

Caesar of Heisterbach

Part 3

1180 ca-1240 ca

PURGATORY

This is the conclusion of the story narrated by Caesar of Heisterbach on the fate of the soul of the nephew of a Bishop: “One year later the deceased appeared to the Bishop after the Holy Mass. He was pale, consumed, thin and dressed in dark. From his expression and his clothing one could understand his status. When the Bishop asked him how things were going for him and where he came from, the deceased answered: ‘I am suffering and I come from the place of punishment, but be thanked for your prayers and for your love, because thanks to your prayers and alms and spiritual benefits that were offered for me in your entire diocese, this year took away from me one thousand years of Purgatory and if you will devote such prayers and offerings and sacrifices for another year in supplication of my soul like you did for this year, I will be completely free.’ Hearing this the Bishop was filled with joy, thanked God and sent other letters as he had done the previous

year sharing the vision he experienced with all in parishes and monasteries and asking that all be willing to continue for another year in the prayers and supplications for the soul of the poor deceased. And he himself continued his prayer and alms and Holy Masses even with more diligence and trust than before.

“The second year having passed, after the Bishop celebrated his special Mass for the deceased nephew, he appeared to him again, but this time clothed in white as snow and with a serene and joyful face, and said: ‘Everything went as I desired.’ And he said again to the Bishop: ‘May the Omnipotent God reward your love, Most Reverend Father, because thanks to your zeal I have been removed from the punishments and now I enter in the joy of my Lord. Thus these two years of prayers had counted for two thousand years of punishment in Purgatory!’ From that moment on the Bishop did not see him anymore.”

