

## Suite of Modern Indulgences

### Artisanal Gratification

An old  
potter friend  
sculpts her own  
grave marker,  
a soaring  
ceramic,  
reptilian,  
Gaudiesque  
structure.  
She hopes  
it will last  
since she  
will be dead  
much longer  
than alive.  
Someday soon  
the last  
person alive  
who knew  
her firsthand  
will die.  
She crafts  
a small dish  
in the top  
from which  
birds can eat  
or drink.  
She finds it  
a comfort  
to think  
of joining  
the dead,  
the largest  
human  
population.

## Catholic Currency

In Gertrude the Great's eleventh-century German convent God appeared in a vision to tell her that He longed inexpressibly for someone to ask Him to release souls from purgatory, to have near Him those for whom He paid so dear a price.

The Mission To Empty Purgatory at [www.MTEP.com](http://www.MTEP.com) has done the purgatory population math based on census records and the presupposition that human history began 50,000 years ago. The rise in sin rates from fatalities in the fetus boom since Roe vs. Wade is also factored in.

In 1968 the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court which catalogs indulgences and handles issues related to the forgiveness of sins, published a list of 70 actions and prayers for the faithful to decrease Purgatory time.

Pope Francis is dragging the Church kicking and screaming into the 21st century. According to the same Vatican court, we can now shave time off Purgatory just by following the Pope's tweets. A believer can still subtract seven years by climbing the Roman Sacred Steps, the dismantled steps from Pontius Pilate's house in Jerusalem that were transported and reassembled in Rome in 400 A.D.

## Digital Age Afterlife

I might want a barcode on my gravestone.  
This is available from the Living Headstone  
line of memorial products. A smart phone  
reads the code and directs visitors  
to a person's memorial page. My remaining life  
could consist of planning my archive  
but my future mourners will likely be too busy  
archiving themselves to read messages from me  
on a posthumous email service.

375,000 Facebook users die each year.  
Academics and social-media experts  
explore estate law and grief ramifications.  
Entrepreneurs build new businesses.  
Your Digital Afterlife is a tips-and-planning book  
from TheDigitalBeyond.com, with advice  
about pre-programming tweets and other  
afterlife management strategies  
like appointing a digital executor.

I would like a link on my memorial page  
to photos of galaxies and heavenly bodies  
from Google Space for the quicksand feeling  
of zooming in to grave level, and its inverse,  
the dizzying trajectory up, since one life,  
to be seen and held in the mind  
must be far enough away that one grave  
takes its proper place besides billions  
of mostly unremarkable lives and deaths.