



Catholicism

Purgatory



Resources

Books

- “10 Most Important Things You Can Say to a Catholic” - Ron Rhodes
- “The Gospel According to Rome” - James G. McCarthy
- “The Roman Catholic Controversy” - James R. White
- “The Fatal Flaw” - James R. White
- “Answers to Catholic Claims” - James R. White
- “Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Disagreements” - Norman L. Geisler & Ralph MacKenzie

Audio/Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7CwA6quQSmnO3mgCHqZ2Qu0i2v-tMiTN>



- Catholic View of Purgatory
- BREAK
- Response to the Catholic View
- Advice on Discussing Purgatory with Catholics
- Questions



Catholic View of Purgatory

1022 Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven - through a purification or immediately, -- or immediate and everlasting damnation.



Catholic View of Purgatory

1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face:

By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints . . . and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, . . . or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, . . .) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment - and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven - have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.



Catholic View of 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.



Catholic View of Purgatory

1031 The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. 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:

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.



Catholic View of Purgatory

1032 This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin." From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.



Catholic View of Purgatory

Council of Florence

"If they have died repentant for their sins and having love of God, but have not made satisfaction for things they have done or omitted by fruits worthy of penance, then their souls, after death, are cleansed by the punishment of Purgatory; also . . . the suffrages of the faithful still living are efficacious in bringing them relief from such punishment, namely the Sacrifice of the Mass, prayers and almsgiving and other works of piety which, in accordance with the designation of the Church, are customarily offered by the faithful for each other."



Catholic View of Purgatory

Council of Trent, Canon 30, 6th Session

If anyone says that after the grace of justification has been received the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out for any repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be paid, either in this world or in the other, in purgatory, before access can be opened to the kingdom of heaven, let him be anathema.



Catholic View of Purgatory

Council of Trent, 25th Session

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this ecumenical synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful, but chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently strive that the sound doctrine touching Purgatory, delivered by the holy fathers and sacred councils, be believed, held, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful of Christ.



Catholic View of Purgatory

Second Vatican Council

The truth has been divinely revealed that sins are followed by punishments. God's holiness and justice inflict them. Sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death. Otherwise the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishments.



Catholic View of Purgatory

“The souls of the just which, in the moment of death, are burdened with venial sins or temporal punishment due to sins, enter Purgatory.” – **Ludwig Ott**

“The temporal punishment for sins are atoned for in the purifying fire by the so-called suffering of atonement (satispassio), that is, by the willing bearing of the expiatory punishment imposed by God.” – **Ludwig Ott**



Catholic View of Purgatory

“The reason of faith is that nothing defiled can enter heaven and therefore anyone less than perfect must first be purified before he can be admitted to the vision of God. In more concrete terms, which have been carved out of centuries of the Church’s reflection on revelation, there exists purgatory, in which the souls of the just who die with the stains of sins are cleansed by expiation before they are admitted to heaven. They can be helped, however, by the intercession of the faithful on earth.

Who are the souls of the just? They are those that leave the body in the state of sanctifying grace and are therefore destined by right to enter heavenly glory. Their particular judgment was favorable, although conditional. They must first be cleansed before they can see the face of God. The condition is always fulfilled.

When we speak of “stains of sins,” the expression is consciously ambivalent. It first means the temporal punishment due to venial or mortal sins already forgiven as to guilt but not fully remitted as to penalty when a person dies. It may also mean the venial sins themselves, not forgiven as to guilt or punishment before death.” – **John Hardon, The Catholic Catechism**



Catholic View of Purgatory

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

On the next day, as had now become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kindred in the sepulchres of their ancestors. Then under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen. So, they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; and they turned to supplication, praying that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out.

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Catholic View of Purgatory

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened as the result of the sin of those who had fallen. He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore, he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.



Catholic View of Purgatory

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 NKJV

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.



Catholic View of Purgatory

Matthew 12:32 NKJV

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Indulgences





Indulgences

Indulgentiarum Doctrina (1967)

“[Sins] must be expiated either on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and calamities of this life and above all through death, or else in the life beyond through fire and torments or "purifying" punishments...”

“The doctrine of purgatory clearly demonstrates that even when the guilt of sin has been taken away, punishment for it or the consequences of it may remain to be expiated or cleansed.”



Indulgences

Indulgentiarum Doctrina (1967)

“On the contrary the “treasury of the Church” is the infinite value, which can never be exhausted, which Christ’s merits have before God.... This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission the Father entrusted to them. In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical Body.”



Indulgences

Indulgentiarum Doctrina (1967)

“For God’s only-begotten Son ... has won a treasure for the militant church ... he has entrusted it to blessed Peter, the key-bearer of heaven, and to his successors who are Christ’s vicars on earth, so that they may distribute it to the faithful for their salvation.”

“In addition, we ought not to forget that when they try to gain indulgences the faithful submit with docility to the lawful pastors of the Church. Above all, they acknowledge the authority of the successor of Blessed Peter, the key-bearer of heaven.”



Indulgences

Indulgentiarum Doctrina (1967)

“To gain indulgences the work prescribed must be done. But that is not all. The faithful must have the dispositions that are necessary. These are that they must love God, hate sin, trust in Christ’s merits, and believe firmly in the great help they obtain from the Communion of Saints.”

“A plenary indulgence, applicable only to the dead, can be gained in all churches and public oratories (and in semi-oratories by those who have the right to use them) on November 2.”

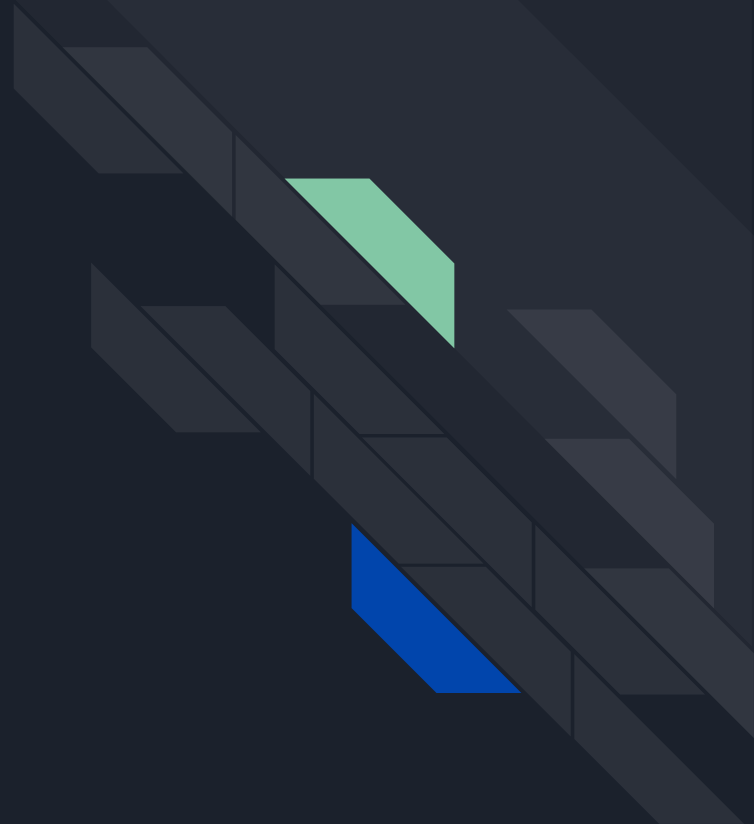


Indulgences

Indulgentiarum Doctrina (1967)

“Supported by these truths, holy Mother Church again recommends the practice of indulgences to the faithful. ... The Church recommends its faithful not to abandon or neglect the holy traditions of those who have gone before.”

BREAK



Response to the Catholic View



2 Maccabees 12:39-45





Response to the Catholic View

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

- Not a canonical book, so not authoritative
- No direct reference to purgatory. As the Catholic church's primary reference for Purgatory, this is too obscure.



Response to the Catholic View

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

- There is nothing in the law of Moses that indicates that offerings for the dead were ever an authentic part of the Jewish faith. The most this passage proves is that the unknown writer believed that sacrifices could atone for the sins of the dead.
 - It seems more likely, based on Leviticus 4:1-6:7 that Judas Maccabaeus sent the money to Jerusalem to provide for a sin or trespass offering.



Response to the Catholic View

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

- The dead were engaged in idolatry, which is a mortal sin. This would have sealed their fate to eternal damnation. There should have been no need to pray for them.



Response to the Catholic View

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

- Prayers to the dead and for the dead are condemned by God in scripture

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 NKJV - "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. "For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD,"



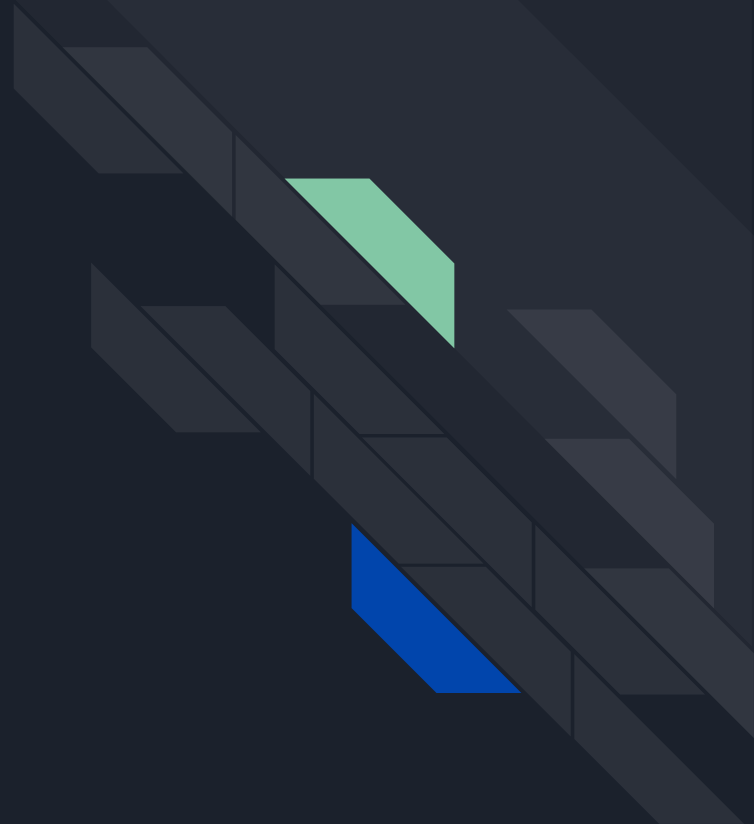
Response to the Catholic View

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

2 Samuel 12:22-23 NKJV - And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' "But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Luke 16:26 NKJV - 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

1 Corinthians 3:10-15





Response to the Catholic View

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

- 1 Corinthians written to those who “have been sanctified in Christ” (1:2).
- The Christian has already been judged with reference to sin in Christ and has passed out of death to life (John 5:24)

1 Corinthians 6:11 NKJV - And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.



Response to the Catholic View

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

1 Corinthians 3:14-15 NKJV - If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Not speaking about the consequence of sin but reward for service for those who are already saved
- Not speaking of salvation but a loss of rewards – “he himself will be saved”



Response to the Catholic View

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

1 Corinthians 3:13 NKJV - each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

- It is the *works* that are judged and put through the fire
- Does not say the person goes through fire, is punished, or suffers to make atonement for sin.
- The fire does not purge our soul from sins. Rather, it discloses and tests our works

Matthew 12:32





Response to the Catholic View

Matthew 12:32

- Parallel passage

Mark 3:29 NKJV - "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"



Response to the Catholic View

Matthew 12:32

- The emphasis is on the impossibility of forgiveness for this blasphemy, not the concept that there is forgiveness for sin in the age to come.
 - The “age to come” for the Jew in that day was referring to the “Day of the LORD”
 - Jesus is saying that “it is unforgiven, period!”

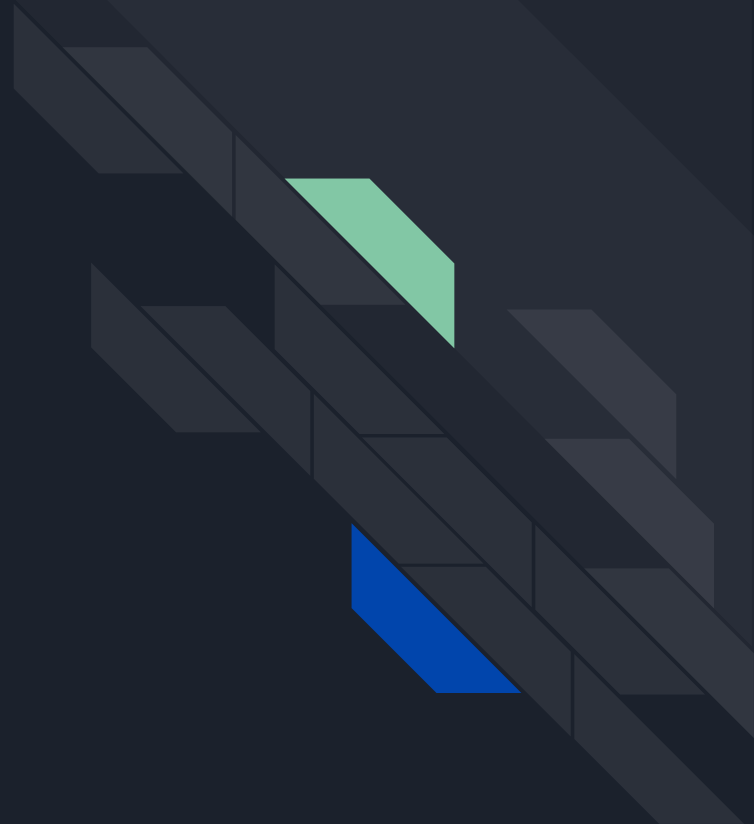


Response to the Catholic View

Matthew 12:32

- Purgatory involves only venial sins, but this sin is not venial; it is mortal. How can a statement about the unforgiveness of a mortal sin in the next life be the basis for an argument that non-mortal sins will be forgiven?
- Passage is not even speaking about punishment

Indulgences





Response to the Catholic View

Indulgences

- No scriptural support or support from early church fathers. Same for treasury of merit.
- In fact, this teaching goes directly against the gospel message



Response to the Catholic View

Indulgences

Romans 5:8-11 NKJV - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

- Knowing this, then, indulgences don't make sense. Why would I need a transfer of merit from a treasury of merit if reconciliation has already taken place? Also, we have received reconciliation in One, Jesus Christ, and in Him alone.



Response to the Catholic View

Indulgences

- Jesus made propitiation for our sins (**Romans 3:25**)
 - Propitiation is a stronger term than mere expiation (do away with). Propitiation speaks of that as well as the turning away of God's wrath. Therefore, no punishments remain in such a relationship.



Response to the Catholic View

Indulgences

Hebrews 7:24-25 NKJV - But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 10:14 NKJV - For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.



Response to the Catholic View

Indulgences

- If Jesus is able to save forever those who come unto God by Him, how can Catholic church say that I must make expiation for my own sins, on earth and in purgatory?
- Are believers “perfected for all time,” yet they still need to expiate sins, endure punishments, and undergo the suffering of atonements, making indulgences helpful and necessary? Of course not!



Response to the Catholic View

Suffering of atonement (*satispassio*)

“What is the ‘suffering of atonement’? Is not Christ’s suffering sufficient for those who are His? Suppose I undergo this ‘suffering of atonement’ in Purgatory and thereby atone for the temporal punishments of my sins. Will I not then, upon entering into the presence of god, stand before Him clothed in the righteousness of Christ and my own righteousness, which I worked out through my own sufferings? How can my glory and honor be solely given to Christ when, in fact, at least some of my righteousness comes about through my own suffering?”



Response to the Catholic View

Romans 3:25 NKJV - whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith,...

Romans 8:1 NKJV - There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.



Response to the Catholic View

Hebrews 2:17 NKJV - Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 10:14 NKJV - For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.



Response to the Catholic View

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 NKJV - But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption-- that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

John 5:24 NKJV - "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."



Response to the Catholic View

Colossians 2:13-15 NKJV - And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.



Response to the Catholic View

1 Peter 2:24 NKJV - who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

1 Peter 1:18-19 NKJV - knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Questions

