

God's World

Purgatory

BY REV. LEO J. TRESE

Our knowledge of purgatory is rather limited. We do know that it is the place or state where a soul receives its final finishing, if needed, in preparation for heaven.

As far as the soul is concerned, purgatory would be "any place" where the soul cannot see God.

The inability of the soul to see God is the essence of the suffering of purgatory. Housed in its physical body, the soul in this life is shielded from the powerful attraction which God exerts upon the human spirit.

Like a rocket from its launching pad, the soul tries to go to God with all the power of its being.

But, although God is everywhere, no soul with the least taint of self-love can see Him who must be the total object of our love. One who dies free from grave sin has not rejected God. Yet, even unrepented venial sin or unfulfilled penance for sin constitutes a barrier between the soul and God.

AS THE SOUL "strains at the leash" to reach God, yet cannot "find Him," it experiences indescribable anguish. It burns with a consuming but frustrated desire for God, and this agony of frustration is the very suffering which purges the soul of the last traces of self.

Suddenly—God bursts upon the soul in all His infinite beauty and goodness and lovability. The soul possesses God and is possessed by Him. The soul is in heaven.

Time as we know it—hours and days and months—is a measurement of the physical universe. A disembodied spirit is outside the limitations of terrestrial time. Therefore it seems pointless to ask how long purgatory may last for any particular soul.

Even in this world, suffering is measured by intensity rather than by time. One hour of excruciating pain can seem like a year. As measured by our worldly time, the suffering of purgatory may endure for but a moment—a moment which, to the suffering soul, may seem like an eternity.

Whether we speak in terms of "shortening the time" or of "lessening the pain," we who are still upon earth can help the souls in purgatory. They cannot help themselves. Their time of personal merit ended at death. They only can suffer with patience, awaiting the blessed moment of heaven's dawning dawn.

HOW OPULOUS is purgatory? No one can know, but purgatory is probably not as crowded as some persons think. I remember that when I was a child in catechism class, the good Sister said that almost everyone, even saints, will at least have to pass through purgatory. I suspect that Sister's appreciation of God's holiness somewhat overshadowed her understanding of His love and mercy.

Since the sacrament of Extreme Unction removes all the "remains of sin," a person who has worthily received the Holy Anointing in his last illness would be in no need of purgatory. This would be true also of anyone who has gained a plen-

ary indulgence just before death, or who was able to make an act of perfect love for God in his final moments.

Nevertheless, love dictates that we take no chances in prematurely canonizing those who have gone before us. Many or few, the souls in purgatory plead for the charity of our remembrance.

At the 10th-century Council of Trent the vote on this matter was close, and the Fathers of the Council ultimately left the restoration of the "cup" to the pope. Four hundred years later, the bishops were almost unanimous: "Communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See."

The examples given in the liturgy constitution are only three, intended as instances of other possibilities for the future: "to the newly ordained in the Mass of their ordination, to the newly professed in the Mass of their religious profession, and to the newly baptized in the Mass which follows their Baptism."

Communion under both kinds is not some privilege of priests, and thus one example each is given for the clergy (including deacons and subdeacons and even the Eastern orders), the religious and the laity. Already the hope among the laity, certainly in countries where the level of religious education is high, is that the practice will be extended to the wedding Mass, to the occasions of first Communion and Confirmation, and the like.

The cases may seem few and far; this is no widespread return to ancient practice. But it is a beginning and, at the very least, it shows the willingness of the Church to attempt a renewal. It should overcome, as no apologetic explanation would ever do, the charge that the liturgy revealed the cup of the Lord's Blood. It shows respect for the usage of the Eastern Churches, both Orthodox and Catholic.

But what, after all, is the purpose of restoring Communion under both kinds? The answer lies in the nature of the Eucharist as food and drink, as a holy meal. The Eucharistic sacrifice of Mass was instituted by Christ in the form of a family meal, a banquet of the community which is the Church. Any experience, any sign, any outward evidence that we eat the Lord's Flesh and drink His Blood makes our participation a holier thing.

In modern times no Catholic has doubted that the Mass is a true sacrifice offered to God, that it is a sacred meal of food and drink that has not penetrated very deeply into Catholic consciousness at times.

It is not enough for the Council to decree: "Efforts also must be made to encourage a sense of community within the parish, above all in the common celebration of Sunday Mass." The Council must also put this into effect, by restoring the fullness of understanding of the Mass.

Similar reasoning operated in a second major reform of the Council concerning the Mass: the decision to extend consecration. The decree has two

parts. The first part makes consecration of Mass the regular practice—once the ritual has been prepared and published on Holy Thursday, at councils and synods, and certain other occasions. The second part allows consecration, with the permission of the bishop or the major religious superior, at the daily Mass in institutions, in communities and even in parishes when the needs of the people do not require additional Masses—in fact on any occasion when priests are gathered together without the obligation of celebrating individual Masses.

Again, the doctrine or theory was already clear enough. The Church is best manifested or seen "in the full active participation of all God's holy people... especially in the same Eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers."

The problem lies rather in practice, where the unity of the Christian community is lost sight of, especially when many priests celebrate many separate Masses in the same Church at the same time. Concelebration groups the many priests around the bishop (or the priest who takes his place) at the one altar, offering the one Eucharist in union with the whole body of the faithful.

In the large parish, concelebration of Mass on Sundays is hardly an immediate possibility, but the restoration or extension of the practice was now followed not only at the Mass of ordination on Holy Thursday, at councils and synods, and certain other occasions. The second part allows consecration, with the permission of the bishop or the major religious superior, at the daily Mass in institutions, in communities and even in parishes when the needs of the people do not require additional Masses—in fact on any occasion when priests are gathered together without the obligation of celebrating individual Masses.



Construction Set at St. Josaphat's

CONSTRUCTION OF THE \$450,000 school, hall and cafeteria for St. Josaphat's Parish got underway this week with Bishop Joseph M. Schmondlak, right, breaking ground at the parish site. He was assisted by the Very Rev. Stephen A. Chomko, left, pastor, and Very Rev. Emil Manasterzky, vicar general of the Stamford Diocese. The former school at 305 Hudson Ave. has been purchased by the city for part of the Baden-Ormond urban renewal project.

Community Aids Paralyzed Child

Pequanook, N. J. — (NC) — One girl's suffering has helped unite this community.

The girl is 11-year-old Shirley Breeman. She would have entered the seventh grade at Holy Spirit School here in September if she had been able. But Shirley was totally paralyzed by an injury in a backyard pool last July.

Since then the people of Holy Spirit parish and their neighbors have raised \$10,000 to help pay her medical bills, expected to reach \$17,000.

Shirley will be hospitalized for at least a year and will require therapy to enable her to perform even a few simple actions such as feeding herself.

THE COMMUNITY effort to help the girl — the oldest of six children of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Breeman — is being directed by Father John Dericks, pastor at Holy Spirit, and Judge Herbert Irwin.

Shirley is taking her ordeal like a trooper. One day she told her father, "I'd like to put all my troubles into a bag and give them away." But she quickly changed her mind, saying: "No — then they'd only be troubles for someone else."

The plucky lass is offering her suffering for the souls in purgatory and asked her family if they thought "God has a lot more people He wants to get into heaven and that's why He's letting me suffer so much?"

Shirley has seen her class mates once since the accident. That was when the ambulance which transferred her from Chilton Hospital here to the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in New York stopped off at the schoolyard. But her classmates send her tape recordings of their activities and messages provided by the Salvation Army.

A door-to-door canvass has been organized to raise funds for her medical bills. The Rotary Club donated \$500 toward purchase of a device to project

Advertisement for a business or service, including contact information like 'Open 'til 9 p.m. This Week' and '58 Lake Ave. EA 8-9494'.

Advertisement for 'Hearth & Embers Room of the Manger Hotel'. Features a cartoon rabbit and lists a menu for Easter Sunday dinner, including 'Roast Stuffed Native Turkey, Fresh Cranberry Compote, Roast Leg of Spring Lamb, Dressing, Mint Jelly, Baked Honey Cured Virginia Ham, Orange Sauce, Roast Long Island Duckling, Wild Rice, Montmorency'. Price: \$3.75 per person.

Advertisement for 'SPECIAL Easter GREETINGS from TRANT'S'. Includes address '96 CLINTON AVE. N. 115 FRANKLIN ST. PHONE BAKER 5-5623' and the slogan 'That You and yours may have A Happy and A Blessed Easter'.

What will New Mass Rite be Like?

(The following article is the main part of a series on the broad reforms in the public worship of the Church which were enacted by the Second Vatican Council, the official Council report, is a professor of canon law at the Catholic University of America and the immediate past president of the North American Liturgical Conference.)

BY FATHER FREDERICK B. McMANUS (N.C.W.C. News Service)

What will the Mass of the future look like? How soon will all the changes decided last December by the Second Vatican Council become a matter of ordinary parish practice?

The answer to the second question is impossible to give. The 2,000 bishops of the Council could not themselves work out the details of a revised, reformed Mass rite and text. Only recently (Jan. 25) has Pope Paul VI established a commission to correct the official missal. So that the sacrifice of the Mass, even in the ritual forms of its celebration, may become primarily efficacious to the fullest degree.

The other question is easier. The Council's Constitution on the Liturgy, Chapter II, entitled "The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist," gives the general direction and also the purpose that the meaning of the Mass "may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved."

Some changes are obvious enough. Others, like concelebration of Mass and Communion under both kinds, require much explanation.

Even the simpler changes may take time to work out:

• Official use of mother tongues, at least for the Scriptural readings and the parts of Mass which are properly said or sung by the people;

• Greater variety and better selection in the Epistles and Gospels;

• Preaching of homilies as an integral part of Mass — already required;

• Restoration of a form of "people's prayer" after the Gospel and homily, to ask God's intercession for the Church, diocese, and parish, for those in need and for all mankind;

• More complex was the Council's solemn decision to restore, at least for certain special occasions, Communion under both kinds, or species. In effect this means that, once a new ritual is given approval, Catholics will have some opportunity to receive Communion not only under the appearance or form of bread but also under the form of wine.

This is a restoration. It is a recovery of something lost. The Eastern Rites have faithfully maintained the practice, in the tradition of the Lord's Supper itself, at least by dipping the host into the precious Blood before Communion.

In past ages the question concerning Communion under both kinds was: Is it necessary? Is it essential? And the Church's

answer was no. Today the question is different: Is it desirable? Is it profitable spiritually? And the Church's answer, given by the Pope and the other bishops, is yes.

At the 10th-century Council of Trent the vote on this matter was close, and the Fathers of the Council ultimately left the restoration of the "cup" to the pope. Four hundred years later, the bishops were almost unanimous: "Communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See."

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Duty to Vote Against Him

Baltimore — (NC) — The Catholic Review here has described Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace as a "dedicated racist" and said it cannot see how a patriotic American can give him an endorsement.

The official newspaper of the Baltimore archdiocese noted that Wallace has become a candidate in the Maryland Democratic Presidential primary on May 19.

The paper said the Governor has a "genius" for "activating lawless hate-mongers." As an example, it cited threats recently made against U.S. Sen. Daniel B. Brewster of Maryland, Wallace's opponent in the Democratic primary.

"Because of the potential of Maryland's approaching primary," said the paper, "there might well be a duty for those Catholics who are entitled to do so to cast a vote against him."

Even though it has not yet issued its constitution "On the Church," the Second Vatican Council has already proclaimed the nature of the Church as the praying people of God, as an assembly of worshippers. Communion under both kinds, concelebration and the whole revision of the rite of holy Mass will gradually make this doctrine concrete, a matter of Sunday practice in the parish which is the Church in miniature.

Papal Envoy Terms Deputy Despicable

Jamaica, N.Y. — (NC) — Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Delegate in the United States, characterized the controversial Broadway play "The Deputy" as "despicable" and as "the most complete misrepresentation."

He told students of St. John's University conducted by the Vincentian Fathers here that the play which criticizes Pope Pius XII for failing to speak out against the Nazi slaughter of millions of Jews in World War II "is the product of a sick and twisted mind."

THE ARCHBISHOP said he had read the book. He commented: "I must say it is one of the biggest misrepresentations ever written. Anyone who has known Pope Pius XII personally, who has worked with him, will recognize that it is the most complete misrepresentation."

"Certainly the Pope was confronted with an agonizing decision," the Archbishop said. "I know Pius XII and I know he was a man of profound conscience, a delicate conscience. The question came to his mind certainly, whether he should speak, and I am sure his first impulse was to speak and to protest. But, he reasoned, will my protest help the Jews or will it make it worse? Which will help the situation in the world, help the mission of the Church in the world? That was the point."

"I will not deny that perhaps he had spoken nothing might Ludwigs church there.

Reds OK Visit

Berlin — (RNS) — Archbishop Alfred Bensch, Bishop of Berlin, whose residence is in East Berlin, received permission from Soviet Zone authorities to visit West Berlin on Easter Sunday. He was scheduled to celebrate Mass and preach at St. Ludwig's church there.

4:00 P.M. Easter

Large advertisement for the movie 'THE NUN'S STORY' starring Audrey Hepburn. Includes the text 'on TV/10' and 'THE NUN'S STORY starring Audrey Hepburn'.

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