

## DEACON'S CORNER

**Q.** How does offering up our suffering help souls in purgatory?

**A.** In Catholic tradition, suffering is never meaningless. When we find ourselves carrying burdens—whether physical, emotional, or the struggles of daily life—we're invited to unite them to the suffering of Christ, who redeemed the world through the Cross. Offering these sufferings become a powerful form of intercession for those we love or for those who have died.

The Church teaches that the souls in purgatory are being purified by God's love as they prepare for the fullness of heaven. They can no longer earn merit for themselves, so they must rely on the prayers, sacrifices, and love from the faithful on earth. This is one of the beautiful mysteries of our faith, the Communion of Saints.

When we “offer up” our suffering, we do something profoundly Christ-like. We take the very things that cause us pain and turn them into gifts of mercy. We use our sufferings as a prayer request or a prayer of intercession to God, to help the souls in purgatory. It is our small sacrifice that joins with what Christ did on the cross. As St. Paul tells us, “I rejoice in my suffering for your sake, and in my flesh, I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the church”(Colossians 1:24). Our offerings become a participation in Christ's redemptive love, a love that reaches into purgatory and brings comfort, healing, and swift purification.

Ultimately, offering our sufferings for the souls in purgatory is an act of hope. It reminds us that we are connected to our loved

ones who have gone before us, and that our sacrifices, united to Christ, can help carry them closer to the joy of heaven.

May this mystery encourage us to approach our crosses not with fear, but with faith—knowing that in God's economy, even our tears can become instruments of grace.