

What is "Communion of the Saints"?

First True Story: St. Antoninus and His Friend

St. Antoninus, the illustrious Archbishop of Florence, relates that a pious gentleman and a great friend of the Dominican Convent in which the Saint resided, died. Many Masses and suffrages were offered for his soul. The Saint was very much afflicted when, after the lapse of a long time, the soul of the poor gentleman appeared to him, suffering excruciating pains. "Oh, my dear friend" exclaimed the Archbishop, "are you still in Purgatory, you who led such a pious and devout life?" "Yes, and I shall remain there still for a long time," replied the poor sufferer, "for when on Earth, I neglected to offer suffrages for the souls in Purgatory. Now God by a just judgment, has applied the suffrages which have been offered for me to those souls for whom I should have prayed." "But God too, in his justice, will give me all the merits of my good works when I enter Heaven, but first of all I have to expiate my grave neglect in regard to others." So true are the words of Our Lord: "By that measure with which you measure, it will be measured to you again." Remember you who read these lines, that the terrible fate of this pious gentleman will be the fate of all those who neglect to pray for and refuse to help the holy souls." [Story taken from page 20, in the book **Read Me or Rue It, How to Avoid Purgatory** (by Fr. Paul O'Sullivan O.P.)]

Second True Story: The Polish Prince

A Polish Prince, who, for some political reason, had been exiled from his native country, bought a beautiful castle and property in France. Unfortunately he had lost the faith of his childhood and was at the time of our story engaged in writing a book against God and the existence of a future life. Strolling one evening in his garden he came on a poor woman weeping bitterly. He questioned her as to the cause of her grief. "Ah! Prince," she replied, "I am the wife of Jean Marie, your former steward, who died two days ago. He was a good husband to me and a faithful servant to your Highness. His sickness was long and I spent all our savings on the doctors and now I have nothing left to get Masses said for his soul." The Prince, touched by her grief, said a few kind words and, though profession to no longer believe in a future life, gave her some gold coins to have Masses said for her husband's soul. Some time after, it was again evening, and the Prince was in his study working feverishly at his book. He heard a loud rap at the door and, without looking up, called out to the visitor to come in. The door slowly opened and a man entered and stood facing the Prince's writing table. On glancing up what was not the Prince's amazement to see Jean Marie, his dead steward, looking at him with a sweet smile. "Prince," he said, "I come to thank you for the Masses you enabled my wife to have said for my soul. Thanks to the saving Blood of Christ, which was offered for me, I am now going to Heaven, but God has allowed me to come and thank you for your generous alms." He then added impressively: "Prince, there is a God, a future life, a Heaven and a Hell." Having said these words he disappeared. The Prince fell on his knees and poured forth a fervent: "I believe..." [Story taken from page 18, in the book **Read Me or Rue It, How to Avoid Purgatory** (by Fr. Paul O'Sullivan O.P.)]

Third True Story: The More We Give, The More We Get

A business man in Boston joined the Association of the Holy Souls and gave a large sum of money annually that prayers and Masses might be said for them. The Director of the Association was surprised at the gentleman's generosity for he knew that he was not a rich man. He asked kindly one day if the alms he so generously gave was his own offering, or, donations which he gathered from others. "What I offer, dear father," he said, "is my own offering. Be not alarmed. I am not a very rich man and you may think that I give more than I am able to do. It is not so, for far from losing by my charity the Holy Souls see to it that I gain considerably more than I give. They are second to none in generosity." [Story taken from page 40, in the book **Read Me or Rue It, How to Avoid Purgatory** (by Fr. Paul O'Sullivan O.P.)]