



# What Makes Us Catholic?

## Purgatory

What is purgatory? Is it a punishment because we have been “pretty good”, but not good enough? Or is there more to it? And what about our loved ones who have died? Is there really any value to our praying for them or having Holy Masses offered for them?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that all who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are assured eternal salvation; but must undergo purification following death in order to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. Purgatory is our meeting with Christ, who loves us, and our loving acceptance of His pardoning love. It is our passage to holiness. It is not yet heaven, but it is a definite way to it, since the love of God underlies the purifying suffering of our souls. In purgatory we are filled with a longing for God and our suffering comes from the knowledge that our separation from Him is caused by our own self-centeredness.

When our loved ones have died our sacrifices and spiritual efforts, united to Christ’s own sacrifice of love for us and applied on behalf of the departed, lend themselves to the maturing process for their souls. Scripture reinforces this teaching. Our loving deeds, words and prayers offered for the Holy Souls, are capable of aiding them in their journey toward God. Through our participation in the Eucharist, we are empowered to apply Christ’s sacrifice to the departed souls. That is why the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the greatest help we can give them.

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***Want to read more about this topic?***

**Sources:**

- Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1030-1032
- 2 Macc 12:46
- Job 1:5
- Purgatory: Fulfillment of God’s justice or fruit of his Mercy? Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC

Do you have questions on this topic, or other topics you would like to learn more about? Please complete the back side of this sheet and leave it in the box on the “What Makes Us Catholic?” stand.

Please note your question on this topic, or other topics you would like to learn more about below and leave it in the box on the "What Makes Us Catholic?" stand.

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