

# ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

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THE HOST APOSTOLATE

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## The Danger of de-demonising the demon...

Evil does exist. It is so easy to ignore the presence of it in our midst. It manifests in many forms; from the way people behave towards each other, expressed in violence, manipulation, hatred, prejudice as well as in poverty, injustice and persecution. It can be overt or quite subtle and hidden and almost pass us by or go in the name of a thousand different covers. We live in a world where images are placed before us which slowly but surely remove our objections and become so matter of fact that we hardly notice them. The erosion of modesty and decency is an area where this is most evident. This is also true in our laws which demand of us a consensus which we cannot always comply with. Areas of concern are the proposed laws relating to Marriage.- which distort and undermine the Sacrament as being between a man and a woman. But there are so many others.

Evil, not just a negative, an absence of good but it exists in the hearts of those who distort truth and whose aim is not to honour the Creator in His creation, us, but to destroy it. We are entering the month dedicated to the Holy Souls.-Souls awaiting perfection before they see the Saviour who saved and spared them. These are Holy Souls – not evil ones. The feast of Halloween was a preparation for the great celebration of All Saints day, Hallowed, 'Halo-ed', all Holy- men and women who were part of the Communion of Saints. What a distortion it has become with ghosts and ghouls, spirits and witches. How far has this been hijacked by images inappropriate to the feast.

Now you may say it is harmless stuff, a bit of fun? Maybe, if you have a secure understanding, but this is not so today for many people...

In many countries the idea behind any form of halloween is to remember those – beyond the grave – Those who are in heaven and those destined to go there. Instead we make idols and images of things which are not of Heaven.

In recent years the bookshops and libraries carry more books on witchcraft, the occult or 'spirituality' than on the Gospels or Prayer. More and more people are being sucked into a culture that deals with darkness rather than light...



Is it an accident, or error that Jesus' own prayer to the Father 'The Our Father'- ends with *deliver us from Evil*? Jesus has no doubt about the existence of evil in action, but also of the existence of the evil one, satan. How he, satan must smile when people deny his existence and become prey to his wiles.

More and more people are playing with fire as they go to the spiritualists, mediums, play with tarot cards and ouija boards, not to mention horoscopes, often seen as another bit of fun...

*'Go courageously to God, along the way He has traced out for you, steadfastly embracing the means He offers you.'*  
St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

But the future is known only to God, and we are at the very least, imprudent, though actually forbidden to enter this realm. Why are these things forbidden? Because it is in the realm of Faith and Trust and the powers of Goodness that we have to live. If we seek out the revelation of the future in dark places we cannot be certain who or what is being presented to us. Further satan, the author of lies is waiting for us to turn from God to these things, which take us away from Truth and dependence on God to an arrogant certainty which lessens our dependence on Him. Satan is a 'person' not a symbol – he hides in the dark places of despair and negativity, doubt and distortion. Jesus had to reject satan as we do too - at Baptism, and by the light of the Paschal Candle at Easter. These are not mere words but fundamental truths. We must be on our guard against his deceptions – as was Jesus Himself.

*'In the last petition 'but deliver us from Evil', Christians pray to God, with the Church to show the victory already won by Christ over the ruler of this world, satan, the angel personally opposed to God and His plan of Salvation'*

Page 610 Catechism of the Catholic Church

So Jesus is victorious in all things. He has overcome satan. We pray therefore to be delivered from the evils past, present and to come, of which satan is the instigator.

We are joined by all the Saints who are already before the throne of God and who have had to do battle with satan. Saints such as Bartolomeo Longo, who was a Satanist, but who rejected satan and his works and became holy, and died in the service of the poor. We pray also for those who are waiting to enter fully into the realm of Heaven, whose journey is slow and interrupted through sin and imperfect understanding which led them to compromise and not choose the better part.

We must pray for the Holy Souls. There are many ways that we can do this. We can offer up the intention in the Mass for a particular person, or have Masses said on a person's behalf. We can pray the Rosary or use special prayers; however, we must not forget that our suffering can be efficacious in helping them.

It may also be advantageous to read a little more about the Holy Souls and books such as 'The Holy Souls' (Frate Alessio Parente OFM Cap) a friend of St. Padre Pio, can be very enlightening. Two other books by Susan

Tassone, 'Praying with the Saints for Holy Souls in Purgatory' and 'Prayers, Promises and Devotions for the Holy Souls in Purgatory', are useful reading. In the latter there are prayers of comfort, encouragement, commitment, and consolation. Some will be familiar to an older generation but are useful as a teaching tool for younger members of the church. They also include prayers for the dying which bring much solace.



St. Margaret of Scotland

One wonderful suggestion she makes is to adopt a priest or religious who has had an impact on our life; who maybe Baptised us, gave us Holy Communion, presided at our Marriage, was a good Confessor, gave us counsel when troubled, was present at the death of a loved one, or whose preaching touched us.

We must not however forget the many Saints who continue to pray for us and we must be very grateful for the paths they chose that lead them to sanctity. This month we not only celebrate 'All Saints' but it is a month where we also celebrate the lives of many British Saints. Thus we have St. Winefride, St. Illtud, Bl. John Duns Scotus, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Hugh of Lincoln, and St. Hilda. It is also the feast of St. Albert the Great, St. Cecilia, SS. Andrew Dung-Lac and companions (of Korea), St. Catherine Labouré, not to mention the Presentation of Our Lady and the Feast of Christ the King.

A beautiful Prayer taken from *the Divine Office* is as follows;

*Through the pastors of Your Church You give your sheep eternal life, and no-one can steal them from You – Save the faithful departed, for whom You laid down Your life.  
Lord, save Your people.*

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