

Purgatory and the Blessed Mother

For many the linking of these two discussions would seem to be a paradox beyond imagination. How is the theological understanding of purgation (the process whereby human being let go of all things they love more than God Himself) and the Mother of our Lord related.

The relationship is in the type of theological belief that devotions to the Blessed Mother represent and human understanding that we have for the process whereby we move into the nearer presence of God. Both these theological understandings are only based in part on Biblical evidence. Both have developed over time and both have been the source of great confusion to the Non-Catholic world.

Finally and sadly, there has been direct and indirect abuse of these theological tenants of faith. Part of this abuse has been the result of faulty or sloppy teaching by the church. And part of the abuse has been the result of human greed.

What I propose that we do today is examine these articles of faith as Anglican Theologians. (First Scripture, then human reason applied to the Sacred Word and finally considering the Traditions of the Church)

Before we begin this quest we need also to understand and long held Anglican Principle of our Theological Practice.

I. Lex Orandi - Lex Credendi

A. The Law of Prayer is the Law of Belief

B. As Anglicans we believe that our repository of Faith is where?

1. God's Word - The Bible
2. The Book of Common Prayer

C. Historically we did not invent this concept

1. S. Prosper of Aquitane c. 390-463
2. The reasoning behind standardization of the Missal
3. One reason for the Latin Mass worldwide

D. Anglican have followed through with this concept - note the differences in Canon Law

II. The importance of Lex Orandi - Lex Credendi for our discussion

A. Anglican Addition - Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi

The law of prayer is the law of faith is the law of Life

B. When we consider theological concepts we must consider:

1. What prayers we say
2. What instructions are in the Prayer Book

C. We must also consider each version of the Book of Common Prayer against the 1662 English Book

1. This is the Book of Common Prayer that arises after the struggles
2. Historically it has been the basis for most other countries BCP
3. It is the most widely recognized BCP as defining the doctrines of faith

III. What does the Book of Common Prayer 1928 say about Purgatory or purgation?

A. BCP 1928 Page 74, 75

"And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; **beseeching thee to grant them continual growth in thy love and service**, and to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.

Amen"

B. Burial Office

1. Page 332 -

Remember thy servant, **(The person who has died)** O Lord, according to the favour which thou bearest unto thy people, and grant that, increasing in knowledge and love of thee, he may go from strength to strength, in the life of perfect service, in thy heavenly kingdom **(This notes an ongoing process after death)**

2. Page 334 - praying for the dead

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; **(Note, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh - does this mean after death or after they have let go of earthly desires?)**

3. Page 335 - again praying for the dead

Multiply, we beseech thee, to those who rest in Jesus, the manifold blessings of thy love, that the good work which thou didst begin in them may be perfected unto the day of Jesus Christ. **(Clearly there is the understanding that the work begun will continue after death until perfection in Christ)**

IV. Scriptural references for death and the process we follow after physical death

A. I Corinthians 3:10-17 - Especially Note 3:15

*According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. **If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

Paul has been teaching about division in the church based upon who baptized the individuals. What he is teaching is that we are to build upon the beginning of our Christian Life that is Baptism. That growth continues until the day of the test, that is when we stand before the Throne of Grace for judgment we will be saved, but through fire - the burning away of all that is impure.

B. I Peter 1:6- 9 - Note especially vs.7

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.

Peter is writing to the churches that are suffering persecution and trial. He is commending them to hold fast their faith. That trial, being tested is part of the journey of faith which ends with God the Father. Again we have the image of testing be fir so as to burn away the impurities.

V. The Roman Catholic Catechism References to Purgatory - Place or Process?

A. Workbook Pages 33-34

B. What about Indulgences - Workbook Pages 35,36

C. The issues of abuse -

What can we conclude?

V. Devotional Practice vs. Necessary for Salvation

A. BCP 533

Bishop: Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all Doctrine required as necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: I am so persuaded

B. Anglican Devotional Practices

1. Elizabethan English
2. MP/EP - Sung Evensong
3. Monastic vs. Diocesan
4. Single Eucharistic Prayer
5. Lessons and Carols

C. Are devotions necessary to salvation

VI. The Blessed Mother - Scriptural References

A. Roman Catholic Doctrines - Workbook Pages 39-43

1. Immaculate Conception

The constant faith tradition of the Church attests to the belief in the special preparation of the holiness of the person of Mary to bear in her body the most holy person of the Son of God.

The important word for us to consider in the catechism is "redeemed" 1031

2. Assumption of the BVM

- a. Roman Catholic Thought
- b. Eastern Thought
- c. Anglican Thought

The Connection between Purgatory and the BVM