

Saint Alfonso de Liguori

1696 - 1787

PURGATORY

In the life of Saint Alfonso an incident is mentioned which occurred in the life of an Augustinian nun, Sister Catherine, who had a great devotion to the souls in Purgatory. In the city where the nun lived there was a woman, Maria, who had a reputation for immoral living. When this woman died, everyone was convinced that she was damned and the few who did attend her funeral did so more out of respect for her family than to pray for her. So convinced was Sr. Catherine herself that Maria was in hell, she never considered praying for her soul. After some four years, Sr. Catherine had a vision: a soul appeared to her from Purgatory and she implored: *“Sr. Catherine, we are so grateful to you for being so devoted to praying for the dead, please do not be remiss in remembering me.* And the Sister retorted: *‘And who might you be?’ And the soul answered: I am the unfortunate Maria – long deceased, abandoned and forgotten by everyone!* *‘What are you saying?! – Sr. Catherine exclaimed – you have been saved then?’*

Maria answered: *I was saved by the intercession of the Madonna. I realized at the time that I was about to die, alone and helpless – so I prayed to her and simply said: ‘O my Queen, you who are the refuge of sinners and all those who are abandoned – look at my condition in which I am so completely abandoned and grant me your assistance!’ The holy Virgin heard my prayer and came*



to my aid by obtaining the grace of a perfect contrition – saving me even as I lay dying on my death bed. But this Blessed Mother did not stop there. When I finally found myself before the Divine Judge, she had obtained from her Divine Son, the grace to reduce the time to be spent in Purgatory. But because divine justice can not be in conflict with its due – I was made to suffer more intensely for a shorter period of time to cancel my debt. At this moment, I need some Masses celebrated for me. ‘I promised not to cease praying for you to God and the Blessed Virgin!’”

Sr. Catherine had the Masses celebrated as she had requested and in a few days, Maria’s soul was freed and ascended into Heaven.

