

“Spiritual Theology” by Jordan Aumann, OP

Study Questions - Chapter Eight

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-Progressive Purgation-

References: CCC

Definition of Purgatory: page 896 The Final Purgation: 1030-1032 In Brief: 1051-1060
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Additional References:

<i>*“The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life by Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance, O.P. (A MUST READ) “The Three Ages of the Interior Life” Vol. 1 & 2 By Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance, O.P. *[Every member of the Dominican Laity should read this book. It is available on the internet.]</i>

Questions

1. Define “passive purification”
This is the activity on God’s part in helping to bring about the needed changes in our lives.
2. Define “active purification”
This represents the activity on our part to remove from our lives those things which interfere with our relationship with Christ.
3. What is the purpose of “active purification”?
The purpose of the active purification of the external senses is to restrain their excesses and to subject them to the rule of reason illumined by faith. A disciplined human body is an excellent instrument for sanctification, but in the present state of fallen nature it has an almost irresistible tendency to anything that can give pleasure to the senses. If it is not subjected, it becomes indomitable, and its demands become more and more excessive until it constitutes an obstacle incompatible with the spiritual perfection of the soul.
4. What are the two principal means of mortifying the senses?
The two principal means of mortifying the senses are (1) to deprive them of anything that may produce unlawful pleasure, and eventually to curtail even lawful pleasure, as one's

circumstances permit or one's spiritual needs require; (2) to practice positive mortification by means of bodily self-denial.

5. What are two beneficial uses of mortification?

In addition to serving as reparation for past sins, bodily mortifications have two other beneficial uses: immolation of self in imitation of Christ and a positive contribution to the Mystical Body by means of the apostolate of suffering.

6. What are the *internal senses* described by Fr. Aumann?

*imagination,
memory,
common sense,
and the estimative power*

7. By what means does Fr. Aumann suggest we *take custody of the external senses*?

By consciously taking control and depriving the senses of those things which stimulate or make conscious that which leads to temptation and sin.

8. Why is it necessary to mortify the memory?

*Forget past sins
Cease thinking of past injuries
Remember benefits from God
Consider motives for Christian hope*

9. Reflect on the following statement: "*The passions are by nature expressions of love of self.*"

They are expressions of self-love primarily because they seek to satisfy the pleasure centers of the brain as a means of self-gratification without any regard for consequences.

10. Why is it necessary that purification reach the very depths of one's spirit, there to rectify the deviations of intellect and will?

According to traditional psychology, there are two spiritual faculties of the soul: the intellect and the will

The intellect is the spiritual faculty by which we apprehend things in an immaterial way. The will, also called the rational appetite, is the faculty by which we seek the good as known by the intellect. It is distinguished from the sensitive appetite, which instinctively seeks the good as known by the senses

The intellect determines what is meaningful or valuable; the will is the force which propels us towards its acquisition – The two work together to determine the level of reality at which I will lead my life – To seek good or evil.

11. As a Lay Dominican whose life is to be characterized by a devotion to study, how do you understand the following statement from the text: *“The active purification of the intellect normally requires first of all the removal of obstacles to the virtuous use of this faculty. Secondly, it is necessary to overcome ignorance by studying the truths of faith and seeking to probe their deeper meaning and their application to Christian living. At the same time, one should avoid the vice of intellectual curiosity that engages in the study of sacred truths as a purely scholastic pursuit instead of seeing them as truths by which one lives.”*

A true relationship to God involves conversion, formation, and transformation; knowledge by itself is sterile.

12. Reflect on the following statement from the text: *“St. John of the Cross reduces his whole spiritual doctrine to this detachment from creatures, as the negative element, and to union with God through love as the positive element. It is a fact that the soul is filled with God in the measure and to the degree that it empties itself of creatures.”*

We are contingent beings

Two contraries cannot exist in the same subject *the*
soul that wishes to be united with God must detach itself from creatures. Without this, union with God is impossible

In order to pass from the all to the All, you must deny yourself wholly in all

13. Define the term *“imperated.”*

14. Reflect on the following statement: *“St. Thomas states that egoism or disordered self-love is the origin and root of all sin. St. Augustine says: “Two loves have erected two cities: self-love, carried to the extreme of disdain of God, has built the city of the world; the love of God, carried to the point of disdain for one's self, has constructed the city of God. The one glories in itself; the other glories in the Lord.”*

“No man can serve two masters: we must choose who we will serve....”

15. The *passive purgations* are divided into two parts. What are they?

The dark night of the senses: The night of the senses consists of a prolonged series of profound and persistent aridities that submerge the soul in a very painful state and severely test its perseverance in the desire for sanctification

The dark night of the spirit: The night of the spirit is constituted by a series of passive purgations that are extremely painful and have for their object the completion of the purification that was begun but not completed by the night of the senses

16. St. John of the Cross gives three signs by which one can discern the presence of the night of the senses and distinguish it from the dryness or aridity – what are they?

The first sign is that the soul finds delight or consolation neither in the things of God nor in any created thing

The second sign is that ordinarily the memory is fixed on God with great care, but *the soul thinks that, rather than serving God*, it is falling back, because of its lack of taste for the things of God.

The third sign is *the inability to meditate or use reasoning*

17. During the dark night of the senses, what forms of conduct should the soul observe?

Complete and loving submission to the will of God,...The soul should not consider this purgative state as something evil but see in it a means of fortifying itself and of making progress in the spiritual life.

Perseverance in prayer in spite of all difficulty, in imitation of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.... This is the point at which many souls turn back. The soul should remain in peace and quiet, content simply with a loving gaze on God, without any particular consideration and without any desire for delight or sensation. The reason is that the soul is receiving infused contemplation, which has nothing to do with the methods of ascetical prayer.

18. What is the principal source of suffering in the dark night of the soul?

The principal source of suffering in this night is an apparent abandonment by God. The soul is deprived of all delight and satisfaction in relations with God. It is closed in upon itself, faced with its own misery and lowliness; God appears as a ruthless and avenging judge. The soul desires more than ever to serve God but feels that it can in no way be acceptable to God.

19. Reflect on the following: During this terrible period of “darkness” *“the soul desires more than ever to serve God but feels that it can in no way be acceptable to God.”*

I find myself questioning if the whole of spiritual experience isn't really some form of mental illness driven by a gradiosity that causes me to think I am actually capable of being the person God wants me to be when, in fact, I can't.

20. Is the night of the spirit necessary in order to reach Christian perfection?

The soul cannot be united with God in the transforming union until it has been totally purified of all its weakness and misery. And this is the proper effect of the night of the spirit.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

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).¹

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.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

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

¹ 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.

⁶⁰⁹ *2 Macc* 12:46.

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.⁶¹¹

- 1051** Every man receives his eternal recompense in his immortal soul from the moment of his death in a particular judgment by Christ, the judge of the living and the dead.
- 1052** “We believe that the souls of all who die in Christ's grace ... are the People of God beyond death. On the day of resurrection, death will be definitively conquered, when these souls will be reunited with their bodies” (Paul VI, *CPG* § 28).
- 1053** “We believe that the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in Paradise forms the Church of heaven, where in eternal blessedness they see God as he is and where they are also, to various degrees, associated with the holy angels in the divine governance exercised by Christ in glory, by interceding for us and helping our weakness by their fraternal concern” (Paul VI, *CPG* § 29).
- 1054** Those who die in God's grace and friendship imperfectly purified, although they are assured of their eternal salvation, undergo a purification after death, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of God.
- 1055** By virtue of the “communion of saints,” the Church commends the dead to God's mercy and offers her prayers, especially the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, on their behalf.
- 1056** Following the example of Christ, the Church warns the faithful of the “sad and lamentable reality of eternal death” (*GCD* 69), also called “hell.”
- 1057** Hell's principal punishment consists of eternal separation from God in whom alone man can have the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.
- 1058** The Church prays that no one should be lost: “Lord, let me never be parted from you.” If it is true that no one can save himself, it is also true that God “desires all men to be saved” (*1 Tim* 2:4), and that for him “all things are possible” (*Mt* 19:26).

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.

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

1059 “The holy Roman Church firmly believes and confesses that on the Day of Judgment all men will appear in their own bodies before Christ’s tribunal to render an account of their own deeds” (Council of Lyons II [1274]: DS 859; cf. DS 1549).

1060 At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. Then the just will reign with Christ for ever, glorified in body and soul, and the material universe itself will be transformed. God will then be “all in all” (*1 Cor* 15:28), in eternal life.³

From Denzinger

[**DS 859**] The same most holy Roman Church firmly believes and firmly declares that nevertheless on the day of judgment “all” men will be brought together with their bodies “before the tribunal of Christ” “to render an account” of their own deeds [Rom. 14:10].⁴

[**DS 1549**] And whereas “in many things we all offend” [Jas. 3:2; can. 23], each one should have before his eyes the severity and judgment as well as mercy and goodness; neither ought anyone to judge himself, even though he be “not conscious to himself of anything,” since the whole life of men must be judged and examined not by the judgment of men, but of God, who “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise from God” [1 Cor. 4:4 ff.], “who,” as it is written, “will render to every man according to his works” [Rom. 2:6].⁵

DS Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (1965)

DS Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (1965)

³ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (274–275). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

DS Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*. Ed. 34. 1965

⁴ Denzinger, H., Deferrari, R. J., & Rahner, K. (1954). *The sources of Catholic dogma* (184). St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co.

DS Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*. Ed. 34. 1965

⁵ Denzinger, H., Deferrari, R. J., & Rahner, K. (1954). *The sources of Catholic dogma* (257–258). St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co.