

“Spiritual Theology” by Jordan Aumann, OP

Study Questions - Chapter Two

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-The Goal of Our Striving-

References: CCC

The Church and the mystery of man’s union with God: 767-768; 772-775 Definition of Purgatory: p. 896 The Final Purification: 1030-1032 Sanctifying Grace: 1999-2001 Our Dignity: 1691-1698
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Additional References:

<i>“Spiritual Passages” by Benedict J. Groeschel</i> <i>“Introduction to the Devout Life” by Francis de Sales</i> <i>“Markings” by Dag Hammarskjold</i> <i>“The Rule of St. Benedict” by Joan Chittister, O.S.B.</i> <i>“Introduction to the Devout Life” by St. Francis De Sales</i>

Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Church?
“The purpose of the Church is the sanctification of souls.” p19; #1
2. What are the three distinct goals of the spiritual life?
“The spiritual life has three distinct goals or, if one prefers, it has one ultimate goal and two relative or proximate goals. The ultimate goal of the spiritual life, as of all things in creation, is the glory of God; the proximate goals are our sanctification and salvation.”
3. What is the ultimate goal in life?
“The Glory of God” p.20; #2

4. What are the two proximate goals in life?

"... the proximate goals are our sanctification and salvation." P.19; #1

5. What is deification or divinization?

"By a process that the Fathers of the Church did not hesitate to describe as "deification" and "divinization," God's own glory shines forth resplendently in the souls of the just. "
p. 21; #1

cf: *"The Glory of God is man fully alive."* –from *"Consecrated Phrases"*

6. What part of the Mass makes reference to our divinization?

Liturgy of the Eucharist; Preparation of the Altar and Gifts (at the pouring of the wine and water into the chalice):

"By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity."

7. What is the purpose of purgatory?

Purgatory is that final state of purification which is a necessary prerequisite for the "beatific vision." P.23; #3

8. What is the beatific vision?

"...theologians use the phrase "beatific vision" to describe the intimate and joyful union of the souls of the blessed with God in glory." P.23; #4

9. What is the illumination of the intellect?

"When any created intellect sees the essence of God, the essence of God itself becomes the intelligible form of the intellect. Hence it is necessary ... that the power of understanding should be aided by divine grace. Now this increase of the intellectual powers is called the illumination of the intellect" p. 24; #3

10. What is sanctifying grace?

"The followers of Christ, called by God not in virtue of their works but by his design and grace, and justified in the Lord Jesus, have been made sons of God in the baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified. They must therefore hold on to and perfect in their lives that sanctification which they have received from God sanctifying grace is a sharing in the nature and life of God" p.26; #1 & 4

cf. 1 Pet. 1:23

"For you have been born again, not from corruptible seed, but from what is incorruptible, from the Word of God, living and remaining for all eternity."

THE CHURCH: IN BRIEF

- 777** The word “Church” means “convocation.” It designates the assembly of those whom God’s Word “convokes,” i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ.
- 778** The Church is both the means and the goal of God’s plan: prefigured in creation, prepared for in the Old Covenant, founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and his Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth (cf. *Rev* 14:4).
- 779** The Church is both visible and spiritual, a hierarchical society and the Mystical Body of Christ. She is one, yet formed of two components, human and divine. That is her mystery, which only faith can accept.
- 780** The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men.¹

PURGATORY: A state of final purification after death and before entrance into heaven for those who died in God’s friendship, but were only imperfectly purified; a final cleansing of human imperfection before one is able to enter the joy of heaven (1031; cf. 1472).²

1031 The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁶ 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:⁶⁰⁷ (954, 1472)

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.⁶⁰⁸

¹ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (205). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

² Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (896). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1304; Council of Trent (1563): DS 1820; (1547): 1580; see also Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1000.

⁶⁰⁷ Cf. *1 Cor* 3:15; *1 Pet* 1:7.

⁶⁰⁸ St. Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 4, 39: PL 77, 396; cf. *Mt* 12:31.

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.”⁶⁰⁹ 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.⁶¹⁰ The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead: (958; 1371; 1479)

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.⁶¹¹³

SANCTIFYING GRACE

1999 The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the *sanctifying* or *deifying grace* received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification:⁴⁸ (1966)

Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.⁴⁹

2000 Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love. *Habitual grace*, the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God’s call, is distinguished from *actual graces* which refer to God’s interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification.

2001 The *preparation of man* for the reception of grace is already a work of grace. This latter is needed to arouse and sustain our collaboration in justification through faith, and in sanctification through charity. God brings to completion in us what he has begun, “since he who completes his work by cooperating with our will began by working so that we might will it.”⁵⁰ (490)

Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for his mercy has gone before us. It has gone before us so that we may be healed, and follows us so that once healed, we

⁶⁰⁹ 2 Macc 12:46.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. Council of Lyons II (1274): DS 856.

⁶¹¹ St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 41, 5: PG 61, 361; cf. *Job* 1:5.

³ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (268–269). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Jn* 4:14; 7:38–39.

⁴⁹ 2 Cor 5:17–18.

⁵⁰ St. Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 17: PL 44, 901.

may be given life; it goes before us so that we may be called, and follows us so that we may be glorified; it goes before us so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with God: for without him we can do nothing.⁵¹⁴

LIFE IN CHRIST

1691 “Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God.”¹ (790)

1692 The Symbol of the faith confesses the greatness of God’s gifts to man in his work of creation, and even more in redemption and sanctification. What faith confesses, the sacraments communicate: by the sacraments of rebirth, Christians have become “children of God,”² “partakers of the divine nature.”³ Coming to see in the faith their new dignity, Christians are called to lead henceforth a life “worthy of the gospel of Christ.”⁴ They are made capable of doing so by the grace of Christ and the gifts of his Spirit, which they receive through the sacraments and through prayer.

1693 Christ Jesus always did what was pleasing to the *Father*,⁵ and always lived in perfect communion with him. Likewise Christ’s disciples are invited to live in the sight of the Father “who sees in secret,”⁶ in order to become “perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”⁷

1694 Incorporated into *Christ* by Baptism, Christians are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord.⁸ Following Christ and united with him,⁹

⁵¹ St. Augustine, *De natura et gratia*, 31: PL 44, 264.

⁴ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (484). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

¹ St. Leo the Great, *Sermo 21 in nat. Dom.*, 3: PL 54, 192C.

² *Jn* 1:12; *1 Jn* 3:1.

³ *2 Pet* 1:4.

⁴ *Phil* 1:27.

⁵ Cf. *Jn* 8:29.

⁶ *Mt* 6:6.

⁷ *Mt* 5:48.

⁸ *Rom* 6:11 and cf. 6:5; cf. *Col* 2:12.

Christians can strive to be “imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love”¹⁰ by conforming their thoughts, words and actions to the “mind ... which is yours in Christ Jesus,”¹¹ and by following his example.¹² (1267)

1695 “Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God,”¹³ “sanctified ... [and] called to be saints,”¹⁴ Christians have become the temple of the *Holy Spirit*.¹⁵ This “Spirit of the Son” teaches them to pray to the Father¹⁶ and, having become their life, prompts them to act so as to bear “the fruit of the Spirit”¹⁷ by charity in action. Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation.¹⁸ He enlightens and strengthens us to live as “children of light” through “all that is good and right and true.”¹⁹

1696 The way of Christ “leads to life”; a contrary way “leads to destruction.”²⁰ The Gospel parable of the *two ways* remains ever present in the catechesis of the Church; it shows the importance of moral decisions for our salvation: “There are two ways, the one of life, the other of death; but between the two, there is a great difference.”²¹ (1970)

1697 *Catechesis* has to reveal in all clarity the joy and the demands of the way of Christ.²² Catechesis for the “newness of life”²³ in him should be:

⁹ Cf. *Jn* 15:5.

¹⁰ *Eph* 5:1–2.

¹¹ *Phil* 2:5.

¹² Cf. *Jn* 13:12–16.

¹³ *1 Cor* 6:11.

¹⁴ *1 Cor* 1:2.

¹⁵ Cf. *1 Cor* 6:19.

¹⁶ Cf. *Gal* 4:6.

¹⁷ *Gal* 5:22, 25.

¹⁸ Cf. *Eph* 4:23.

¹⁹ *Eph* 5:8, 9.

²⁰ *Mt* 7:13; cf. *Deut* 30:15–20.

²¹ *Didache* 1, 1: Sch 248, 140.

²² Cf. John Paul II, *CT* 29.

²³ *Rom* 6:4.

— *a catechesis of the Holy Spirit*, the interior Master of life according to Christ, a gentle guest and friend who inspires, guides, corrects, and strengthens this life; (737 ff.)

— *a catechesis of grace*, for it is by grace that we are saved and again it is by grace that our works can bear fruit for eternal life; (1988 ff.)

— *a catechesis of the beatitudes*, for the way of Christ is summed up in the beatitudes, the only path that leads to the eternal beatitude for which the human heart longs; (1716 ff.)

— *a catechesis of sin and forgiveness*, for unless man acknowledges that he is a sinner he cannot know the truth about himself, which is a condition for acting justly; and without the offer of forgiveness he would not be able to bear this truth; (1846 ff.)

— *a catechesis of the human virtues* which causes one to grasp the beauty and attraction of right dispositions towards goodness; (1803 ff.)

— *a catechesis of the Christian virtues* of faith, hope, and charity, generously inspired by the example of the saints; (1812 ff.)

— *a catechesis of the twofold commandment of charity* set forth in the Decalogue; (2067 ff.)

— *an ecclesial catechesis*, for it is through the manifold exchanges of “spiritual goods” in the “communion of saints” that Christian life can grow, develop, and be communicated. (946 ff.)

1698 The first and last point of reference of this catechesis will always be Jesus Christ himself, who is “the way, and the truth, and the life.”²⁴ It is by looking to him in faith that Christ’s faithful can hope that he himself fulfills his promises in them, and that, by loving him with the same love with which he has loved them, they may perform works in keeping with their dignity: (426)

I ask you to consider that our Lord Jesus Christ is your true head, and that you are one of his members. He belongs to you as the head belongs to its members; all that is his is yours: his spirit, his heart, his body and soul, and all his faculties. You must make use of all these as of your own, to serve, praise, love, and glorify God. You belong to him, as members belong to their head. And so he longs for you to use all that is in you, as if it were his own, for the service and glory of the Father.²⁵

For to me, to live is Christ.²⁶

SECTION ONE

MAN’S VOCATION LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

²⁴ Jn 14:6.

²⁵ St. John Eudes, *Tract. de admirabili corde Jesu*, 1, 5.

²⁶ Phil 1:21.

1699 Life in the Holy Spirit fulfills the vocation of man (*chapter one*). This life is made up of divine charity and human solidarity (*chapter two*). It is graciously offered as salvation (*chapter three*).

PART THREE

LIFE IN CHRIST

1691 “Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God.”¹ (790)

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SECTION ONE

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CHAPTER ONE

THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

1700 The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (*article 1*); it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude (*article 2*). It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment (*article 3*). By his deliberate actions (*article 4*), the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience (*article 5*). Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth (*article 6*). With the help of grace they grow in virtue (*article 7*), avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son¹ to the mercy of our Father in heaven (*article 8*). In this way they attain to the perfection of charity. (356; 1439)⁶

⁵ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (421–424). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

¹ *Lk* 15:11–32.

⁶ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (421–424). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.