

minister to each other's wants, and feel for each other's sufferings, and contribute to the well-being of the whole body, so, in the Church of God, which is the body of Christ, the various members thereof do, by the divine appointment, and according to their position and the measure of their capacity, minister to each other's spiritual needs, interchange kindly and merciful offices, are bound together by the bonds of active charity and friendship, which defy the powers of death and the ruin and wreckage of the grave. We here on earth invoke the prayers of the saints—they intercede for us with God—and by prayers, almsdeeds and other good works we bring relief and comfort, and we hasten the day of their freedom and happiness for the prisoners of God in Purgatory. This is the communion of saints in the fullest sense of the word. It presents the whole world of souls who are at friendship with God, whether they still remain in the flesh or are already divested of their bodies, and are reigning in Heaven or suffering, with unspeakable longings for home, in Purgatory; bound together in the golden bonds of sympathy, friendship and love—bonds which death itself cannot rend asunder; for love is stronger than death—*fortis est ut mors delectio*. In the Catholic system the love of friendship and of charity is not killed or extinguished by death. It survives its awful ravages—it smiles above the wreck of mortality, like the blessed light of hope upon a death-bed—like the rainbow of promise over the retiring waters of the deluge. Soul lives in blissful communion with soul—friend here with departed friend—and nor death nor the grave can part them. This is and ever has been the belief and practice of the Church, and hence we find in every Christian age, from the catacombs to this nineteenth century, prayers and sacrifice offered up by the living for the souls of the faithful departed. We find this belief and practice recorded on the damp walls of the catacombs—on mural tablets in churches—on the tombs that affection or pride has raised to the memory of the departed. We find them enshrined in the immortal pages of the Fathers

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