

Christian Anthropology
and Purgatory

CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Human Beings

- Genesis
 - ☞ Begins the story of humanity by telling us that we are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26)
 - ☞ Humanity's original relationship with God was broken thru the first sin (Genesis 3:13)
 - ☞ The entire Old Testament from Genesis 3 onward is the story of God's people trying to repair their relationship with Him.
- Jesus Christ
 - ☞ The New Testament testifies to the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified as the perfect sacrifice in order to eternally heal the effect of sin (Hebrew 10:12).

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➤ Humanity

☞ The New Testament explains that human beings are made up of “spirit, soul, and body” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). In the New Testament, the word “soul” refers to anything pertaining to our minds and emotions.

- Saint Paul calls our bodies earthly “tents” that will someday be done away with when we receive our resurrected bodies.
 - This does not mean that the body is bad or arbitrary.
 - Jesus makes it clear that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, to be kept pure and holy.

☞ Through Baptism and faith in Christ, the Bible tells us that the “old has now become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

- Through Baptism and faith, Christ lives within us. We are called to let Christ consume more and more of who we are so that we become more and more *like* Christ.*

*John 3:30 “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”

1 John 3:2 “Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that

when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

The apex of Christianity within us is our coming to recognize that who we are is what God has called us to be in Christ. Sin is when we try to be someone other than who we truly are (in Christ).

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- While we have been given a new Spirit in Christ, there is nowhere in the Bible where it says that we are made “new” in our “soul” (i.e.-minds) through Baptism and faith in Christ.
 - ☞ Rather, Christians were frequently instructed to renew and sanctify their minds.
 - Colossians 3:1-3
 - Romans 12:2
 - ☞ Therefore, we can logically say that we are not “saved/renewed” in our minds as we are in our spirits through faith and Baptism. There is further renewal that needs to be done.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” – Colossians 3:1-3

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” –Romans 12:2

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➤ Life is a process of conforming our minds to the new spirit that has been placed within us through Baptism and faith—to conform our human minds to the mind of Christ.

- This is precisely where our theology of Purgatory begins.

† Purgatory—the process thru which one's entire self is conformed to Christ so as to stand in the presence of God for all eternity.

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➤ **The Catechism of the Catholic Church on purgatory:**

“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” (¶1030).

Hebrews 12:14 states that we must “strive for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

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Some Purgatory FACTS:

- Purgatory is purification, not punishment.
- It is a process, not a place.
- While we often talk about purgatory in terms of “time,” with God there is no such thing.
- A person going thru purgatory has already accepted Jesus Christ (and is therefore assured Heaven) and cannot “fall” from purgatory to hell.

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Some Purgatory FACTS:

- There was a tradition in Judaism of praying for the dead (2 Macc. 12:43-46). Since Jesus was a Jew, it seems natural to think that Jesus would have believed in a final purification and the power of praying for those who have died.
- When we pray for someone in purgatory, we are actually praying that they be open to the purification that God desires—just like we pray for each other now.

“He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.” – 2 Maccabees 12:43-46