

# HUNGRY SOULS



# HUNGRY SOULS

SUPERNATURAL VISITS, MESSAGES,  
AND WARNINGS FROM PURGATORY

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*PHOTOGRAPHS*

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*We are still alive and we are hungry for love!*

—Message from a Holy Soul

*Vanity it is: to be only mindful of the present life, and not fix one's eyes on the future.*

—Thomas à Kempis, *Imitatio Christi*



## INTRODUCTION



### PURGATORY AND THE PARANORMAL

*F*or those who [at death] find themselves in a condition of being open to God, but still imperfectly, the journey towards full beatitude requires a purification, which the faith of the Church illustrates in the doctrine of purgatory.”

This is how Pope John Paul II explains why Purgatory is necessary, for, he continues, we are called “to be perfect like the heavenly Father during our earthly life . . . sound and flawless before God the Father ‘at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints’ (1 Thess 3:12).”<sup>1</sup>

Here John Paul reaffirms the old wisdom concerning the existence of a “state of purification” after death. Purification means atonement for sins and their effects on the soul. It is not a painless, automatic process of “growing” the soul, of attaining full “self-realization” through the acquisition of ever more insight after death, as is the soothing theory of some spiritualists. It is not an accumulation of learning, through a series of “reincarnations,” until some point of perfect wisdom is reached, as in the fantasy of some Western New

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\* References throughout this book can be found in the Bibliography.

Age disciples. Such are childish attempts to suppress man's deep awareness that the basic dimension determining his destiny in the next world is not knowledge or experience but moral purity: sin, and the traces it leaves on the soul, versus holiness.

In our culture today, of the three destinations that traditional Christian doctrine teaches may follow death and judgment—Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory—only belief in Heaven or some such happy state has widely survived. The prevailing cheap optimism holds that (if there is anything at all across the threshold of death) the life of practically everybody automatically ends up in a state of bliss. De-christened and inwardly impoverished Western man may acknowledge having his imperfections and shortcomings but doesn't look upon himself as sinful. To him, atonement for or purification from sin is a "medieval" idea.

Already 150 years ago, Cardinal John Henry Newman saw the rise of this superficial, humanist mentality:

We are cherishing a shallow religion, a hollow religion, which will not profit us in the day of trouble. The age [our age considerably more than his!] loves an exclusively cheerful religion. It is determined to make religion bright and sunny and joyous, whatever the form of it which it adopts. And it will handle the Catholic doctrine in the same spirit . . . we take what is beautiful and attractive, shrink from what is stern and painful.<sup>2</sup>

Purgatory (to say nothing of Hell), penance, expiation, God's holy Justice: these just do not fit in with today's cheerfully cheap religiosity. However, the truth remains that man has to be "sound and flawless before God the Father" when, after death, he appears before Him to render an account of his life. Only holy souls have direct access to the blissful abode where "nothing unclean shall enter."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, "every trace of attachment to evil must be eliminated, every imperfection of the soul corrected."<sup>4</sup> The place for this correction of the soul's imperfections is Purgatory.

This is not only a profound and holy mystery but also an appalling mystery, whose frightening aspects cannot be glossed over. But the reality should not terrify us. John Paul II continues, "One last important aspect which the Church's tradition has always pointed out *should*



*Facade of the church of the Sacred Heart of Suffrage in Rome.*









(on the previous page)

*Church of the Sacred Heart of Suffrage, facade: Statues of saints who, in one way or another, are important with respect to purgatory. From left to right: St. Augustine, St. Peter, St. Joseph (great intercessor for the suffering souls); in the middle: the Blessed Virgin, the principal helper of the souls; St. John, St. Paul (texts of both saints refer to Purgatory), St. Odilon of Cluny (998–1048; this abbot took initiative for the institution of All Souls Day on November 2).*

*be re-proposed today: the dimension of ‘communio’ . . . the ecclesiastical solidarity which works through prayer, prayers of suffrage, and love.”<sup>5</sup>* Here John Paul teaches us that penance and pain in Purgatory are mitigated by the comfort of mercy. In the final analysis, Purgatory is the mercy of Christ working through his Mystical Body, the Church.



*Bas-relief above the central entrance of the church: The suffering souls in Purgatory. Surrounding text: “Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine. Et lux perpetua luceat eis.” (“Lord, give them eternal rest, and may the perpetual light shine upon them,” from the Requiem Mass.) Horizontal text: “Cordi Jesu SS pro animabus igne purgatorio expiandis” (“To the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the souls that must expiate in the fire of purgatory”).*



Close to the Vatican, alongside the Tiber in Rome, stands a beautiful neo-Gothic Church (the only one in that style in the whole city), which is devoted to the Sacred Heart of Suffrage—suffrage in the meaning of help to the souls in Purgatory. In a room in the sacristy are exhibited a small number of strange, fascinating “relics”: objects bearing visible, physical traces left by souls in Purgatory. The collection is known as the *Piccolo Museo del Purgatorio* (Little Museum of Purgatory). The *Museo* and the church of the Sacred Heart of Suffrage represent two sides of Purgatory: the collection offers impressive bits of tangible evidence for the harrowing existence of the souls there, while the church itself displays the Christian comfort of the mercy and charity for the suffering souls as practiced since time immemorial by the Catholic Church. The great central triptych in the church, representing the Sacred Heart, the poor (or holy) souls, and various saints, has even been called “a visual compendium of Catholic doctrine on purgatory” by Pope Benedict XV.<sup>6</sup>

The church is a monument in honor of the mercy of the divine-human Heart of Christ for the souls in Purgatory and, at the same time, an invitation to the faithful to practice charity for them in union with His merciful heart, for the devotion to the suffering souls is inextricably linked to the devotion of the Sacred Heart. That has been made especially clear by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, the apostle of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. As Father John Croiset wrote,

The revelations she received about the sufferings of these souls, about our Divine Lord’s tender love for them and His eager desire for their deliverance, of the great efficacy of the devotion to the Sacred Heart for their early release, and the fact that . . . (she) combined these two devotions so intimately in her own person, indicate that there is such a close connection between the two devotions that the devotion to the souls in Purgatory may be said to form a part of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.<sup>7</sup>





*The Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, the angels, saints, holy Mass, and the souls in purgatory. Painting by Giuseppe and Alessandro Catani above the main altar in the church of the Sacred Heart of Suffrage. Pope Benedict XV called this painting “a visual compendium of Catholic doctrine on purgatory.”*





*Stained-glass window in the church of the Sacred Heart of Suffrage representing St. Thomas Aquinas (left) and St. Bonaventura (right), theologians of purgatory and advocates of the devotion to the poor souls.*



*Christ appears to St. Margaret-Mary Alacoque. Painting above the altar of the saint in the same church.*



*Church of the Sacred Heart of Suffrage. “Mortem nostram moriendo destruxit”: by offering up the merits of the Passion and death of Christ to God, the faithful can alleviate or shorten the suffering of the souls in purgatory.*

\* \* \*

The “paranormal” evidence displayed in the Little Museum of the church and some additional evidence, notably the burned-in hand in the *corporale* of Czestochowa in Poland, are instrumental in developing devotion to the suffering souls. It brings us nearer to the reality of Purgatory by allowing us a closer look into this awful abyss of purification.

These evidences also appeal to the modern mind, with its preference for concrete proof and witness testimony. They bear the signature of souls who have appeared from Purgatory to ask for mercy, revealing something about themselves and their condition of suffering and doing penance.

The paranormal specimens in the *Museo del Purgatorio* and an item like the “hand of Czestochowa” are the best-documented

paranormal evidence to be found in relation to contacts with the dead. The authenticity of the apparition stories linked to each of the specimens in the museum has been verified by critical priests, theologians, and trustworthy witnesses. And despite their relative rarity, they are not the only ones in existence. Uncritical credulity is of course not the right mind-set to approach them, but it is no less narrow-minded to exclude beforehand the occurrence of events other than those of everyday experience, presumptively concluding that they must be the products of superstition or even fraud. G.K. Chesterton rightly noted (in *The Incredulity of Father Brown*), "It is natural to believe in the supernatural. It never feels natural to accept only natural things."

Our present tour of Purgatory, then, will be mainly a tour of human experiences, of trustworthy apparitions of souls from the afterlife. Although we shall occasionally refer to theology, theology is not our prime focus here. But then, it is clear that many of these apparitions from the dead are nonetheless full of theological wisdom, for all reliable reports of apparitions from the dead are interesting, but the fact is that the overwhelming majority of the more elaborate, instructive, and well-documented apparitions come from the Catholic world. There seems to be a message in that fact.

The program of this book is as follows: after a few introductory considerations on the notion of Purgatory in history and on apparitions of the dead in general, we'll enter the *Museo del Purgatorio* in Rome to examine the individual items of its collection, presented to the reader by the artful work of photographer Janusz Rosikoń that will lead us to the inspection of more such pieces of evidence, beginning with the relic of Czestochowa and then to some singularly informative cases of apparitions of souls from Purgatory in the 20th century. As we try to penetrate a little into this too-often forgotten part of the next world, we may become

more keenly aware that the souls in Purgatory are in need of our help and are too often forsaken.



Confronted with some of the pieces of evidence from the *Museo* and with the stories behind them, many people understandably react with a shiver. Manifestations from beyond the tomb are indeed frightening, in particular visible apparitions, ghosts, or phantoms. And these manifestations are not only frightening when they are of demonic origin; even apparitions from heaven may incite fear. Moreover, the signals from Purgatory point to grievous suffering.

But when looking at the pictures of burned-in hands or when meditating on the stories of apparitions from Purgatory, we must keep in mind that these souls seldom unfold their whole inner condition, if such a thing were possible at all. They show only the face of their profound misery, presumably because the main reasons for appearing are to ask for mercy and to awaken the awareness of the seriousness of sin in the living, urging them to strive after holiness. But it is more difficult to understand—for the next world really transcends our earthly perceptions and experiences—that Purgatory has simultaneously a totally different dimension: the “poor souls” or “holy souls” seem to experience unimaginable consolations and joys as well. Tangible manifestations and communications from Purgatory are, so to speak, coded in the language of images and words we can understand, but that is only an approximation of the language of the hereafter. We know that grief and joy can coexist in the soul on earth, but how the extremes of suffering and rejoicing can go together in Purgatory is beyond normal human experience. Yet on balance, the place or state of purification, of God’s fathomless justice, is at the same time a place or state of God’s mercy, of hope, inner peace, and joy.





*St. Francis de Sales. Window in the church of the Sacred Heart of Suffrage.*



*In the same church: Queen of the Rosary, help of the suffering souls.*

St. Francis of Sales, a Doctor of the Church who can be called an authority on this issue, was amazingly outspoken: “The thought of Purgatory is productive rather of consolation than of terror,” he wrote. “Great as the torments of purgatory are . . . the interior consolations granted there are nevertheless so ineffable that no earthly bliss and enjoyment can equal them.”<sup>8</sup>





## CHAPTER 1



# THE NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE—AND BEYOND

Near-death experiences are well established. A percentage (5, 10, or even 20 percent, depending on the group under study) of people who have come back from the threshold of death—from a state characterized by a standstill of heartbeat and respiration, deep coma, falling away of important reflexes, and disturbed or diminished brain functioning—report impressive experiences as if they had been in a waking state. Many “saw” their body and the things that happened around it as if from above and could hear what was said around it. Then they went through a dark tunnel into a bright light, experienced an overview of their whole life, and/or met with an “entity of light” or with deceased relatives.<sup>1</sup>

This is all very suggestive of their having set a few initial steps into the afterlife, of having had a glimpse of what comes after death. In many instances, the people who returned from the near-death situation appear to have been deeply influenced for the better. They come back to life less self-centered, more intent on loving other people, and more positive toward religion.

One of the best elaborated and informative cases that can be found in the literature is the autobiography of the German-Austrian industrial manager Hellmut Laun, who had such an experience during an operation after an automobile accident in 1929. When the archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Franz König, asked him to write an account of the experience and his subsequent investigations of it, by which his life had been completely changed, his first reaction was negative: “on the one hand, because it is always hard to convey things that concern one’s own soul to a greater public; on the other, because it is difficult to make comprehensible the kind of experiences such as fell to my share.” This is a typical reaction. People with supernatural experiences want to protect their inner privacy. Many years later, he nevertheless decided to make his story public, hoping his testimony might help others “who seek God with a sincere of heart,” for his near-death experience had opened up for himself the way to God and the Church.<sup>2</sup>

The following fragments of his account are of special interest. While under an anesthetic during the emergency operation, Hellmut Laun’s life became endangered. The anesthetist told him he was concerned that Laun “would not come back” from the procedure. As for Laun himself,

Time and space ceased to exist, the contact with the environment was broken off, every feeling extinguished. But now I experienced something extraordinary: at first faintly, yet increasingly more clearly it dawned upon me that I “was there” again. I woke up as it were in an immaterial space separated from the world and captured myself as “I.” My self-awareness was absolutely identical with my being a person in the world and yet of a different nature. It is difficult to find the fitting words for that. I would rather say: I perceived again like previously in the world, but receptive, not of myself, by my own will, and yet actively, intensively, and with awe.

Note that his personal identity, his ego, his soul, was just the same, fully intact. He continued,

In this immaterial space (space not in the earthly sense) I discerned in the far distance, unclear in the beginning, a spiritual center, like a light of tremendous intensity, a Center unto which everything in that space was ordered. My “spiritual eye,” the center of my person, directed itself, as fascinated, to that still far-away center, and merely seeing it aroused in me a deep yearning to come nearer to it, as to the ultimate, most blissful goal. It looked as if everything I had ever longed and wished for in my life was put together there as in a focus, and alive in a fullness that exceeded all imagination, and orientated to that Center; and as if each creature couldn’t but strive after the most intimate bond with just that ravishing spiritual Center. Its perception was immediately accompanied with a profound feeling of happiness; for I noticed that I moved towards that most intensely desired Center, that I got nearer to it. Not in a straight line, but . . . in circles that became narrower at each revolution. That way I came nearer and nearer to the Center. At each revolution It became more distinct to me, more ravishing, and at the same time the yearning to attain this desired Goal deepened, became ever more intense. It was as if I increasingly comprehended with full clarity that no earthly good had ever sent me that much into raptures, and could have sent me into raptures, as this incomprehensible Light.

Today, after so many years, I would say that from this mysterious Center emanated an infinite fullness of life, a mysterious Everything-in-All. In that yearning to wholly arrive at this Center, there was no trace of annihilation, no thought of being extinguished in this tremendous Sun, out of which boundless power seemed to irradiate. Very clearly joined with these raptures at coming nearer was the certainty that my own “I” would find its fulfillment there.

Laun wrote this many years after the fact, from memory. The fascinating thing is that his memory, apparently an immaterial faculty, retains this experience, this perception of nonmaterial realities, at all. He translates his retained perception of immaterial realities back into earthly words and material images: distance, space, Center, Sun. The words and images he uses do not transmit these realities directly; they can only approximate them. However, irrespective of these

limitations, it is clear that the basic dimensions of the psyche turn out to be the same in the hereafter as in this life: the I, consciousness, thinking, feeling, longing for happiness and fulfillment; in other words, by death “life is changed, not taken away.” *Vita mutatur, non tollitur*.

Laun also gets a glimpse of a departed soul who was detained on the spot where it found itself and could not come nearer to the Center:

On my way to the Center I saw—as I clearly remember—a man; not in his body, and yet I saw him very real. This man, or rather this spiritual being, had its gaze fixed on that Center with an unquenchable craving, with a longing that at the same time caused deep pains because something, whatever it might be, impeded him to come nearer to the rapturous goal, if only a hair’s breadth. He was pin-pointed as it were and couldn’t move any more, although he pined for it, as I could read from his expression, with all passion, with his whole soul. . . . When I look back today, only this face, stiffened in pain, is clearly in my memory.

He thinks the unhappy figure was Voltaire. The suggestion is that he was in Hell, as there was no hope for him ever to come nearer to the Center.<sup>3</sup> Anyhow, Laun “saw” the suffering of that happiness-thirsty soul who can see the water but cannot get at it. In Laun’s vision, there was no fire, no flames. But that need not mean that the soul in Hell—or in Purgatory, for that matter—is not ablaze with a real and/or mystical fire. In a certain sense, extreme longing and a feeling of burning converge. The extreme yearning of souls in Hell or Purgatory may feel more like a scorching fire than an earthly fire to our body. As we shall see, this is the view of St. Catherine of Genoa, the “theologian of Purgatory.”

With each further revolution, with increasing approximation, the longing grew more vehement to fully get at the rapturous Center as the highest desirable good. All beings of the space beyond recognize that as clearly, like all of us perceive the common world around us with the same senses. Since the movement went

spiral-wise, the speed of approaching increased constantly. But at some point of the track I was suddenly held back. The movement came to a halt, yes went backwards, so that I moved outward again and withdrew from the yearned-for Center. . . . This backward movement was as smarting to me as approaching had sent me in raptures, and in effect the pain which increased with the growing distance consisted herein that I had to take leave of the good I had recognized as the profoundest possible happiness.

This was why he kept repeating over and over again the word “terrible,” after coming out of the anesthesia. Thereafter, his emotional life was marked by this “homesickness” for the Light, this Sun he was to identify as God. It is the bitter pain of homesickness people feel after receiving the grace of a very intimate contact with God; but in a more subtle way, not consciously recognized for what it is, it works in each human soul. This notion of homesickness is no doubt also a good designation for the longing for God of the soul in Purgatory.



In these near-death accounts, what would have been the next steps, if the experience had not been broken off and the person had not stopped on the threshold of death? Interestingly, there are several accounts of communications by souls from Purgatory that correspond to profound near-death experiences, like the one described by Hellmut Laun, and give an impression of what happens beyond them.

We shall cite two such trustworthy communications. The first comes from a deceased priest who appeared numerous times to the German princess, Eugenie von der Leyen (1867–1929), a woman who was visited in great numbers by the poor souls, begging for her aid, for holy Masses, prayers, mortifications, and other suffrages of the Catholic Church. It is evident that some persons, motivated by pity and mercy, are called to a hard life of self-denial in the service of the suffering souls. Eugenie was one of them. An emotionally stable, amiable, cheerful, and realistic woman, she shared with other privileged helpers of the poor souls the characteristic that she preferred to keep silent about her contacts with these souls; if she hadn't been

ordered by her spiritual director to keep a diary on her experiences, they would have fallen into oblivion.

Experiences such as the ones she describes, strange and perhaps incredible as they may appear when one takes cognizance of them for the first time, are of course not run-of-the-mill events. On the other hand, they are less rare than one might think. Many Catholic publications testify to the reality of such apparitions both in the past and the present, but although they are on the whole at least as well documented and often much more informative than the kind of manifestations of the dead reported in the parapsychological literature, they are largely ignored outside the Catholic world. It is the same in the field of miracles: if the “paranormal” points to “religion,” in particular, the Catholic religion, you should not take it seriously!

Aside from that, regarding reports (parapsychological and other) about manifestations of the dead, we must critically distinguish between real and pseudo-communications, real and pseudo-apparitions. The latter is the case, for example, with *spiritualist* phenomena. These two fundamentally different categories are often confused in the “scientific” parapsychological literature.

Eugenie von der Leyen reports the apparitions of the soul of a Dominican priest who informed her about the events right after death. When this soul first appeared, on September 5, 1925,<sup>4</sup> his “face was still wholly unrecognizable, a grey lump. He is rather quiet, but mutters incomprehensible words, it seems Latin.”

Eugenie continues in her journal,

*September, 10.* The Dominican is not frightening, but very often around.

*September, 13.* The Dominican is a Father I have known well, a Frenchman. Was a long time with me, nodded assent when I started praying.

*September, 17.* I was very sad about something this night and cried. Then a hand was laid on my head. I looked up, it was the Dominican. He said: “Why do you weep?” I: “Because I am not content with myself.” . . . He: “Have confidence and be humble!” I: “How can I help you then?” He: “By mortification.” Then he remained for a long time. Is not scary at all. It is the first apparition

that began talking unasked for” [Typically, ghosts, i.e., souls from purgatory, seem to wait humbly until their host questions them.]

On September 27 the priest gives the information we are interested in here:

He was there for long time. I: “Please tell me if we contemplate Our Lord at death at once.” He: “Yes, an awful shivering of the soul in adoration and then sinking away in the Purification.” I: “Aren’t you allowed to say more to me?” He: “No. The more you love God, the greater the beatitude, act according to that!”

He appeared to her for a few months; she to speed up his purification with her prayers and mortifications, and he to give her some priestly advice. In contrast with so many frightening apparitions of souls from Purgatory, Eugenie noted that “I am not at all afraid of the Dominican, I rather enjoy his coming.” Although still in Purgatory, this soul could tell her, on November 2, “I am doing fine.”

The point the Dominican makes is that the soul of the deceased indeed arrives at its destination, the Light, God: “an awful shivering of the soul in adoration.” That is apparently the moment of truth; in the face of the eternal Light and the infinite Purity, the soul understands her imperfections and gravitates to the place or state of purification. It seems to be a spontaneous, natural movement: “then sinking away in the Purification.”



Our second illustration of what is to come beyond the point where the near-death experience stops is taken from the communications of a soul not in Purgatory but in Hell. This is the soul of a young woman from Munich, who, after dying in a car accident in 1937, appeared to a girlfriend who was a novice in a monastery.<sup>5</sup> The deceased told her former friend to stop praying for her, as she was in Hell, and gave a startling account of how her way of life and her repeated rejections of the invitations of grace had finally brought her to her terrible destiny. A week after her death, she “wrote” a “letter,” which her friend read in a vision that deeply and clearly imprinted itself on her memory:<sup>6</sup>

There, all of a sudden, during our drive home, my husband was blinded by a car from the opposite direction. . . . “Jesses!” it went through me. Not as a prayer, only as a scream. A crushing pain pressed me together—in comparison with the present pain, a trifle. Then I was senseless. Curious, that morning, inexplicably, the idea crossed my mind: you might go to Mass once again. It sounded like imploring. Clearly and resolutely my “No” cut off this thread of thinking . . .

As for me, I suddenly woke up from the darkness of the moment of my departure. Saw myself flooded as with a glaring light. It was at the same place where my corpse was laying. It happened like in a theater, when the lights extinguish in one moment; the curtains rustle apart; in a dismal light an unsuspected scene emerges. The scene of my life.

As in a mirror my soul showed itself to me. The graces trampled underfoot since my childhood, until the last No against God. I felt like a murderer to whom his inanimate victim is presented during the trial.<sup>7</sup> Repent? Never! Be ashamed? Never! But any less could I endure it being under the eyes of the God I had rejected. So only one thing was left: to flee. Like Cain fled from the corpse of Abel, so my soul tore itself away from this horrific sight.

That was the Particular Judgment! The invisible Judge spoke: be gone!

There my soul went down like a sulfuric-yellow shadow to the abode of eternal torment.

With her “last No against God,” she entered eternity. “If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place so ever it shall fall, there shall it be,” says the Bible.<sup>8</sup> Awakening in a new light, seeing her own (dead) body, a vision of her whole life from the viewpoint of good and evil: these are familiar elements in near-death experiences. But a step further is her definitive conclusion, apparently reached in the presence of God, Who in this case is not adored and intensely desired but hated. The flight from God, down to Hell, is as spontaneous a movement of the soul as the “sinking away” into Purgatory in the case of the Dominican priest. Although in the immaterial “space” hereafter, there is no up and down, both movements away



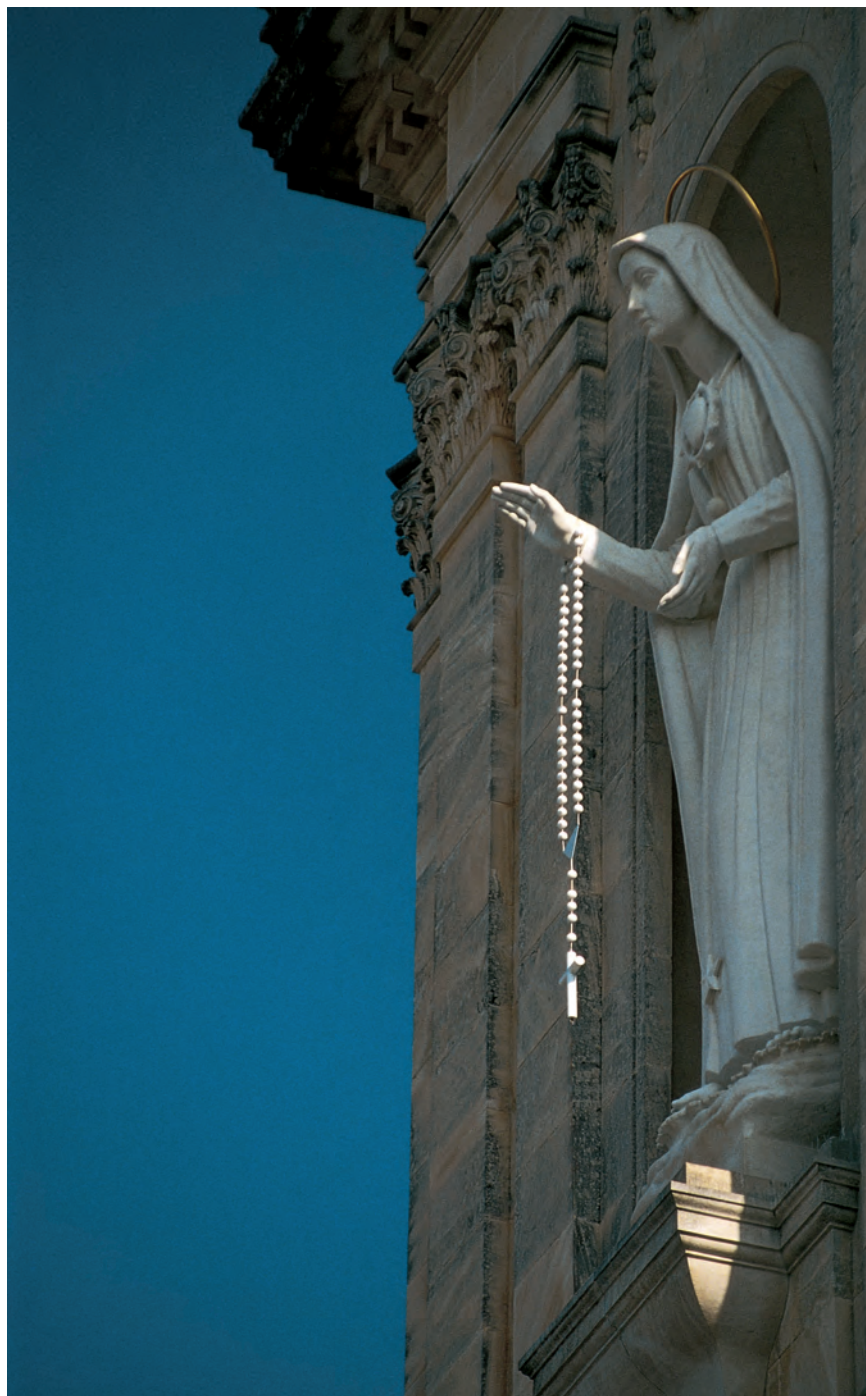
from God are experienced as falling movements, seemingly caused by the soul's weight of sin and its effects.

St. Faustina Kowalska (1905–1938) relates in her *Diary* her mystical experience of the complete moral self-insight that one day will be revealed to every man at the particular judgment after death:<sup>9</sup>

Once I was summoned to the judgment [seat] of God. I stood alone before the Lord. Jesus appeared such as we know Him during His Passion . . . Suddenly I saw the complete condition of my soul as God sees it. I could clearly see all that is displeasing to God. I did not know that even the smallest transgressions will have to be accounted for. What a moment! Who can describe it? To stand before the Thrice-Holy God! Jesus asked me, "Who are you?" I answered, "I am Your servant, Lord." "You are guilty of one day of fire in purgatory." I wanted to throw myself immediately into the flames of purgatory, but Jesus stopped me.

St. Faustina transmits the awfulness of the soul's confrontation with the Eternal, its insight that perfect holiness is required before it can enjoy God's presence—the smallest imperfections having more weight than even a pure soul as Faustina's had been aware—and the instinctive impulse of the soul to be cleansed, even in the flames of Purgatory.

These examples give at least some impression of the crucial moment when the soul has to render an account of its whole life in the face of God. That is the awful hour of truth: salvation—with or without Purgatory (the latter seems more rare)—or damnation. One of the main reasons for the occasional apparitions of souls from the dead is undoubtedly to urge the living to draw their consequences from this reality.



*The basilica at Fatima. The Blessed Virgin reminds the pilgrim of her call to pray the Rosary.*