

I suppose there is none of us who expects to be lost. We know and feel the greatness of the risk we are running; but to expect to be lost would be the sin of despair. It is not so with Purgatory. I suppose we all expect, or think ourselves sure, to go there. I can hardly imagine any one of us expecting to escape Purgatory. So it very much concerns us to know the common views of Purgatory, which prevail in the Church.

The first of these views is that the pains are extremely severe. The length of the suffering may be understood in two ways: first, as of actual length of time, and, secondly, as of seeming length from the excess of pain. With regard to the first, if we look into the revelations of Sister Francesca of Pampeluna, we shall find, among some hundreds of cases, that by far the great majority suffered thirty, forty, or sixty years.

This should teach us to have a greater watchfulness over ourselves, and more unwearied perseverance in praying for the departed. We are tempted to stop praying too soon, imagining with a foolish idea that our friends are freed from Purgatory much sooner than they really are.

If Sister Francesca saw the souls of many fervent Carmelites, some of whom had even performed miracles in their lifetime, still in Purgatory ten, twenty, thirty, sixty years after their death, and still not near their deliverance, as many told her, what must become of us and ours?

In the Chronicles of the Franciscans, the life of St. Francis Jerome, and elsewhere, of souls appearing an hour or two after death, and thinking they had been many years in Purgatory. Such may be the Purgatory of those who are caught up to meet the Lord at the Last Day.

Father Frederick Faber on Purgatory