



How to **Avoid Purgatory**

By

Fr. Paul O'Sullivan

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Foreword

Our Lord came on earth expressly to give us a perfect Redemption. He gave us a Law of Love, a Religion in every way to suit our human hearts, destined to make us holy and happy. His Commandments, counsels and promises all breathe peace, joy, mercy and love.

The idea that nearly all of us shall, notwithstanding, have to pass a period more or less long in the excruciating fires of Purgatory after death seems to be at variance with this all-merciful and all-loving plan of our Divine Lord.

It is true that we are weak and fall many times and that God's justice is rigorous and exacting, but it is equally certain that God's mercy and love are above all His works. It is no less certain that Our Lord has given us abundant grace and strength to save us from sin and many (and most efficacious) means of satisfying for any sins that we may have committed. This last fact seems to be almost entirely overlooked, or imperfectly understood by the majority of Catholics.

Of course, those who go on deliberately sinning and who make no effort to correct their faults and refuse to use the many wonderful means God offers them for satisfying for sin, condemn themselves to Purgatory.

The object of this little book is to show how we can avoid Purgatory by using the means God has so generously offered us, and, secondly, to show that the use of these means is within the reach of every ordinary Christian. The careful perusal of these pages will be a source of much benefit and consolation to all who read them. The author offers them to the loving Heart of Jesus and asks Him to bless them.

Chapter 1

Can We Avoid Purgatory? Yes.

Many think that it is practically impossible for the ordinary Christian to avoid Purgatory. Go there we all must--so they say.

They laughingly remark: "It will be well for us if we ever get there" Alas! When too late they will recognize how terribly rash their words were. As a consequence of such fatalistic ideas, many make no serious effort to avoid Purgatory, or even to lessen the term they may have to pass there. Thank God all do not hold such gloomy views.

WE SHALL STRIVE IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO SHOW:

- a) How all can notably shorten their period of expiation in Purgatory;
- b) And how they may even avoid Purgatory altogether. These pages are well worth reading and re-reading. The fact is that a great number of souls go to Purgatory and remain there for long years simply because they had never been told how they could have avoided it.

The means we suggest are easy, practical and within the reach of all. Moreover, far from being irksome, the use of these means will only serve to make our lives on this earth holier and happier and will take away the exaggerated fear of death which terrifies so many. We ask you, Dear Reader, to put this little booklet into the hands of all your friends. You cannot do them a greater service.

Chapter 2

How Can We Avoid Purgatory?

The reason why we have to pass through Purgatory after death is that we have committed sins and have not made satisfaction for them. Every individual sin must be expiated--in this life or the next! Not even the slightest shadow of sin or evil can enter the all-holy presence of God. The graver, the more frequent the sins, the longer will be the period of expiation and the more intense the pain. It is not God's fault, nor God's wish, that we go to Purgatory! The fault is all our own. We have sinned and have not made satisfaction.

Even after our sin, God, in His infinite goodness, places at our disposal many easy and efficacious means by which we may considerably lessen our term of expiation, or even entirely cancel it.

Most Christians, with incomprehensible rashness, neglect these means and so have to pay their debts in the dreadful prison house of Purgatory.

We will briefly enumerate some of the principal means by which we can avoid Purgatory-or at least lessen its severity and duration.

Chapter 3

The First Means: Removing the Cause

The First Means of avoiding Purgatory is manifestly to remove the cause which sends us there, which is sin. It may not be easy to refrain from all sin, even the smaller sins, but every ordinary Christian can, by the frequent use of the Sacraments, easily abstain from mortal sin.

Secondly, we can all avoid deliberate and grave venial sin. It is an awful thing to offend

the good God deliberately. Deliberation intensifies enormously the malice of sin and offends God much more than faults of weakness, or sins committed when we are off our guard.

Lastly, we must use our best endeavors to break off bad habits. Habits, like deliberation, add seriously to the malice of sin.

A deliberate falsehood is very much worse than a hasty lie of excuse, and a lie resulting from the inveterate habit of lying is very much worse than a casual lie.

A lady once told us how she had, when younger, the habit of constantly speaking ill of her neighbors. Having heard a sermon on the subject, she made a strong resolution never to do so again, and kept it.

That simple, strong resolution changed the whole trend of her life and saved her from thousands of sins, and most surely from a long and painful Purgatory.

Who cannot make a like resolution and keep it?

If a Christian avoids, as he easily can, these three classes of sin, viz., mortal sins, deliberate and grave venial sins, and habits of sin, it will be relatively easy for him to atone for faults of frailty, as we shall presently see.

Resolution

We would be well advised to pronounce with special emphasis and fervor, every time we say the Our Father, the words: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." These are the very words of God Himself and repeated frequently and fervently will certainly obtain for us pardon of our sins.

Chapter 4

The Second Means: Penance

The Second Means of avoiding Purgatory is to satisfy for our sins in this life by doing penance. "Do penance or you shall all likewise perish" Do penance, or you will burn long years in Purgatory, is a fact that there is no getting away from.

This is a terrifying thought and one that makes the bravest man shudder. Which of us does not tremble when he thinks of those who have been burnt to death in a slow fire? What fear would not be ours if we had to face a similar death? Yet their suffering was of relatively short duration. The incomparably fiercer fire of Purgatory, which we may have to face, may last 20, or 50 or 100 years!

Many people have such a horror of penance that they never even dream of practicing it. It is like the fear that children have of ghosts, a very great but a very unfounded fear. Their idea is that penance is something awful. They think perhaps of the severe penances of the great Saints and of course are afraid to attempt anything of a like kind.

God does not ask us, as a rule, to do what is heroic. When He does, He gives us all the strength necessary, as in the case of the Saints. He asks each one to do a little. If we are afraid of doing much, and it is only natural that some should be, let us do at least a little. No one but a coward is afraid to do a little, especially if he gets much in exchange.

The easy road to Heaven of Saint Therese, the Little Flower, is to do many little things. God was infinitely pleased with the widow's mite; He will be equally pleased with our little penances.

As a result of little mortifications, we can deliver ourselves from the awful fires of Purgatory and amass rich merits for Heaven. To go into the matter further, there is not much difficulty about mortification or penance, notwithstanding the absurd fear that people have of it.

Penance is not only easy, it is useful and necessary, and it will bring us very great happiness. Not to do penance is the greatest penance of all. As a matter of fact, every man of the world naturally, spontaneously mortifies himself. The first principle, for instance, of politeness and good breeding is to sacrifice our whims and tastes for the sake of others. The selfish man is a boor; the generous man is the idol of all.

Again, the only way of securing good health is to eschew the most appetizing viands when they do us harm and to make use of plain foods when they do us good. Overeating is the cause of the vast majority of sickness and premature deaths.

To take another example: The secret of success is strenuous, methodical, regular work. Now generosity, self-denial, method, regularity are other forms of very genuine but practical mortification. Yet no man can get on without them. To insist on our own likes and dislikes, to do only as we please, is to lead a life bristling with difficulties, in which every duty is a burden, every good act an effort and a labor.

Boy scouts and girl scouts are bound to do a kind act every day, even though it costs them a big effort. Christians should surely do more. Daily acts of self-restraint, of patience with others, of kindness to others, the exact fulfillment of duty are splendid penances and a great aid to happiness.

Resolution

If we are afraid to do much, let us do many little things.

Chapter 5 The Third Means: Suffering

The Third Means of avoiding Purgatory is very easy. It consists in making a virtue of necessity, by bearing patiently what we cannot avoid, and all the more since suffering, borne patiently, becomes easy and light. Suffering, if accepted with calmness and for God's sake, loses all its sting. If received badly, in the spirit of revolt and with repugnance, it is intensified a hundredfold, and becomes almost intolerable.

Everyone in this vale of tears has to face sorrows innumerable and infinite in variety. Crosses light and crosses heavy are the lot of us all. Strange as it may seem, these sorrows, which most of us would gladly dispense with, are in truth God's greatest graces. They are the little share He offers us of His Passion and which He asks us to bear for love of Him and as penance for our sins.

Borne in this spirit they will lessen considerably our time in Purgatory and very possibly completely remove it--with this difference, that Purgatory, even a Purgatory of 50 or 100 years, will in no wise increase our merits in Heaven; whereas, every pain and sorrow and disappointment in this life will lessen our suffering in Purgatory, and also bring us more happiness and glory in Heaven.

How sad it is that so many Christians, for want of thought, make their sufferings a thousand times worse than they are and lose all the immense merits that they could so easily gain.

Resolution

Let us suffer with calmness and serenity for the love of God. We shall thus save ourselves from Purgatory.

Chapter 6 The Fourth Means: Confession, Communion, Holy Mass

The Fourth Means by which we can lessen our time in Purgatory, or avoid it altogether, is by frequent Confession, Communion and daily assistance at Mass.

Confession applies to our souls the Precious Blood of Christ, wipes out our sins, gives us light to see their malice, fills us with horror of sin and, above all, it gives us strength to avoid it. In Holy Communion we receive the God of infinite mercy and love, the God of all sanctity, who comes expressly to pardon our sins and help us to sin no more.

He visited the house of Zaccheus once, and in that one visit, Zaccheus obtained complete pardon of all his sins.

How is it possible that the same God of goodness and sweetness can come, not into our houses, but into our very hearts in Holy Communion and not give us the same and even greater graces? He visited Zaccheus once; He visits us every day if we allow Him.

Many, alas, never feel, never grasp the immense joys and consolation of Holy Communion.

The Mass is identical with the Sacrifice of Calvary, in its essence, in its value, in the graces it bestows. The Sacrifice of Calvary was sufficient to save all the world, millions and millions of souls, and was also sufficient to save countless other sinful worlds, had they existed. By assisting at Mass, we can apply all these oceans of graces to our own souls, and that not once, but every day.

Resolution

Let us go to Mass and Holy Communion every day. We can do nothing better. One day with Mass and Communion is worth a hundred days without them.

Chapter 7 The Fifth Means: Asking God

The Fifth Means of avoiding Purgatory is asking God for this grace. Some wise Catholics have a really great, if simple secret, which is well worth learning and using for our own benefit. God promises us in the most solemn and deliberate way (and He cannot fail to do what He promises) that He will give us everything we ask in prayer, if it is good for us.

Now two conditions, especially, make prayer infallible, namely perseverance and faith. God cannot refuse such a prayer.

These Catholics we speak of pray expressly every day of their lives that God will free them from Purgatory. In every single prayer they say, in every Mass they hear, in every good act they perform, they have the express intention of asking God first of all and with all their hearts to deliver them from Purgatory.

How? That is for God to decide. It is not easy to see how God can possibly refuse such constant, unceasing prayer. The fact that such prayers are said daily and many times in the day, for 20, 30, 50 years, shows that they are said with undoubting faith and magnificent perseverance.

We exhort all our readers to adopt this practice. The more they know and think on Purgatory, the more fervently will they make this prayer.

Resolution

Every time we say the Hail Mary let us say with all the fervor of our hearts the words: "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

Chapter 8 A Sixth Means: Resignation to Death

A Sixth Means of avoiding Purgatory is given us by some great saints: They say that when a sick person becomes aware that he is dying and offers to God his death with perfect resignation, it is very likely that he will go straight to Heaven.

Death is the awful punishment of sin, and when we accept it, as of course we ought to do, with submission and resignation, our act pleases God so much that it may satisfy

perfectly for all our sins.

The idea of Pope St. Pius X was the same when he granted a plenary indulgence at the hour of death to those who say at least after one Holy Communion the following prayer:

"Eternal Father, from this day forward, I accept with a joyful and resigned heart the death it will please You to send me, with all its pains and sufferings."

It will be better still to say this prayer after every Holy Communion we receive.

It is for our best interest to accept God's will in everything that happens to us in life and in death.

Nothing can be easier when we remember that God always wishes what is best for us. If we do what God does not will, we shall surely suffer.

Resolution

Each time we repeat the Our Father, let us say with special fervor the words: Thy will be done. In all our troubles, small and great, let us do likewise. Thus everything will gain us merit. By this simple act we change sorrow into joy, the worries of life into gold for Heaven.

Chapter 9

The Seventh Means: Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick)

The Seventh Means of avoiding Purgatory is Extreme Unction: God Himself has given us a Sacrament, the end of which is to take us directly to Heaven. This Sacrament is Extreme Unction, which according to St. Thomas and St. Albert was instituted especially to obtain for us the grace of a holy and happy death and to prepare us for immediate entrance into Heaven. Many Catholics do not understand this most consoling doctrine, and because they do not understand it, they prepare themselves insufficiently for the reception of Extreme Unction and so lose many of its great graces.

Every Sacrament properly received produces its effect. Baptism cleanses us from Original Sin and any other actual sins that may have been committed by adults before receiving the Sacrament.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders gives a priest all his tremendous powers. Matrimony makes man and woman husband and wife. In the same way Extreme Unction, if devoutly received, prepares the dying Christian for immediate entrance into Heaven, thus delivering him from Purgatory.

How foolish it is, therefore, to put off receiving this Sacrament until very late, when the dying person is too exhausted to receive it with full knowledge of what he is doing and with due fervor and devotion. The moment of death is the supreme moment in our lives. It is the moment which decides our fate for all Eternity.

Resolution

Let us use every means in our power to secure a happy and holy death, especially by receiving most devoutly, and as soon as possible, Extreme Unction. (Anointing of the Sick)

Chapter 10 Indulgences and Purgatory

[The grants of indulgences were changed in 1968. See the Enchiridion of Indulgences 1968]

God in His infinite mercy and compassion offers us a most wonderful and easy means for lessening or canceling our Purgatory.

Fully aware of our weakness, and knowing, too, how fearful many are of penance, He opens wide the treasury of His Goodness and offers us most abundant Indulgences in exchange for some small act of devotion.

For one recitation of short ejaculatory prayers, He grants 100 or 300 or more days Indulgence. These we may say hundreds of times in the day. Those who say the little ejaculation: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in Thee" one hundred times a day gain 30,000 days Indulgence. Those who say it 1,000 times, as many do, gain 300,000 days Indulgence each day!

Nothing can be easier than to acquire the habit of saying this little prayer all day long, countless times each day.

Then, for each Hail Mary of the Rosary, one gains more than 2,000 days Indulgence!

Besides an immense number of Partial Indulgences, there are very many Plenary (full, complete) Indulgences which may be gained during life and at the hour of death.

These are specially given by the Church to enable us to avoid Purgatory.

These Indulgences can be applied to our own souls, and we shall thus directly make satisfaction for our sins. Or, we may apply them to the souls in Purgatory, who will see to it that we do not lose by our generosity.

Resolution

Let us strive to gain all possible Indulgences.

Chapter 11

The Third Orders

Among the extraordinary graces which Catholics gain by becoming members of a Third Order is a share in many Masses and prayers.

To mention, for instance, the Third Order of Saint Dominic, Pope Benedict XV, himself a Tertiary, said: "One of the easiest and most effectual ways of reaching a high degree of sanctity is by becoming a Dominican Tertiary."

The members of this order receive during life a share every day in thousands of Masses and prayers, and after death, when, alas, so many are neglected by their relatives, those who are members of this Third Order have a share daily in thousands of other Masses and prayers, this for as long as they remain in Purgatory!

Among the many beautiful characteristics of the Order of St. Dominic is its intense devotion and love for the Holy Souls, especially for the souls of its members, friends and benefactors. So true is this that a young Italian nobleman who consulted the Pope as to which religious order he would do well to enter received for answer: "My dear son, you may with much profit join any of the Orders, for in each you will find abundant means of becoming a Saint. After death, however, be a Dominican" The Holy Father meant to imply that the suffrages given after death to their deceased members are, indeed, most abundant in the Dominican Order.

The conditions of becoming a member of this order are so easy and the advantages so many that half the world would become Dominican Tertiaries did they know these advantages.

Chapter 12

Those Who Earnestly Help the Holy Souls May Well Hope to Avoid Purgatory

The Holy Souls whom we relieve or release by our Masses and good works pray for us with such indescribable fervor that God cannot refuse to hear their prayers. One of the principal graces they ask for their friends is that these shall have little or no Purgatory. No one knows better than they the awful intensity of the Purgatorial flames; no one, therefore, can pray for us as they do. Let us remember that:

a) God thanks as done to Himself what we do to others. When we relieve or release any of the Holy Souls, we relieve or release, as it were, God Himself. How ready, therefore, will He not be to hear the prayers offered by these souls for us.

b) Our Blessed Lord lays down clearly the great law: "By that measure by which you measure, it will be measured to you again" In proportion, consequently, to our generosity towards the Holy Souls will God's mercy and generosity be towards us. Those who work heart and soul for the relief of the Holy Souls may thus well hope that their Purgatory will be entirely remitted, or notably lessened. On the other hand, those who neglect the Holy Souls may justly fear a severe judgment and a long Purgatory.

Resolution

Let everyone without fail join the Association of the Holy Souls. All the members of the family should do so. The conditions are very easy. If the Association is not established in your Parish, write to: Association of the Holy Souls, Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary, Pius XII Monastery, Rua do Rosario 1, 2495 Fatima, Portugal, which is one of the centers of the devotion.

St. James the Apostle gives another very effectual method of avoiding or lessening our stay in Purgatory. He says: "He who saves a soul, saves his own, and satisfies for a multitude of sins"

If someone were fortunate enough to save the life of a King's only son, the heir to his throne, from a horrible death, what reward might he not expect to receive from the grateful monarch? No King, however, could be as grateful to and anxious to reward the person who saved his son as God is grateful and ready to reward the person who saves one soul from Hell.

All of us may, in a thousand different ways, save not one but many souls from Hell. For instance:

1. We can do so by praying earnestly for them. How often does not a mother save her son's soul by her fervent prayers. We can save souls by giving good advice and also by our good example. How many boys owe their sterling qualities to the wise counsels of a good Father or friend!
2. Another efficacious method of saving souls is by propagating the Faith, viz., Catholic Action.

The incredible ignorance, apathy and indifference of Catholics are the evils of the day!

It is the bounden duty of Catholics to spread about thousands and thousands of pamphlets of all kinds, full of life, vigor and burning interest, crisp, incisive, clear and strong. Otherwise, these are useless.

Each pamphlet or leaflet must carry a message straight to the heart of the reader, rousing him, convincing him, galvanizing him into action.

Chapter 13 To Avoid Purgatory, Do As Follows

1. In every prayer you say, every Mass you hear, every Communion you receive, every good work you perform, have the express intention of imploring God to grant you a holy and happy death and no Purgatory. Surely God will hear a prayer said with such confidence and perseverance.

2. Always wish to do God's will. It is in every sense the best for you. When you do or seek anything that is not God's will, you are sure to suffer. Say fervently, therefore, each time you recite the Our Father: "Thy will be done."

3. Accept all the sufferings, sorrows, pains and disappointments of life, be they great or small: ill health, loss of goods, the death of your dear ones, heat or cold, rain or sunshine, as coming from God. Bear them calmly and patiently for love of Him and in penance for your sins. Of course one may use all his efforts to ward off trouble and pain, but when one cannot avoid them let him bear them manfully. Impatience and revolt make sufferings vastly greater and more difficult to bear.

4. Christ's life and actions are so many lessons for us to imitate.

The greatest act in His life was His Passion. As He had a Passion, so each one of us has a passion. Our passion consists in the sufferings and labors of every day. The penance God imposed on man for sin was to gain his bread in the sweat of his brow. Therefore, let us do our work, accept its disappointments and hardships, and bear our pains in union with the Passion of Christ. We gain more merit by a little pain than by years of pleasure.

5. Forgive all injuries and offences, for in proportion as we forgive others, God forgives us.

6. Avoid mortal sins and deliberate venial sins and break off all bad habits. Then it will be relatively easy to satisfy God's justice for sins of frailty. Above all, avoid sins against charity and against chastity, whether in thought, word or deed, for these sins [and the expiation for them] are the reason why many souls are detained in Purgatory for long years.

7. If afraid of doing much, do many little things, acts of kindness and charity, give the alms you can, cultivate regularity of life, method in work, and punctuality in the performance of duty; don't grumble or complain when things are not as you please; don't censure and complain of others; never refuse to do a favor to others when it is possible. These and suchlike little acts are a splendid penance.

8. Do all in your power for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Pray for them constantly, get others to do so, join the Association of the Holy Souls and ask all those you know to do likewise. The Holy Souls will repay you most generously.

9. There is no way more powerful of obtaining from God a most holy and happy death than by weekly Confession, daily Mass and daily Communion.

10. A daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament--it need only be three or four minutes--is an easy way of obtaining the same grace. Kneeling in the presence of Jesus with eyes fixed on the Tabernacle, sure that He is looking at us, let us for a few minutes repeat some little prayer like these: "My Jesus, mercy." "My Jesus, have pity on me, a sinner" "My Jesus, I love You" "My Jesus, give me a happy death"

Chapter 14

How We Can Help the Holy Souls

I. The first means is by joining the Association of the Holy Souls. The conditions are easy.

Association of the Holy Souls
Approved by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon, June, 1936

1. The members are asked to send their full name and address to:
Association of the Holy Souls, Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary,
Pius XII Monastery, Rua do Rosario 1, 2495 Fatima, Portugal.
2. The members must offer up a Mass once a week for the Holy Souls
(Sunday's Mass can fulfill this obligation).
3. The members pray for and promote devotion to the Holy Souls. (We
recommend the booklets Read Me or Rue It and How to Avoid Purgatory.)
4. The members are asked to contribute a yearly alms to the Mass Fund.
The alms is used to have Masses said for the Holy Souls every month.

II. A second means of helping the Holy Souls is having Masses offered for them. This is certainly the most efficacious way of relieving them.

III. Those who cannot get many Masses offered, owing to want of means, ought to assist at as many Masses as possible for this intention.

A young man who was earning a very modest salary told the writer: "My wife died a few years ago. I got 10 Masses said for her. I could not possibly do more but heard 1,000 for her dear soul."

IV. The recital of the Rosary (with its great indulgences) and the Way of the Cross (which is also richly indulgenced) are excellent means of helping the Holy Souls.

St. John Massias, as we saw, released from Purgatory more than a million souls, chiefly by reciting the Rosary and offering its great indulgences for them.

V. Another easy and efficacious way is by the constant repetition of short indulgenced prayers, offering up the indulgences for the Souls in Purgatory. Many people have the custom of saying 500 or 1,000 times each day the little ejaculation, "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in Thee" or the one word, "Jesus" These are most consoling devotions and bring oceans of graces to those who practice them and give immense relief to the Holy Souls.

Those who say the ejaculations 1,000 times a day gain 300,000 days Indulgence! What a multitude of souls they can thus relieve! What will it not be at the end of a month, a year--or 50 years? And if they do not say the ejaculations, what an immense number of graces and favours they shall have lost. It is quite possible and even easy to say these ejaculations 1,000 times a day. But if one does not say them 1,000 times, let him say

them 500 or 200 times.

VI. Still another powerful prayer is:

"Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Jesus, with all the Masses being said all over the world this day, for the Souls in Purgatory."

Our Lord showed St. Gertrude a vast number of souls leaving Purgatory and going to Heaven as a result of this prayer which the Saint was accustomed to say frequently during the day.

VII. The Heroic Act consists in offering to God in favor of the Souls in Purgatory all the works of satisfaction we practice during life and all the suffrages that will be offered for us after death. If God rewards so abundantly the most trifling alms given to a poor man in His name, what an immense reward will He not give to those who offer all their works of satisfaction in life and death for the souls He loves so dearly?

This Act does not prevent priests from offering Mass for the intentions they wish, or lay people from praying for any persons or other intentions they desire. We counsel everyone to make this act.

Alms Help the Holy Souls

St. Martin gave half of his cloak to a poor beggar, only to find out afterwards that it was to Christ he had given it. Our Lord appeared to him and thanked him.

Blessed Jordan of the Dominican Order could never refuse an alms when it was asked in the name of God. One day he had forgotten his purse. A poor man implored an alms for the love of God. Rather than refuse him, Jordan, who was then a student, gave him a most precious belt or cincture which he prized dearly. Shortly afterwards, he entered a church and found his cincture encircling the waist of an image of Christ Crucified. He, too, had given his alms to Christ. We all give our alms to Christ.

Resolution

a) Let us give all the alms we can afford; b) Let us have said all the Masses in our power; c) Let us hear as many more as is possible; d) Let us offer all our pains and sufferings for the relief of the Holy Souls.

We shall thus deliver countless souls from Purgatory, who will repay us ten thousand times over.

Appendix I

The Brown Scapular

(The following official information was obtained from the National Scapular center, Darien, Illinois, May 9, 1986.)

Two wonderful promises of Our Lady of Mount Carmel are available to those who have been enrolled in the Brown Scapular.

The great promise of the Blessed Virgin Mary, given to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251, is as follows: "Whoever dies wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire."

Our Lady's second Scapular Promise, known as the Sabbatine Privilege (the word "Sabbatine" meaning "Saturday"), was given by the Blessed Virgin Mary to Pope John XXII in the year 1322 and is as follows: "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death, and whomsoever I shall find in Purgatory, I shall free."

There are three conditions for obtaining this privilege: 1) the wearing of the Brown Scapular; 2) the practice of chastity according to one's state of life; 3) the daily recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Those who cannot read can abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays instead of reciting the Little Office. Also, any priest who has diocesan faculties (this includes most priests) has the additional faculty to commute (change) the third requirement into another pious work—for example, the daily Rosary.

Because of the greatness of the Sabbatine privilege, the Carmelite Order suggests that the third requirement not be commuted into anything less than the daily recitation of seven Our Fathers, seven Hail Marys, and seven Glory Be to the Fathers.
