

dying she said to him: "Lay this body anywhere; be not concerned about that; only I beg of you that wheresoever you be, you make remembrance of me at the Lord's altar," and the saint goes on to tell how he fulfilled this request, and how, after her death, the "Holy Sacrifice of our Ransom" was offered for her, and how fervently he continued to pray for her soul.

The constant and unbroken tradition of praying for the dead, prevailing at all times and in all countries, is, we repeat, one of the strongest, even if less direct than other proofs, of the truth of the doctrine of the Church as to the existence of a place of purgation and probation in the next life. This practice of praying for the dead presupposes also the doctrine of the communion of saints.

The Church Catholic is a living organism—it is the body of Christ. It exists in Heaven in a triumphant state, on earth in a militant state, and in Purgatory in a suffering state. "As in one body," says St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, "there are many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members one of another." The communion of saints is a great fact attested by the revealed word of God, and embodied as an article of faith in the Apostles' Creed. The Church is a vast society of the children of Christ, embracing the saints in Heaven, the suffering souls in Purgatory, and its members still detained in the flesh. There is a bond of union, of sympathy, and of charity, binding all these children of the Church in one great family of God. Death cannot separate these souls, nor raise up an impassible barrier dividing them, for Christ, who is our peace, hath broken down all the walls of partition which sin and death had interposed between God's children, and hath made both one; that is, hath embraced and united the saints in Heaven, his children on earth, and his suffering prisoners in Purgatory, into one body, which is His Church. And, as in the human body, all the members are interdependent and