

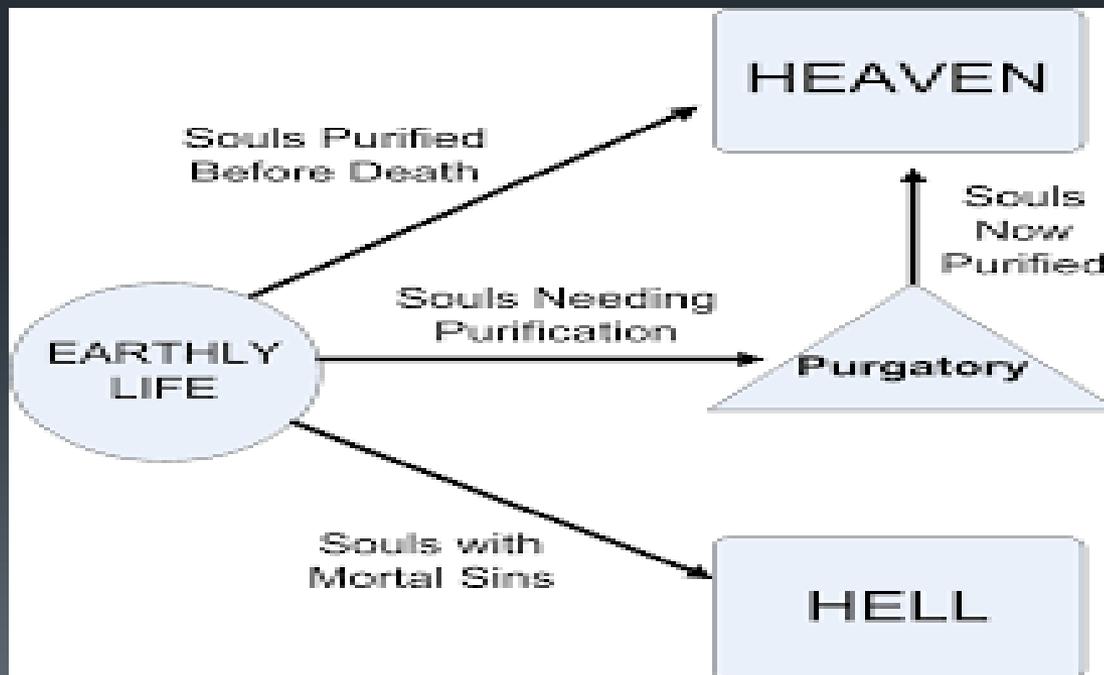
# Inside the Vatican: Purgatory

The Hell Before Heaven?



# What does the Church say?

- “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (CCC1030).

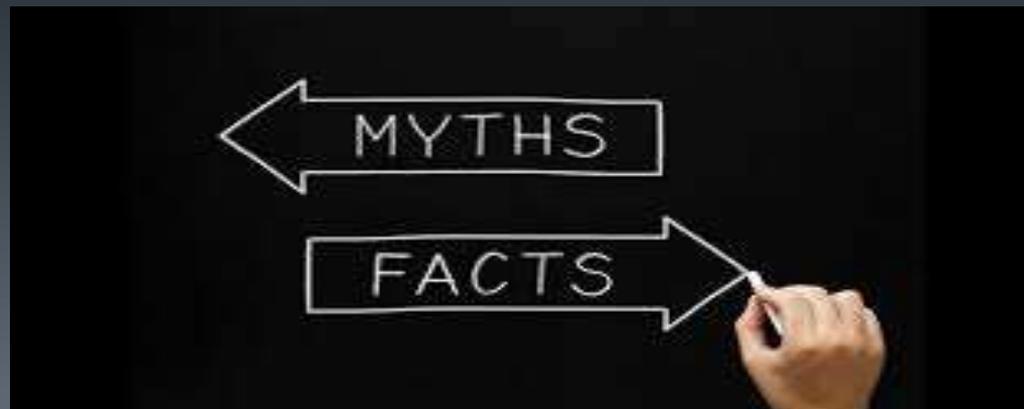


Heaven is only exit from Purgatory

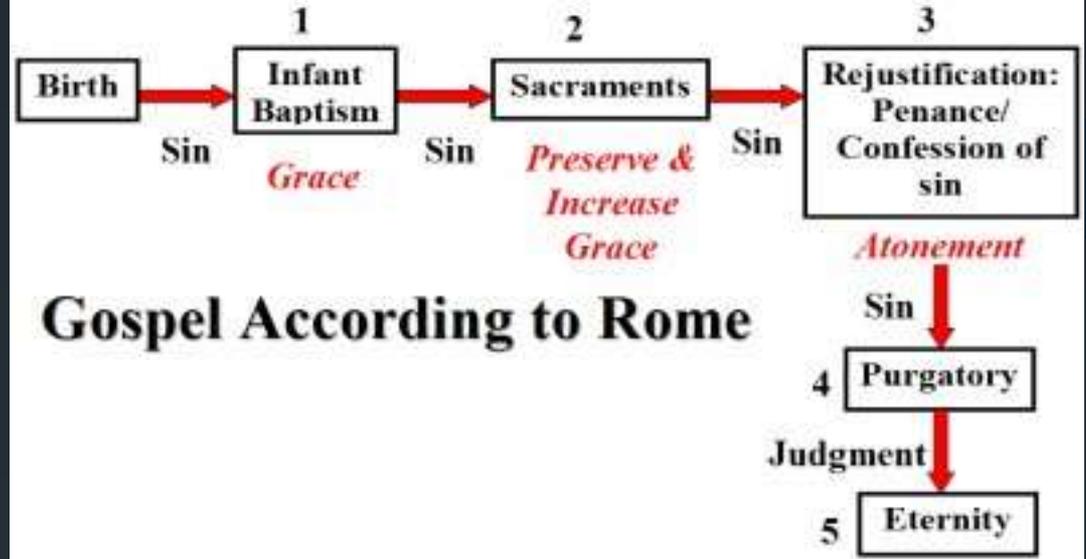


# Oppositions/Misconceptions

- 1. Purgatory is not necessary because Jesus died for our sins
- 2. Purgatory is not biblical
- 3. Purgatory was not part of the early church and was invented in the middle ages
- 4. Purgatory is a bad place



# Definition



- "The place and state in which souls suffer for a while and are purged after death, before they go to Heaven, on account of their sins.
- Venial sins, which have never in life been remitted by an act of repentance or love or by good deeds, and grave sins, **the guilt of which with its eternal punishment has indeed been removed by God after an act of repentance** but for which there is still left a debt of temporal punishment due to his **justice** on account of the imperfection of that repentance, must be purged away after death by the pain of intense longing for God, whose blissful vision is delayed, and also, as is commonly taught, by some pain of sense inflicted probably by material fire." —*A Catholic Dictionary*

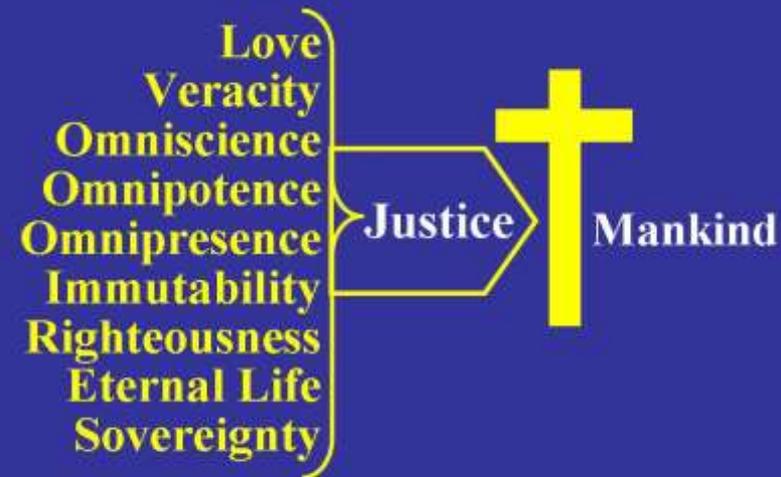
## Definition Cont.

- “For if the debt of punishment is not paid in full after the stain of sin has been washed away by contrition, nor again are venial sins always removed when mortal sins are remitted, and if justice demands that sin be set in order by due punishment, it follows that one who after contrition for his fault and after being absolved, dies before making due satisfaction, is punished after this life. “  
—St. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica*



# Simplified

- Sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ
  - Frees us from ETERNAL punishment
  - Promises Life after death
- BUT: Sins have consequences
  - TEMPORAL punishment (CCC 1472-73)
  - Attachment to the earth/detachment from God's love
- Temporal punishment a grace
  - Justice of God
  - Love of God (discipline)



# Scriptural Evidence



## 2 Maccabees 12:39-46

- “Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out...thus **he made atonement for the dead** that they might be **freed from this sin**” (v. 42,46)
- Proves from an historical perspective that Jews believed in praying and making atonement for the dead before Christ
- Does not mention purgatory as a place but solidifies the belief that the dead can be prayed for
  - Dead are not beyond help





## Matthew 5:25-26

- “Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge and...you will be thrown in prison. Amen, I say to you, **you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.**”
- Metaphorical to judgment of God – Tertullian *De Anima* 208 A.D.
  - Sermon on the Mount: Jesus teaches on Heaven, Hell, moral & venial sin in both literal and metaphorical meaning
- *Phulake*: Greek word used here for “prison”
  - Same word used in 1 Peter 3:19 ( “holding place” where Jesus was when he died to free those souls in prison).



# 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

- “ If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones...the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and **the fire will test** the quality of each one’s work. If the work stands...that person will receive a wage. But if someone’s work is burned up...**the person will be saved but only as through fire.**”
- Judgment of God
  - Tested after death
- Not a reference to Hell because souls are being saved
- Fire used metaphorically in scripture:
  - 1. Purifying agent (Mal 3:2-3, Mt 3:11, Mk 9:49)
  - 2. Consumes the entity entirely (Hb 1:13, Rv 21:27)

# Early Church and Purgatory

- Purgatory solidified by Council of Florence (1449) and Council of Trent (1563)
- "A woman, after the death of her husband . . . prays for his soul and asks that he may, while waiting, find rest; and that he may share in the first resurrection." – Tertullian (*Monogamy* 10:1–2 [A.D. 216]).
- "That there should be some fire even after this life is not incredible, and it can be inquired into and either be discovered or left hidden whether some of the faithful may be saved, some more slowly and some more quickly in the greater or lesser degree in which they loved the good things that perish, through a certain purgatorial fire" - Augustine (*Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Charity* 18:69 [A.D. 421]).

# Roman Catacombs

- Burial tombs for early Christians
- Painted murals and written prayers
- “The faithful prayed for the dead, entreating God to protect their souls, as He protected Daniel in the lion's den, the three young men in the furnace, Noe in the ark, and Susanna against the two elders. With the same intention, and in order to invite the visitors of these subterranean cemeteries to pray for the dead...”



# Helping Non-Catholics Understand Purgatory

- Non-Catholics afraid when discussing purgatory
- Non-Catholics do not understand purgatory b/c they don't understand confession or difference between venial and mortal sin
- Non-Catholics pray for the souls of their deceased loved ones
- Purgatory is on God's time not earthly time
- Purgatory prepares ones soul for heaven
  - Dating prepares one for marriage
  - Parallel to the Israelites in the desert before entering the Promise Land
- Catholic church solidifies Christian beliefs

