12/07 2:00 PM: High Mass at *Holy Name of Mary* (Second Sunday of Advent)

- Initial First Sunday High Mass at Holy Name of Mary Church
- Windsor Masses on other Sundays of the month continue to be held at St. Alphonsus Church at 2:00 PM