

# Saint Paul of the Cross

1694 - 1775

PURGATORY

Saint Paul of the Cross took to heart the fate of the Souls of Purgatory. In supplication for them, he celebrated Mass every time he could and recited the Rosary. His biographers recount that at night a procession of souls of Purgatory went to the Saint to ask him for prayers and supplications. This is how he himself reports it: "At that time I used to say prayers desperately and endure very lengthy penances because I felt such great compassion. One time I took a bundle of chains and I scourged myself so much that I fainted and for many days I was unable to move. I began to wonder whether there could be some deception, because I did much penance without the order of obedience, sustained by the compassion towards those poor souls. Having this doubt, Our Lady Most Holy appeared to me, calling me the first time, a second time and a third time. I simply did not respond, remembering that one time a confessor had told me not to respond in such circumstances; however I prostrated myself with my face on the ground with complete reverence, and my Guardian Angel lifted me up from the ground and I heard him telling me: 'In order that you may know the obligation you have to pray for those poor souls, come with us.' And thus they lead me to Purgatory. Our Lady Most Holy opened Purgatory for me and I saw it. Oh! What punishments, daughter, oh! What punishments! I would almost say that in some way the punishments were worse

than those of the damned, being the souls far from God, Whom they loved so much."

Another time Saint Paul had the vision of a deceased priest, as he narrates himself: "I knew a priest friend, a good man, but I warned him openly more than once. When hearing my words he seemed to be remorseful, but later he went back as before. When one night I heard knocking at my door, I said 'Go away!', believing that it was the devil coming to disturb me. A little later, I heard knocking anew. 'Go away!', I said again. After a little while he returned to knock for a third time. At that time not knowing who it was, I said 'I command you on behalf of God that you tell me who you are and what you want?' And then I heard him saying to me: 'I am the soul of that certain priest: I died this night at 6 and I was condemned to Purgatory due to the faults that you warned me about. Oh! What Punishments! I feel like I have been in Purgatory for thousands of years!' I then looked at the clock that I had for an alarm and saw that it was 6:15, whence I said to him: 'It's a quarter of an hour since you have expired and they seem thousands of years to you?' And the soul of that priest replied: 'Yes, they seem like thousands of years to me!' And I promised to entrust him to God with prayers. The vision having disappeared, I could not restrain myself: I began a penance, with fervor; but afterwards I did not feel consoled



at all, neither had I any understanding that the soul was liberated. I restarted the penance and prayed to the Lord with very deeply felt expressions."

