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All Souls Day

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Nov. 2, 2009 NCR Today

Today is **All Souls Day**.

The latest teachings on Purgatory from Pope Benedict XVI:

> From III:47: "Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Saviour. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgement. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All that we build during our lives can prove to be mere straw, pure bluster, and it collapses. Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, there lies salvation. His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation 'as through fire'."
>
> From III:48: "Now a further question arises: if 'Purgatory' is simply purification through fire in the encounter with the Lord, Judge and Saviour, how can a third person intervene, even if he or she is particularly close to the other? When we ask such a question, we should recall that no man is an island, entire of itself. Our lives are involved with one another, through innumerable interactions they are linked together. No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better and for worse. So my prayer for another is not something extraneous to that person, something external, not even after death. In the interconnectedness of Being, my gratitude to the other?my prayer for him?can play a small part in his purification. And for that there is no need to convert earthly time into God's time: in the communion of souls simple terrestrial time is superseded. It is never too late to touch the heart of another, nor is it ever in vain."

--From the encyclical letter Spe Salvi, or Saved by Hope [1]

(Interesting that Benedict quotes John Donne [2], who abjured his Catholic religion to become an Anglican priest.)

-- Submitted by Gerelyn Hollingsworth [3]

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Links:
[1] http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi_en.html
[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Donne

[3] http://www.gerelynhollingsworth.com/