

# Message From The Pastor

**February 26, 2021**

## Purgatory - Is It For Me?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines purgatory as a “purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven,” which is experienced by those “who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified” (CCC 1030). It also notes that “this final purification of the elect is entirely different from the punishment of the damned” (CCC 1031).

The said “purification” is needed. It is written in the Book of Revelation, “nothing which is unclean will enter the presence of God in heaven.” (Rev. 21:27). Indeed, even though our mortal sins may have been forgiven before we die, there still may be many impurities in us. And, it is possible the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven, whether they be mortal or venial, may not have been completed in this life.

What are some of the impurities which may remain in us even though our sins have been forgiven? Certainly, the list of them would be particular to each person. There are many examples. For some it may be the remnants of a life of licentious. For others it may be the ongoing attachment to material things of this world. Or, it could be the need of purification from bad habits which a person could not overcome in this life.

Moreover, what is the “temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven, but not completed prior to a person’s death?” Temporal punishment is the “loving discipline” of our heavenly Father which He gives to a person to make reparation for his/her sins before death. This temporal punishment remains even after sin is forgiven. Some examples include Adam and Eve getting thrown out of Paradise when they ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis), and the Israelites losing the privilege of seeing the Promised Land because they worshiped the golden bull (Exodus). In this life, forms of temporal punishment would be doing voluntary penances, such as fasting and almsgiving. Unlike eternal punishment, temporal punishment remains only for the period of time it takes for the expiation of one's sins.

Our Church takes seriously the notion that “nothing unclean shall enter heaven.” From this it is inferred that a less than cleansed soul isn’t fit for heaven. It needs to be cleansed or “purged” of its remaining imperfections. It is an absolute requirement, as Hebrews 12:14 states that we must strive “for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

Peace

Fr. Marc