

Apostolate for the Dying

Bringing souls to God's Infinite Mercy

What's the right thing to say when someone is dying, especially when death is very near? How can we help a person facing death? And most of us are not prepared to be at the bedside of someone we love who is dying. There is a ministry in Cincinnati, Ohio called Apostolate for the Dying. This is a new and unique apostolate in our Catholic Church. The ministry's mission is to faithfully intercede every day for the salvation of all those who are dying around the world, including those who die a violent or sudden death and are unprepared to face God. Many souls die alone, and some out of despair, committing suicide. Praying for the salvation of these souls is an urgent need in our turbulent world filled with war, violence, religious persecutions, and natural disasters.

Praying for the dying and the dead, is a vital and central work of mercy in our Catholic faith. Our Lady of Fatima told us in 1917 that, "Many souls go to hell because no one prays for them." And Jesus told St. Faustina, "Pray as much as you can for the dying.....Be assured that the grace of eternal salvation for certain souls depends on your prayers." *Diary of St. Faustina, #1777.* God, in His Infinite Mercy, wants to save every soul by any means. Jesus also told St. Faustina, "My daughter, I want to instruct you on how to rescue souls through sacrifice and prayer. You will save more souls through prayer and suffering than a missionary through his teaching and sermons alone." *Diary of St. Faustina, entry #1767.*

On April 15, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI said, "Today, all too often we are somewhat afraid of speaking about eternal life." These are serious words to ponder. There are many people who simply deny the stark truth of their mortality until time starts running out. "The hour of death is truly the most crucial and important time in every person's life." says Fernanda Moreira, founder of the Apostolate. Do we think about what forever means in our lives? How often do we think about what eternal life will be like? Fernanda states, "The best way to prepare for my own death is to pray for the dying. That is the greatest act of charity I can do for those who go before me and, consequently for me when my own hour comes." This ministry encompasses many benefits for ourselves as well.

The Apostolate was started by Fernanda Moreira and her sister-in-law, Lourdes Moreira, in 2004, when another sister-in-law died of bone cancer after a long hospital stay. "We had many opportunities to visit her and pray together," Fernanda says, "and it was evident that this gave her comfort and peace. As the illness progressed and she could not speak or pray anymore, she would make the sign of the Cross or put her hands together inviting us to pray...we can see now how God was showing us through her actions, how much a dying person longs for our prayers."

The Holy Hour Devotion for the Dying can be prayed at home, in prayer groups, at church before the Tabernacle, or at Adoration. Fr. Jim Walsh, Pastor of St. Dominic Parish, where the ministry started in Cincinnati, wrote in their bulletin explaining the ministry, "St. Dominic's Apostolate for the Dying has spread to many states and now is practiced in Spain, Portugal, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, and the Philippines....four continents! God has blessed this ministry. It involves a Holy Hour of prayers for the dying. It started here at St. Dominic and continues every Saturday morning after the 8:15 Mass, from 9:00-10:00. Fernanda Moreira has put together a booklet of prayers that also serves as a guide for the Holy Hour. It is that booklet that is now circulating throughout the world! The spread of this devotion reminds me of the "Gamaliel principle." Gamaliel was a well-known rabbi and member of the Sanhedrin. He was also the teacher of Paul. The Sanhedrin was debating what to do about this new movement centered around Jesus of Nazareth. Gamaliel carried the day with his advice that they do nothing and give it time. "If the movement is not of God it will fall on its own. But if it is of God there will be nothing the Sanhedrin can do to stop it." Fr. Jim.

Eva, who is 49 years old and is dying from cancer, was given three months to live. She has been inspired by this ministry and shares her testimony with the Apostolate. This is a quote from her letter, "I wanted to let you know that I have been thinking a lot about all the people dying each day, each minute, particularly those who are not prepared and scared. There is no greater gift that we can give to those who are dying than peace and hope. I have received the small prayer booklet, "Words of Comfort for the Dying." This is particularly helpful to people who are not well versed in prayer or not accustomed to praying at all. The booklets are helpful to people who are dying, to people who want to pray for a dying friend, relative, or a complete stranger near or far away. Jesus desires *all* souls to be saved. God bless you, and your ministry."

Kathy G. wrote about the apostolate, "I have been looking for a prayer for a long time to pray every day to help me not fear death as much as I do. I read your article in the Catholic Telegraph and was able to get a copy of your book "Holy Hour for the Dying". The prayer for a holy death has brought me so much peace and comfort. I treasure this book. I thank you very much for this book. ".....

The Apostolate offers two booklets: "Holy Hour Devotion for the Dying" and "Words of Comfort for the Dying." And there are many Holy Cards to choose from: "Meditations on the Five Wounds of Christ for the Dying," "The Seven Sorrows of Mary, Prayers for the Dying," "Prayer to Our Lady of Mount Carmel," "Saint Joseph, Patron of the Dying & Prayer for a Holy Death," "Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel," and "Prayers for Those in Despair." All of the booklets and holy cards have the Imprimatur of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati from Bishop Joseph Binzer. The Holy Hour Devotion booklet has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, German and Polish. Articles on the Apostolate have been published in Our Sunday Visitor, The Catholic Telegraph, and the Catholic Beat at Sacred Heart Radio. Sacred Heart Radio has had interviews with two local priests about the Apostolate as well.

Here is a quote from "Words of Comfort for the Dying" booklet: "With these prayers and meditations, we will draw from the furnace of Divine Love, the trust and consolation a soul is in most need of at the critical moment of death, when eternity is right there at the door. How great must be the need for a dying person to hear about God's most gracious Mercy... how consoling to their heart and soul."

You can contact the Apostolate by email: holyhourdevotion@gmail.com or call at 513-922-0370.
Visit the website at: ApostolatefortheDying.org. or write: P. O. Box 38-9185 Cincinnati, Ohio 45238

Be a part of this ministry and experience the joy of doing something beautiful for God, for the salvation of souls, and for yourself.