

Study Lesson Number: 37

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS:

"I believe in - - - - the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins. . ."

What is meant by "the communion of saints" in the Apostles' Creed?

By "the communion of saints" is meant the union of the faithful on earth, the blessed in Heaven and the souls in Purgatory, with Christ as their Head.

It is an active union - - - a sharing of spiritual goods among the members of the MYSTICAL BODY.

The "communion of saings" is something like the circulation of blood in the body or the circulation of steam in the heating system of a house. Grace and the virtues belong to each one of us personally, just as the steam belongs to each individual radiator. But, in a certain manner, we can share them with others and influence others by them without losing them ourselves. The heat of each radiator helps all the other radiators.

In the communion of saints each one of us either helps or hinders the circulation of spiritual life among the members of the Mystical Body by the strength or weakness of our love of God.

The word "saints" in the expression "communion of saints" means "holy ones." We are all made holy by our baptism, although only the saints in heaven have reached perfect holiness.

Through the communion of saints, what can the blessed in heaven do for the souls in purgatory and the faithful on earth?

Through the communion of saints, the blessed in heaven can help the souls in purgatory and the faithful on earth by prayer for them.

Should the faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, honor the blessed in heaven and pray for them?

The faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, should honor the blessed in heaven and pray to them, because they are worthy of honor and as friends of God will help the faithful on earth.

Can the faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, relieve the sufferings of the souls in purgatory?

The faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, can relieve the sufferings of the souls in purgatory by prayer, fasting, and other good works, by indulgences, and by having Masses offered for them.

The Church by means of INDULGENCES remits the temporal punishment due to sin by applying to us (OR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY) from her spiritual treasury part of the infinite satisfaction of Jesus Christ and of the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints.

The satisfaction of Jesus Christ means the power of His Precious Blood to make up for our sins and to heal all the wounds left by sin. It is like a great reservoir of medicine He has left for us to draw on as we need it. This is the spiritual treasure of the Church.