

**Comparing and Contrasting  
Purgatory of the Latin/Roman  
Tradition with the Eastern  
Tradition of Final Theosis**

- **INTRODUCTION:**
- **AN EXAMINATION OF THE ISSUE OF PURGATORY IN THE LATIN CHURCH AND FINAL THEOSIS IN THE EASTERN CHURCHES, HIGHLIGHTS THE THEOLOGICAL ROLLAR-COASTER BETWEEN EAST AND WEST.**
- **IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM THERE IS A SHARED SEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING BY THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.**

- **IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOLASTICISM IN THE WEST A DIVERGENCE OF DEFINITION OCCURS. REVEALING THE PATRISTIC AND MONASTIC INFLUENCED APPROACH OF THE EAST AND THE ARISTOTELIAN AND ACADEMIC (SCHOOLMEN) APPROACH OF THE WEST.**
- **IN THE MODERN PERIOD A LESS MEDIEVAL APPROACH IN THE LATIN CHURCH THAT RE-AFFIRMS A MORE PATRISTIC UNDERSTANDING, WHILE MAINTAINING THE MEDIEVAL TERM “PURGATORY”.**

# BIBLICAL REFERENCES: PURGATORY

***"And making a gathering, he [Judas] sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."***

***Second Maccabees 12:43-46***

**The previous quote from the Second Book of Maccabees is usually cited as the foundational Scriptural reference for the doctrine of Purgatory. Judas Maccabee the great liberator of the Jewish people from foreign dominance, sends a stipend to the Jewish priests for his deceased soldiers whom he loved, and who died fighting for the law of God, so that their sins may be forgiven and they might receive resurrection from the abode of Sheol (the shadowy place of the dead).**

**“MAKE FRIENDS QUICKLY WITH YOUR ACCUSER, WHILE YOU ARE GOING WITH HIM TO COURT, LEST YOUR ACCUSER HAND YOU OVER TO THE JUDGE, AND THE JUDGE TO THE GUARD, AND YOU BE PUT IN PRISON; TRULY I SAY TO YOU, YOU WILL NEVER GET OUT TILL YOU HAVE PAID THE LAST PENNY.” MATTHEW 5:25-26**

**- TERTULLIAN IN *DE ANIMA* 58, WRITTEN IN CA. AD 208, REFERENCES THIS SCRIPTURE IN SUPPORT OF HIS THEOLOGY OF WHAT LATER WILL BE CALLED PURGATORY**

***IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED UP, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS, THOUGH HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, BUT ONLY AS THROUGH FIRE. - 1 CORINTHIANS 3:15***

***"I WILL BRING THE ONE THIRD THROUGH FIRE, AND I WILL REFINE THEM AS SILVER IS REFINED, AND I WILL TEST THEM AS GOLD IS TESTED" - ZECHARIAH 13:9***

***“WHOEVER IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME, AND WHOEVER DOES NOT GATHER WITH ME SCATTERS. AND SO I TELL YOU, EVERY KIND OF SIN AND SLANDER CAN BE FORGIVEN, BUT BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE SPIRIT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN. ANYONE WHO SPEAKS A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN WILL BE FORGIVEN, BUT ANYONE WHO SPEAKS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN, EITHER IN THIS AGE OR IN THE AGE TO COME” - MATTHEW 12:30-32***

**REFERENCED BY POPE SAINT GREGORY (DIED 604) AND THE COUNCIL OF LYONS (1274).**



## ***BIBLICAL REFERENCES: THEOSIS***

***JESUS ANSWERED, "IS IT NOT WRITTEN IN YOUR LAW, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'? - JOHN 10:34***

***{REFERRING TO...}***

***I say, "You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you; - Psalm 82:6***

***NOW THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT, AND WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM. AND ALL OF US, WITH UNVEILED FACES, SEEING THE GLORY OF THE LORD AS THOUGH REFLECTED IN A MIRROR, ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM ONE DEGREE OF GLORY TO ANOTHER; FOR THIS COMES FROM THE LORD, THE SPIRIT. - 2 CORINTHIANS 3:17-18***

***FOR BY THESE HE HAS GRANTED TO US HIS PRECIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT PROMISES, SO THAT BY THEM YOU MAY BECOME PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, HAVING ESCAPED THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD BY LUST. - 2 PETER 1:4***

**THE LANGUAGE OF II PETER IS TAKEN UP BY ST IRENAEUS, IN HIS FAMOUS PHRASE, 'IF THE WORD HAS BEEN MADE MAN, IT IS SO THAT MEN MAY BE MADE GODS' (ADV. HAER V, PREF.). IN THE FOURTH CENTURY, ST. ATHANASIUS WILL REPEAT IRENAEUS ALMOST WORD FOR WORD.**

***FOR ALL WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD ARE CHILDREN OF GOD. FOR YOU DID NOT RECEIVE A SPIRIT OF SLAVERY TO FALL BACK INTO FEAR, BUT YOU HAVE RECEIVED A SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. WHEN WE CRY, 'ABBA! FATHER!' IT IS THAT VERY SPIRIT BEARING WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST—IF, IN FACT, WE SUFFER WITH HIM SO THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED WITH HIM. - ROMANS 8:14-17***

***IN THE SAME WAY WE ALSO, WHEN WE WERE NOT OF AGE, WERE ENSLAVED TO THE ELEMENTAL POWERS OF THE WORLD. BUT WHEN THE FULLNESS OF TIME HAD COME, GOD SENT HIS SON, BORN OF A WOMAN, BORN UNDER THE LAW, TO RANSOM THOSE UNDER THE LAW, SO THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE ADOPTION. AS PROOF THAT YOU ARE CHILDREN, GOD SENT THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO OUR HEARTS, CRYING OUT, "ABBA, FATHER!" SO YOU ARE NO LONGER A SLAVE BUT A CHILD, AND IF A CHILD THEN ALSO AN HEIR, THROUGH GOD. - GALATIANS 4:3-7***

# **NON-CHRISTIAN NOTIONS OF PURGATORY**

## ***Zoroastrian:***

**Hamīstagān (plural of Hamīstak, “in balance, stationary”, also Pahlavi Gyāg ī Hammestagān, “place for the mixed ones”; Avestan misvan gātu): Zoroastrian purgatory, a neutral place between heaven and hell where souls go if their good deeds are equal (evenly balanced) to their evil deeds; (from, “Zoroastrian influence upon Jewish Afterlife: Hell punishments in Arda Wiraz and Medieval Visionary Midrashim” by Ralfs Kokins, 2010)**

**Many scholars feel this doctrine developed later in Zoroastrianism, as Islam was replacing it as the majority religion in Persia/Iran.**

***Plato:***

**...the souls which came from earth curiously enquiring about the things above, and the souls which came from heaven about the things beneath...told one another of what had happened by the way, those from below weeping and sorrowing at the remembrance of the things which they had endured and seen in their journey beneath the earth (now the journey lasted a thousand years), while those from above were describing heavenly delights and visions of inconceivable beauty. The Story, Glaucon, would take too long to tell; but the sum was this: –He said that for every wrong which they had done to any one they suffered tenfold; or once in a hundred years –such being reckoned to be the length of man’s life, and the penalty being thus paid ten times in a thousand years. - from, Book X, The Republic, by Plato.**

## *Virgil*

**So they are scourged by torments, and pay the price for former sins: some are hung, stretched out, to the hollow winds, the taint of wickedness is cleansed for others in vast gulfs, or burned away with fire: each spirit suffers its own: then we are sent through wide Elysium, and we few stay in the joyous fields, for a length of days, till the cycle of time, complete, removes the hardened stain, and leaves pure ethereal thought, and the brightness of natural air. - from, Book VI, *Aeneid*, by Virgil**



# THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

## THEOSIS AND PRAYER FOR THE DEAD

- **Saint Irenaeus (130-202AD), *Adversus Haereses (On the Detection and Overthrow of the So-Called Gnosis)***

**God had "become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself." He added:**

**Do we cast blame on him [God] because we were not made gods from the beginning, but were at first created merely as men, and then later as gods? Although God has adopted this course out of his pure benevolence, that no one may charge him with discrimination or stinginess, he declares, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are sons of the Most High."  
... For it was necessary at first that nature be exhibited, then after that what was mortal would be conquered and swallowed up in immortality.**

**CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (C.150-215AD) *EXHORTATION TO THE GREEKS***

***"YEA, I SAY, THE WORD OF GOD BECAME A MAN SO THAT YOU MIGHT LEARN FROM A MAN HOW TO BECOME A GOD."***

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**SAINT ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA (C.296-373) *AGAINST THE ARIANS, THE INCARNATION***

***"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE GODS. ... JUST AS THE LORD, PUTTING ON THE BODY, BECAME A MAN, SO ALSO WE MEN ARE BOTH DEIFIED THROUGH HIS FLESH, AND HENCEFORTH INHERIT EVERLASTING LIFE."***  
***ATHANASIUS ALSO OBSERVED: "FOR THE SON OF GOD BECAME MAN SO THAT WE MIGHT BECOME GOD."***

**SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354-430), *ON THE PSALMS***

***"BUT HE HIMSELF THAT JUSTIFIES ALSO DEIFIES, FOR BY JUSTIFYING HE MAKES SONS OF GOD. 'FOR HE HAS GIVEN THEM POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD' [REFERRING TO JOHN 1:12]. IF THEN WE HAVE BEEN MADE SONS OF GOD, WE HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE GODS." "TO MAKE HUMAN BEINGS GODS," AUGUSTINE SAID, "HE WAS MADE MAN WHO WAS GOD" (SERMON 192.1.1). AUGUSTINE GOES ON TO WRITE THAT "[THEY] ARE NOT BORN OF HIS SUBSTANCE, THAT THEY SHOULD BE THE SAME AS HE, BUT THAT BY FAVOUR THEY SHOULD COME TO HIM..."***

**JUSTIN MARTYR (C. 100-165) *DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO***

***"[MEN] WERE MADE LIKE GOD, FREE FROM SUFFERING AND DEATH, PROVIDED THAT THEY KEPT HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND WERE DEEMED DESERVING OF THE NAME OF HIS SONS, AND YET THEY, BECOMING LIKE ADAM AND EVE, WORK OUT DEATH FOR THEMSELVES; LET THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALM BE HELD JUST AS YOU WISH, YET THEREBY IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT ALL MEN ARE DEEMED WORTHY OF BECOMING "GODS," AND OF HAVING POWER TO BECOME SONS OF THE HIGHEST."***

- **Saint Gregory of Nyssa (c.335-395) *The Great Catechism, and On Christian Perfection***
- **"Since the God who was manifested infused Himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of His grace, He disseminated Himself in every believer."**
- **"For just as He in Himself assimilated His own human nature to the power of the Godhead, being a part of the common nature, but not being subject to the inclination to sin which is in that nature (for it says: "He did no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth), so, also, will He lead each person to union with the Godhead if they do nothing unworthy of union with the Divine."**

- **Saint Gregory the Theologian (c.329-390) *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius***
- **Likewise, he argues that the mediator "pleads even now as Man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the Body which He assumed, until He make me God by the power of His Incarnation."**
- **"Through the medium of the mind he had dealings with the flesh, being made that God on earth, which is Man: Man and God blended. They became a single whole, the stronger side predominating, in order that I might be made God to the same extent that he was made man."**

**SAINT BASIL THE GREAT (330-379), *ON THE SPIRIT***

**WROTE THAT "BECOMING A GOD IS THE HIGHEST  
GOAL OF ALL"**

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## **THE CONTROVERSY:**

**PURGATORY AS A PHYSICAL PLACE**

**THE FIRES OF PURGATORY**

**INDULGENCES**

# THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DEFINITION

## First Council of Lyon

**Dogmatic definition of purgatory was given in 1245: the First Council of Lyon declared that, on Scriptural grounds and because the Greeks too "are said to believe and to affirm that the souls of those who after a penance has been received yet not performed, or who, without mortal sin yet die with venial and slight sin, can be cleansed after death and can be helped by the suffrages of the Church, we, since they say a place of purgation of this kind has not been indicated to them with a certain and proper name by their teachers, we indeed, calling it purgatory according to the traditions and authority of the Holy Fathers, wish that in the future it be called by that name in their area. For in that transitory fire certainly sins, though not criminal or capital, which before have not been remitted through penance but were small and minor sins, are cleansed, and these weigh heavily even after death, if they have been forgiven in this life."**



# **THE CONTROVERSY**

**THE BIBLICAL AND PATRISTIC SOURCES REPRESENT THE SHARED BELIEF IN CHRISTIAN WEST AND EAST, THAT PRAYER FOR THE DEAD IS EFFICACIOUS, AND THAT THE ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD FOR THOSE WHO SHARE IN THE SALVATION OF CHRIST IS ONGOING.**

**THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEGINS WITH THE USE OF THE TERM PURGATORY.**

**IN THE MEDIEVAL WEST, MANY POPULAR THEOLOGIANS DEFINED PURGATORY AS A SPECIFIC PLACE, WHERE PEOPLE ESSENTIALLY SAT AROUND AND SUFFERED. SOME THEOLOGIANS WENT SO FAR AS TO IMPLY THAT A LITERAL FIRE BURNS THOSE WHO SUFFER IN PURGATORY. IT WAS ALSO POPULAR TO TALLY PERIODS OF TIME THAT PEOPLE SPENT IN PURGATORY FOR VARIOUS OFFENSES.**

THE CONCEPTION OF PURGATORY AS A PHYSICAL PLACE DATES TO THE 12TH CENTURY, THE HEYDAY OF MEDIEVAL OTHERWORLD-JOURNEY NARRATIVES AND OF PILGRIMS' TALES ABOUT ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY, A CAVELIKE ENTRANCE TO PURGATORY ON A REMOTE ISLAND IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

AS LATE AS 1220, HOWEVER, CAESARIUS OF HEISTERBACH, A CISTERCIAN MONK AND PREACHER, THOUGHT THAT PURGATORY COULD BE IN SEVERAL PLACES AT ONCE.

WITH HIS PURGATORIO, IN WHICH THE "SECOND KINGDOM" OF THE AFTERLIFE IS A SEVEN-STORY MOUNTAIN SITUATED AT THE ANTIPODES TO JERUSALEM, DANTE ALIGHIERI (1265–1321) CREATED A POETIC SYNTHESIS OF THEOLOGY, PTOLEMAIC COSMOLOGY, AND MORAL PSYCHOLOGY DEPICTING THE GRADUAL PURIFICATION OF THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD IN THE HUMAN SOUL.

**AUGUSTINE ([ENARRATION ON PSALM 37, NO. 3](#)) SPEAKS OF THE PAIN WHICH PURGATORIAL FIRE CAUSES AS MORE SEVERE THAN ANYTHING A MAN CAN SUFFER IN THIS LIFE, "GRAVIOR ERIT IGNIS QUAM QUIDQUID POTEST HOMO PATI IN HAC VITA" (P.L., COL. 397). [GREGORY THE GREAT](#) SPEAKS OF THOSE WHO AFTER THIS LIFE "WILL EXPIATE THEIR FAULTS BY PURGATORIAL FLAMES," AND HE ADDS "THAT THE PAIN BE MORE INTOLERABLE THAN ANY ONE CAN SUFFER IN THIS LIFE" (PS. 3 POENIT., N. 1).**

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS TAUGHT THAT BESIDES THE SEPARATION OF THE SOUL FROM THE SIGHT OF GOD, THERE IS THE OTHER PUNISHMENT FROM FIRE, AND ST. BONAVENTURE NOT ONLY AGREES WITH ST. THOMAS BUT ADDS THAT THIS PUNISHMENT BY FIRE IS MORE SEVERE THAN ANY PUNISHMENT WHICH COMES TO MEN IN THIS LIFE; "GRAVIOR EST OMNI TEMPORALI POENA. QUAM MODO SUSTINET ANIMA CARNI CONJUNCTA". HOW THIS FIRE AFFECTS THE SOULS OF THE DEPARTED THE DOCTORS DO NOT KNOW, AND IN SUCH MATTERS IT IS WELL TO HEED THE WARNING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT WHEN IT COMMANDS THE BISHOPS "TO EXCLUDE FROM THEIR PREACHING DIFFICULT AND SUBTLE QUESTIONS WHICH TEND NOT TO EDIFICATION', AND FROM THE DISCUSSION OF WHICH THERE IS NO INCREASE EITHER IN PIETY OR DEVOTION" (SESS. XXV, "DE PURGATORIO").**

- **THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE:**

**The Eastern Orthodox Church held that "there is a state beyond death where believers continue to be perfected and led to full divinization". But in the 15th century, at the [Council of Florence](#), authorities of the Eastern Orthodox Church identified some aspects of the Latin idea of purgatory as a point on which there were principal differences between Greek and Latin doctrine. The Eastern Christians objected especially to the legalistic distinction between guilt and punishment and to the fire of purgatory being material fire.**

The decrees of the Council, which contained no reference to fire and, without using the word "purgatory" ("purgatorium"), spoke only of "pains of cleansing" ("poenis purgatoriis"), were rejected at the time by the Eastern churches but formed the basis on which certain Eastern communities were later received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. At the Council itself, the Greek Metropolitan [Bessarion](#) argued against the existence of real purgatorial fire. In effecting full communion between the Roman Catholic Church and the [Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church](#) by the [Union of Brest](#) (1595), the two agreed, "We shall not debate about purgatory, but we entrust ourselves to the teaching of the Holy Church." Furthermore, the [Council of Trent](#), in its discussion of purgatory, instructed the bishops not to preach on such "difficult and subtle questions".

**UNION OR TREATY OF BREST:**

**THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS NEVER BEEN REQUIRED TO USE THE WORD PURGATORY. THE ACT OF REUNION WITH ROME, "THE TREATY OF BREST," WHICH WAS FORMALLY ACCEPTED BY POPE CLEMENT VIII, DOES NOT REQUIRE THEM TO ACCEPT THE WESTERN UNDERSTANDING OF PURGATORY.**

**ARTICLE V OF THE TREATY OF BREST STATES "WE SHALL NOT DEBATE ABOUT PURGATORY..." IMPLYING THAT BOTH SIDES CAN AGREE TO DISAGREE ON THE SPECIFICS OF WHAT THE LATIN CHURCH CALLS "PURGATORY."**

# FINAL THEOSIS

- **Definitions:**
- **theosis, deification, divinization, metanoia**
- **harmartia (missing the mark)**
- **hamártēma (sin)**
- **apothéōsis (the heresy of deification in God's essence)**
- **apocatastasis (recapitulation, in St. Irenaeus)**



**THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD IS IN THE EASTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION “THE BIBLICAL” EXPLANATION OF THEOSIS:**

**ONE OF THE TWELVE MAJOR FEASTS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH, IT PROVIDES GREAT INSIGHT FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF THEOSIS. JESUS WENT UP THE MOUNTAIN WITH PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN AND WAS TRANSFORMED BEFORE THEIR EYES. HE APPEARED TO THEM IN HIS GLORIFIED HUMANITY AND WAS ILLUMINED WITH THE LIGHT OF DIVINITY. MOSES AND ELIJAH, REPRESENTING THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS, APPEARED WITH CHRIST AS HE WAS ENVELOPED BY THE CLOUD OF GLORY, THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AS AT HIS BAPTISM, THE FATHER SPOKE, SAYING, “THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. HEAR HIM!” (MATTHEW 17:5).**

**Here we have the whole Bible summed up in this one event. The Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets, point to Christ, the eternal Son who became flesh. He appears with the Holy Spirit and the Father—the Trinity. Through His Incarnation He is joined to our humanity and glorifies it in Himself, uniting us to God, fulfilling the purpose of our creation in Genesis. We are to listen to Him because He is God's ultimate revelation of Himself to us (cf. Hebrews 1:1; John 1:14). Furthermore, this event occurred to prepare the disciples for Christ's crucifixion, which would deliver our fallen humanity from sin and death and raise us up with Him in His resurrection.**

**Final Theosis is the recognition that our life in the Spirit, transforming us to be Christlike is eternal.**

## BLESSED JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

WHILE PROTESTANTISM IN GENERAL REJECTS THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY AND USUALLY DOES NOT MENTION THE IDEA OF FINAL THEOSIS. THERE CAN BE FOUND IN THE HYMNS OF JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY AND IN PIETISTIC METHODISM ILLUSIONS TO THEOSIS. IN NEWMAN BEFORE HIS CONVERSION TO CATHOLICISM AND IN C.S. LEWIS CAN BE FOUND A PROFESSION OF BELIEF IN PURGATORY EXPLAINED IN THE LANGUAGE OF FINAL THEOSIS.

[JOHN HENRY NEWMAN](#) ARGUED, IN A BOOK THAT HE WROTE BEFORE BECOMING CATHOLIC, THAT THE *ESSENCE* OF THE DOCTRINE ON PURGATORY IS LOCATABLE IN ANCIENT TRADITION, AND THAT THE CORE CONSISTENCY OF SUCH BELIEFS ARE EVIDENCE THAT CHRISTIANITY WAS "ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO US FROM HEAVEN". - *AN ESSAY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE*

- **C.S.LEWIS**

**ANGLICAN APOLOGIST C. S. LEWIS INTERPRETED THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES THROUGH THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD "PURGATORY", WHICH HE REMARKED, INDICATES CLEANSING, NOT SIMPLY RETRIBUTIVE PUNISHMENT. LEWIS DECLARED HIS PERSONAL BELIEF IN PURGATORY, A PROCESS OF AFTER-DEATH PURIFICATION.**

# **THE RECONCILIATION OF UNDERSTANDINGS**

## **THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

- **THE LANGUAGE OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH REFLECTS AN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE EASTERN AND WESTERN TRADITIONS CONCERNING PURGATORY/FINAL THEOSIS.**

### **III. THE FINAL PURIFICATION, OR PURGATORY**

**1030: 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.**

**1031. "The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. [Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1304; Council of Trent (1563): DS 1820; (1547): 1580; see also Benedict XII, Benedictus Deus (1336): DS 1000.] The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire. [Cf. 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Pet 1:7.] As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come. [St. Gregory the Great, Dial. 4, 39: PL 77, 396; cf. Mt 12:32-36.]"**

**1472. "To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has a double consequence. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the 'eternal punishment' of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the 'temporal punishment' of sin. These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain. [Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1712-1713; (1563): 1820.]"**

## CONCLUSION

- **1. THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY/FINAL THEOSIS ILLUSTRATES THE COMMON HERITAGE OF CHRISTIAN EAST AND CHRISTIAN WEST; THAT HERITAGE BEING THE SACRED SCRIPTURES AND THE PATRISTIC ERA.**
- **2. IT ALSO ILLUSTRATES THE SEPARATION OF EAST AND WEST, DUE TO THE GROWTH OF DIFFERENCES IN LINGUISTIC, CULTURAL, POLITICAL, ECCLESIASTICAL STRUCTURE, OUTSIDE INFLUENCES, ETC., REALITIES.**
- **3. IN A POSITIVE LIGHT IT ILLUSTRATES THAT BY DRAWING UPON THE COMMON ANCIENT SOURCES AND HERITAGE, AND ACKNOWLEDGING OUR LIMITATIONS IN SPEAKING LIFE BEYOND DEATH, LIFE BEYOND OUR WORLD OF SPACE AND TIME - WE CAN EMBRACE THE BROAD LENGTH AND WIDTH OF THE TRADITION.**