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A.M.D.G.

CATHOLIC CATECHISM

OF THE

FOUR LAST THINGS OF MAN

*“Remember man, that thou art dust and into
dust thou shalt return.”*
(Genesis 3:19)

THE FOUR LAST THINGS OF MAN

"In all thy works remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin." (Eccles. 7-40)

Q.1. What are the four last things of man?

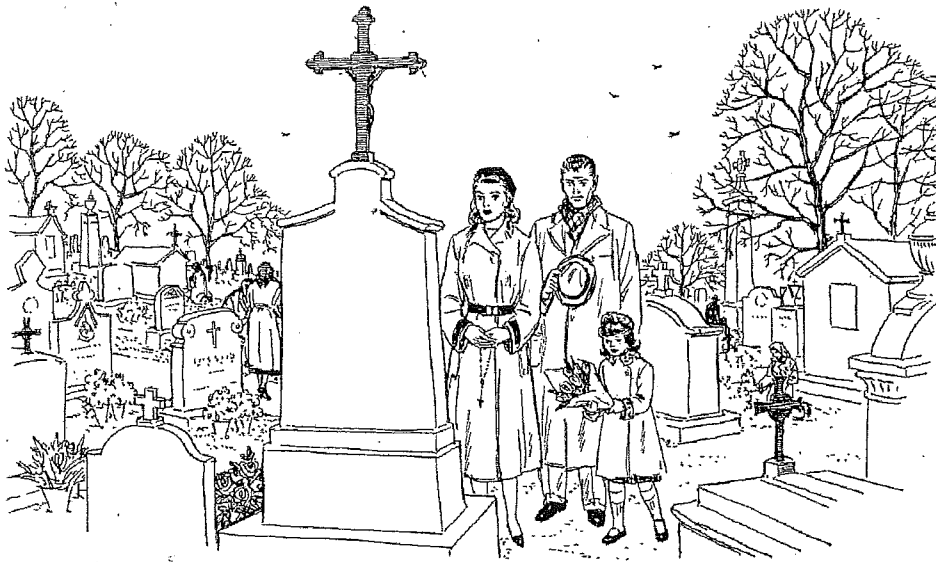
- A. The four last things of man are:
1. **Death**
 2. **Judgment (particular and general)**
 3. **Hell**
 4. **Heaven (and Purgatory)**

Q.2. Why do we need to know the four last things?

A. We need to know the four last things because by thinking about them as being inevitable and as our last end on earth, we are strongly urged to consider it properly and then prepare for it before we enter eternity.

- 1) THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE FOUR LAST THINGS MAKES US LOSE ALL AFFECTION FOR THE THINGS OF THIS TEMPORAL LIFE, WHICH LEADS TO HELL, AND REPLACE IT WITH A DESIRE FOR LIFE ETERNAL, WHICH LEADS TO HEAVEN.

I. DEATH



Q.3. What is death?

A. Death is the separation of the soul from the body.

- 1) DEATH IS THE GATE THROUGH WHICH MAN PASSES FROM THE EARTHLY LIFE TO ETERNITY.
- 2) THE SOUL IS IMMORTAL AND THEREFORE CONTINUES TO LIVE AFTER DEATH AS A SEPARATED SOUL UNTIL THE GENERAL RESURRECTION TO BE REUNITED WITH ITS BODY.
- 3) THE BODY ON THE CONTRARY BECOMES A DEAD MATTER, BEGINS TO CORRUPT AND RETURNS TO DUST:
"For dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3:19).

Q.4. Must all men die?

A. Yes, all men must die.

- 1) EVEN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER SUBMITTED TO DEATH.
- 2) ALSO HENOCH AND ELIAS, WHO WERE TAKEN ALIVE FROM THE EARTH, WILL DIE AT THE TIME OF THE ANTICHRIST.

Q.5. Why must all men die?

A. All men must die because death is the consequence of Original Sin.

- 1) IT SAYS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE: "*It is appointed unto men once to die*" (Heb. 9-27), AND "*As by one man (Adam), sin entered into this world, and by sin, death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned*" (Rom. 5-12).

Q.6. Do we know when, where or how we will die?

A. No, we do not know when, where or how we will die.

- 1) HOWEVER, EXCEPTIONS WERE MADE IN THE CASE OF SOME OF THE SAINTS, E.G. STS PETER AND PAUL, AND OTHERS WHO WERE TOLD THE TIME OF THEIR APPROACHING DEATH BY DIVINE REVELATION.

Q.7. Why is the hour of death hidden from us?

A. The hour of death is hidden from us because if we knew, some would either be overcome by dread and fear and despair as the moment of it approached or some would lead sinful lives intending to turn to God only at the time near death.

Q.8. What do we have to do since we do not know when, where and how we will die?

A. Since we do not know when, where, and how we will die, we have to often think about it, continuously prepare for it and thus be always ready to die a holy death.

- 1) OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SAID: "*Watch ye therefore because you know not the day nor the hour*" (MAT. 25-13).
- 2) DEATH COMES "*as a thief in the night*" WHEN WE LEAST EXPECT IT. THUS WE MUST LIVE AS IF EVERY MOMENT WERE THE LAST MOMENT OF OUR LIFE, ALWAYS READY TO APPEAR BEFORE THE DIVINE JUDGE.
- 3) WHEN OUR LORD SAID, "*Be ye ready,*" HE DID NOT MEAN THAT WE MUST PREPARE OURSELVES ONLY WHEN DEATH ARRIVES, BUT THAT DEATH MUST FIND US PREPARED.

Q.9. How should we prepare for death?

A. We should prepare for death by avoiding sin, keeping God's and the Church's commandments, praying fervently, performing faithfully our duties, doing good to others and thus leading a good life in the state of grace, persevering in it to the end.

- 1) TWO GRACES, WHICH ARE THE MOST NECESSARY FOR DYING A HOLY DEATH, ARE THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE FINAL PERSEVERANCE.
- 2) THROUGH THE GRACE OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE WE OBTAIN ETERNAL LIFE, BUT IT IS GIVEN ONLY TO THOSE WHO PRAY AND PREPARE FOR IT.
- 3) HEAVEN IS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO COMMENCE A GOOD LIFE, BUT IT IS GIVEN ONLY TO THOSE WHO PERSEVERE IN ASKING FOR IT.

Q.10. Is it charitable to tell the dying person to prepare for death?

A. Yes, it is not only charitable to tell the dying person to prepare for death but also extremely important because eternal happiness versus eternal misery is at stake.

- 1) IT IS A LACK OF FAITH WHEN THE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS DO NOT DARE WARN A SICK PERSON THAT HE IS GOING TO DIE. IT IS A FALSE CHARITY, A SIN, NOT TO ADVISE HIM TO RECEIVE THE LAST SACRAMENTS, WORSE YET WHEN THEY FALSELY PROMISE HIM A QUICK RECOVERY.
- 2) THUS THEY DECEIVE HIM AND PREVENT HIM FROM PREPARING HIMSELF FOR A HAPPY DEATH.
- 3) NEVERTHELESS THERE ARE MANY SINNERS WHO DO NOT WANT TO HEAR OF APPROACHING DEATH AND INSTEAD OF THINKING OF THEIR SOUL, AND PREPARING THEMSELVES FOR ETERNITY, THEY THINK ONLY OF DOCTORS AND REMEDIES TO FREE THEIR BODIES FROM THE AILMENTS AND PAINS FROM WHICH THEY SUFFER. THUS THEY STAY IN THEIR SINS AND BY REJECTING THE LAST HELP THE GOOD LORD IS OFFERING THEM, THEY DAMN THEMSELVES.

Q.11. Does a man die as he lives?

A. Yes, as a man lives, so he dies.

- 1) IF A MAN LIVES A JUST LIFE IN THE STATE OF GRACE, HE WILL THEN ENJOY ETERNAL HAPPINESS IN HEAVEN.
- 2) BUT IF A MAN LIVES AN EVIL LIFE, TO THE VERY LAST, HE WILL THEN REAP ETERNAL DAMNATION IN HELL, AND HAVING UNTIL THEN LOVED SIN, THE SINNER ALSO LOVED THE DANGER OF BEING DAMNED. JUSTLY, THEREFORE, WILL THE LORD PERMIT HIM TO PERISH WITHOUT REPENTANCE, IN THAT DANGER TO THE TIME OF HIS DEATH.
- 3) INDEED WHAT SORROW, WHAT REPENTANCE CAN THEY CONCEIVE AT THE HOUR OF DEATH WHO UNTIL THEN HAVE LOVED SIN? THEN THE JUST PUNISHMENT FOR THE SINNERS WILL BE THAT HAVING FORGOTTEN GOD IN THEIR LIVES, THEY SHALL FORGET EVEN THEMSELVES, THEIR SOULS, IN THE TIME OF DEATH.

Q.12. Can a man merit or demerit after his death?

A. After his death a man cannot merit nor demerit.

- 1) UP TO THE MOMENT OF HIS DEATH A MAN HAS HIS CHOICE OF EITHER TURNING TO GOD AND BE IN THE STATE OF GRACE OR TURNING AWAY FROM GOD AND FALL INTO THE STATE OF MORTAL SIN.
- 2) AFTER THE SOUL SEPARATES FROM THE BODY, IT CAN NO LONGER MERIT — CHANGE TO GOOD OR DEMERIT — CHANGE TO EVIL BECAUSE ONLY MAN AS SUCH, THE SOUL AND THE BODY, CAN BEFORE HIS DEATH TURN TO GOOD OR EVIL, BUT NOT AFTER THE DEATH, SINCE HE IS NO LONGER A MAN, BUT A SEPARATED SOUL.

Q.13. Should we be afraid of death?

A. We should not be afraid of death because it is the gate to eternal life.

- 1) EVEN THOUGH DEATH, BEING THE CONSEQUENCE AND PUNISHMENT OF SIN, CAUSES THE DREAD IN THE HEARTS OF MEN, IT IS REALLY FOR A JUST MAN A LONGED FOR PASSAGE TO AN INDESCRIBABLY BETTER LIFE OF ETERNAL HAPPINESS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* (Apoc.14:13), BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO IN DYING ARE ALREADY DEAD IN AFFECTION TO THIS WORLD; THEY SHALL NOT FEAR DEATH; THEY DESIRE IT.
- 2) ON THE OTHER HAND, FOR THE EVIL MAN THE EXPECTATION AND THE MOMENT OF DEATH IS TRULY DREADFUL AND THE GREATEST MISFORTUNE BECAUSE HE CLINGS TO THE TEMPORAL LIFE AND HAS NO HOPE OR BELIEF IN THE ETERNAL LIFE.
- 3) BUT WHAT IS YOUR TEMPORAL LIFE? *“It is a vapor which appeareth for a while and afterwards shall vanish away”* (James 4:15). WITH NOTHING YOU CAME INTO THIS WORLD AND WITH NOTHING YOU SHALL RETURN.

Q.14. What else happens after death?

A. After death, the soul is also judged by God and either rewarded by being taken directly to Heaven or indirectly, via Purgatory, or punished by being condemned to Hell.

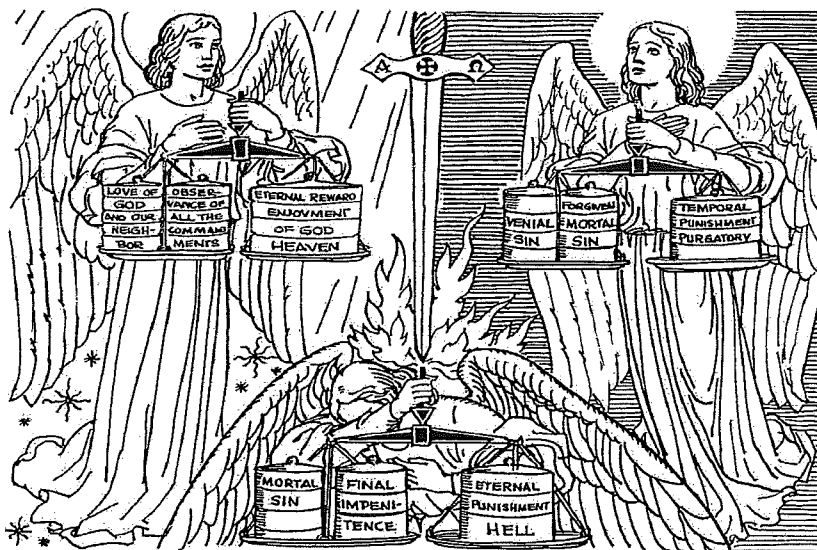
II. THE JUDGMENT**Q.15. How many times is man judged?**

A. Man is judged twice: first at the Particular Judgment and then at the General or Last Judgment.

Q.16. When and where does the particular judgment occur and does it take place?

A. The Particular Judgment occurs immediately after the separation of the soul from the body, and it takes place at the location where the man died.

Particular Judgement



Complete justice will not be done in this life, but in the next. Then everything will be weighed in the balance of God's justice, and punished or rewarded. If on earth we have obeyed the commandments of God and of the Church we shall be given an eternal reward in heaven (1). If we have obeyed

all the commandments, but die with unforgiven venial sin, or without having satisfied for forgiven mortal sin, we shall be sent to purgatory (2). Alas for us if we die with even one mortal sin! For then we shall be banished from the sight of God and suffer torments in hell forever (3).

Q.17. Is every human being judged immediately after his death?

A. Yes, immediately after his death, every human being is judged, with the exception of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother.

- 1) IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE IT IS STATED: "It is appointed unto man to die once, but after this comes judgment" (Heb.9:27).

Q.18. Who is the judge at the Particular Judgment?

A. Jesus Christ, Our Lord is the Judge at the Particular Judgment.

- 1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE SAYS: "For neither doth the Father judge any man but hath given all judgment to the Son." (John 5:22).
- 2) JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD JUDGES ALL MANKIND NOT ONLY AS GOD BUT ALSO AS MAN, SINCE HE WAS GIVEN THE POWER TO JUDGE BY HIS FATHER, HE IS THE HEAD OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH, THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE, HE HAS THE FULLNESS OF HIS HABITUAL GRACE OF WHICH WE PARTAKE AND FINALLY, BY HIS SUFFERING AND DYING FOR AND THUS REDEEMING THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, HE HAS EARNED THE RIGHT TO JUDGE US.

Q.19. On what will each person be judged after death?

A. After death each person will be judged on every desire, intention, thought, word, deed and omission of his whole temporal life.

- 1) THE SCRIPTURE SAYS: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account of it in the Day of Judgment" (Matt. 12-36).
- 2) THE JUDGMENT WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE EXAMINATION OF EVEN THE GOOD, WHICH HAD BEEN CARELESSLY OR BADLY PERFORMED OR NEGLECTED, SUCH AS ONE'S DUTIES OF HELPING OTHERS, RECEIVING COMMUNION OR GOING TO CONFESSION AND OF THE DESIRES AND INTENTIONS IN OUR DEEPEST THOUGHTS.

Q.20. Who will be present at the judgment and how long will it take?

A. Only God and the separated soul will be present at the judgment and it will be instantaneous.

- 1) SINCE GOD KNOWS PERFECTLY THE SMALLEST DETAILS OF OUR WHOLE LIVES, HE NEEDS NEITHER THE TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES FOR OR AGAINST, NOR THE LEAST DISCUSSION. THE ONLY WITNESS IS ONE'S OWN CONSCIENCE WITH ITS GOOD OR BAD DEEDS.
- 2) THUS IT FOLLOWS THAT IN THE DIVINE JUDGMENT THE EXAMINATION OF EACH SOUL IS INSTANTANEOUS.

Q.21. When and what sentence will be pronounced after death?

A. Immediately after death the sentence of either going to Purgatory, Heaven or Hell will be pronounced accordingly as one has lived.

- 1) AT THE MOMENT OF THE SOUL'S SEPARATION, IT IS ENLIGHTENED BY GOD ON ALL ITS MERITS AND DEMERITS, SEEING WITHOUT ERROR ALL THAT IT HAD DONE, SAID, THOUGHT AND DESIRED, BOTH IN GOOD AND EVIL, AS WELL AS ALL THE GOOD IT HAD OMITTED IN ALL ITS PAST LIFE.
- 2) FREED FROM ITS BODY, THE SOUL WILL HAVE BY DIVINE POWER ITS SPIRITUAL EYES OPENED, TO SEE CLEARLY ITS DESTINY, THE INFINITE BEING OF GOD, WHAT ETERNITY IS, HOW ABOMINABLE SIN IS, HOW BEAUTIFUL VIRTUE AND GRACE ARE AND THAT IT WAS CREATED FOR GOD.
- 3) THEREFORE, THE ENLIGHTENED SOUL WILL FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW JESUS CHRIST IS JUDGING IT AND THAT HE HAS PASSED A TRUE JUDGMENT ON IT.

Q.22. Should men be fearful of the Particular Judgment?

A. All men should be fearful of the Particular Judgment because on it depends the eternal happiness or eternal suffering of the soul. If they do not fear it, they know either very little about it or not at all or have scarcely thought about it.

- 1) ALL THE SAINTS TREMBLED IN THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SENTENCE THAT WOULD BE PASSED ON THEM BY GOD FOR THEY KNEW WELL HOW SEVERE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE
- 2) ST. PAUL WRITES: "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.*" (Heb. 10:31)
- 3) HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD EXCITE FEAR IN ALL, THE SAINTS PASS FROM FEAR TO CONFIDENCE AND DIE PEACEFULLY WITH A SMILE ON THEIR LIPS; WHEREAS THE SINNERS PASS FROM FEAR TO DESPAIR AND DIE WITH A TERRIBLE ANGUISH AND REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE.

Q.23. What are the most fearful considerations of the soul when it is about to be judged by God?

A. The most fearful considerations of the soul when it is about to be judged by God are:

- a) Nothing can be concealed from Him nor can He be in any way deceived since **God is omniscient**.
- b) Nothing can withstand Him nor can anyone escape from Him, since **God is omnipotent**.
- c) The sin is so hateful to Him that He will not allow to pass unpunished the slightest transgression, since **God is a just, though very strict, Judge**.
- d) The sentence once pronounced is irrevocable and cannot be reversed, changed or modified in any way since **God is immutable**.
- e) The outcome of the judgment is unknown and the soul has usually more cause to fear than to hope because of its past life.

Q.24. How should we prepare for the judgment in order to alleviate our fears and to be judged well?

A. In order to alleviate our fears and to be judged well, we must prepare for it by being most careful not only to lead a good life in the state of grace, but also die in the state of grace by persevering in good to the end.

- 1) WE SHOULD OBEY ALL THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE CHURCH, DO GOOD WORKS IN PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL DEEDS, AND PRACTICE CHARITY FOR LOVE OF GOD.
- 2) WE SHOULD ALSO DO VOLUNTARY WORKS OF PENANCE AND SELF-DENIAL FOR LOVE OF GOD IN EXPIATION OF SINS.
- 3) AND FINALLY WE SHOULD BEAR ALWAYS IN MIND THAT "*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after that comes the judgment*" AT WHICH TIME THE STATE OF ETERNAL LIFE OR DEATH WILL BE DETERMINED.

Q.25. Does the judged soul see her Judge?

A. The judged soul does not and cannot see God or the Humanity of Jesus Christ.

- 1) IF THE SOUL COULD SEE GOD, IT WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY BEATIFIED, WHICH IS NOT POSSIBLE BEFORE IT IS JUDGED.
- 2) RATHER BY INFUSED LIGHT IT KNOWS GOD AS SOVEREIGN JUDGE AND THE REDEEMER, JESUS CHRIST, AS THE JUDGE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.
- 3) BUT IN SOME OCCASIONAL CASES IT MAY SEE THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

Q.26. When does the execution of the sentence take place?

A. The execution of the sentence takes place immediately after its pronouncement.

- 1) SINCE AFTER THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE SENTENCE THERE IS NOTHING TO DELAY ITS EXECUTION, THE SEPARATED SOULS GO IMMEDIATELY TO:
 - a. HEAVEN, IF THEY ARE IN THE STATE OF BAPTISMAL INNOCENCE BEFORE THE AGE OF REASON OR IF THEY HAVE NO VENIAL SIN ON THEIR SOULS AND FULLY SATISFIED FOR ALL SINS COMMITTED.
 - b. PURGATORY, IF IN THE STATE OF GRACE, BUT EITHER STAINED BY UNATONED VENIAL SIN OR WITH TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT DUE TO FORGIVEN SINS STILL UNATONED FOR OR BOTH.
 - c. HELL, IF IN THE STATE OF MORTAL SIN(S).

Q.27. When does the Last or General Judgment take place?

A. The Last or General Judgment takes place at the end of the world, immediately after the General Resurrection, the resurrection of the dead.

- 1) THIS JUDGMENT IS CALLED THE LAST BECAUSE AFTER IT THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER AND THE GENERAL BECAUSE ALL PEOPLE OF ALL AGES OF THE WHOLE WORLD WILL BE JUDGED.



The General Judgment will take place at the end of the world. It is a public repetition of the particular judgment. Then all that each has thought, said, done, or omitted will be known to everybody. The

just will receive their reward, and the wicked will be punished. At the General Judgment Jesus Christ will be the Judge. Then complete justice will be meted out to all, to the souls united with the bodies.

General Judgement**Q.28. When will the world come to an end?**

A. Nobody but God knows the day and the hour of the end of the world.

- 1) JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF SAID: "*But that day and hour no one knoweth, no, not the angels of Heaven, but the Father alone*" (Matt. 24:36).
- 2) IT IS BELIEVED THAT THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN UNTIL THE NUMBER OF SOULS IN HEAVEN FILL ALL THE " SEATS" EMPTIED BY FALLEN ANGELS.
- 3) THE END OF THE WORLD WILL BE MARKED BY THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Q.29. Who will come to judge at the Last Judgment?

A. Jesus Christ, Our Lord, will come to judge at the Last Judgment.

- 1) THE GENERAL JUDGMENT IS CLEARLY PROCLAIMED IN THE SCRIPTURE AND THUS IS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH IN ALL THE CREEDS:
 - a. THE APOSTLE'S CREED: "FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD."
 - b. THE NICENE CREED: "HE SHALL COME AGAIN WITH GLORY TO JUDGE BOTH THE LIVING AND THE DEAD."
 - c. THE ATHANASIAN CREED: "FROM, THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, AT WHOSE COMING ALL MEN MUST RISE WITH THEIR BODIES AND ARE TO RENDER AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR DEEDS."
- 2) JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD WILL APPEAR IN HIS HUMANITY AND WILL JUDGE IN THE ORDER AND POWER OF GOD: "*God will judge the hidden things of men through Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 2:16).
- 3) FURTHERMORE: "*Apostles will be granted a participation in the judgment.*" (Matt: 19-28), "*along with all the just*" (I Cor. 6-2).

Q.30. Will the sentence at the General Judgment be different from the sentence given at the particular judgment?

A. No, the sentence at the General Judgment will not be different from the sentence given at the particular judgment, but it will be repeated and made public to all present.

- 1) OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST, AS THE JUDGE WILL REVEAL THE HIDDEN THINGS OF DARKNESS AS HE SAID: "*For there is nothing hidden that will not be made manifest, nor anything concealed that will not be known*" (Luke 8:17).

Q.31. Who will be present and judged at the Last Judgment?

A. At the Last Judgment all men, good or bad, and all angels and demons (devils) will be present, but only men will be judged.

- 1) SINCE THE LAST JUDGMENT IS ALSO GENERAL, THE GOOD AND BAD DEEDS, MERITS AND DEMERITS OF ALL MEN, EVEN OF THE JUST, WILL BE REVEALED.
- 2) IT WILL BE TO THE GREAT SHAME AND CONFUSION OF THE WICKED BUT NOT TO THE SHAME OF THE GOOD BECAUSE THEIR GOOD WORKS AND PENANCE WILL ALSO BE REVEALED ALONG WITH THE MERCY AND GOODNESS OF GOD, TO WHOM THEY GRATEFULLY ATTRIBUTE THEIR SALVATION.

Q.32. Why will there be the General Judgment if every man is judged immediately after death?

A. Although every one is judged immediately after death, it is not only fitting but also necessary that there should be the General Judgment for the following reasons:

- a. To vindicate God's providence in the government of the world.
- b. To have the whole world give to Jesus Christ Our Lord the honor denied Him at His first coming and to acknowledge Him as its God and Redeemer.
- c. To give to the just men the public honor due to them and to the wicked men the public shame and confusion they deserve.
- d. To disclose to all the good and evil thoughts, words and deeds, even the most secret ones to all creation.
- e. To make the body share in the rewards or punishments of the soul with which it also shared in good or evil on earth.

Q.33. What does it mean to vindicate God's providence in the government of the world?

A. To vindicate God's providence in the government of the world means to clear the Holy Name of God and to glorify in the presence of all creatures His justice and mercy, wisdom and goodness, power and sovereignty.

- 1) IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL MEN AND ALL ANGELS AND DEVILS, ALL THE GOOD AND EVIL DEEDS WILL BE REVEALED, AND ON THE OTHER HAND, ALL THE SALVIFIC DEEDS, GRACES, HELPS, ADMONITIONS AND WARNINGS AND COUNTLESS OTHER GIFTS OF GOD WILL BE ALSO REVEALED TO SHOW HOW MANY MEN REJECTED THEM AND CHOSE RATHER THE FALSE WISDOM OF THE WORLD, WHICH LED THEM TO THEIR OWN DAMNATION, INSTEAD OF CHOOSING HEAVENLY WISDOM, WHICH WOULD ELEVATE THEM TO THEIR ETERNAL HAPPINESS.

- 2) IT WILL ALSO BE SHOWN TO ALL THAT THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT WAS RENDERED, AFTER THEIR DEATH, TO ALL EVIL MEN WHO ENJOYED THE PROSPERITY ON EARTH AND ETERNAL REWARD TO THOSE WHO SUFFERED AND WERE OPPRESSED BY THEM IN THIS LIFE. THUS A TRIBUTE OF PRAISE WILL BE OFFERED BY ALL TO THE JUSTICE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD AND THEREFORE, NO MAN WILL BE ABLE TO SAY THAT GOD DID NOT REGARD THE WORLD OR WAS UNJUST TO HIM.

Q.34. What is the second coming of Our Lord, Jesus Christ called?

- A. The second coming of Our Lord, Jesus Christ has several names, such as:
“The Day of the Lord”, “Parusia”, “Advent”, “that Day”, “The day of Christ”, “the day of the Son of God.”
- 1) AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURE DESCRIBES HIS COMING: *“And they will see the Son Of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty”* (Matt. 27:30).
 - 2) OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WILL APPEAR IN HIS GLORIFIED HUMANITY, THE SIGHT OF WHICH WILL GIVE A GREAT JOY TO THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT A GREAT TORMENT TO HIS ENEMIES.

Q.35. Will Our Lord Jesus Christ come suddenly to the Last Judgment without any preceding signs?

- A. Our Lord Jesus Christ will come suddenly to the last judgment, but there also will be signs previous to His coming.

Q.36 What signs will precede the Last Judgment?

- A. Before the Last Judgment there will be the following signs, but it is not clear when, how, and in what exact sequence they will occur:
- a. **The Gospel will be preached in the whole world.**
 - 1) OUR SAVIOR TOLD US: *“And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations and then shall the consummation (the end) come”* (Matt.24:14).
 - b. **There will be the conversion of the Jews.**
 - 1) ACCORDING TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FATHERS, THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS IS FORETOLD BY ST. PAUL IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (Rom.11: 25-26).
 - c. **There will be the return of Henoah and Elias.**
 - 1) ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES THESE TWO MEN WHO HAVE NOT DIED WILL BE PRECURSORS OF THE SECOND ADVENT.
 - d. **There will a Great Apostasy from Faith.**
 - 1) ST. PAUL WARNS THE THESSALONIANS ABOUT A REVOLT BY WHICH IS UNDERSTOOD A GREAT REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF THE FAITHFUL THROUGH THE ABANDONMENT OF THE CATHOLIC RELIGION BY MANY NATIONS.
 - 2) OUR LORD SAYS HIMSELF: *“But yet the Son of Man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, Faith on earth?”* (Luke 28:8).
 - e. **The reign of the Antichrist will follow.**
 - 1) ST PAUL CALLS THE ANTICHRIST *“the Man of Sin”* (Thess.2:3) AND ST. JOHN INDICATES THAT *“he is to come in the last days”* (John 2:18).
 - 2) IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THERE WILL ARISE A POWERFUL ADVERSARY OF JESUS CHRIST WHO WILL SEDUCE NATIONS BY HIS WONDERS BUT WILL PERSECUTE THE CHURCH, AND WHO WILL BE EXALTED EVEN ABOVE GOD.
 - f. **Also extraordinary perturbations of nature will occur.**
 - 1) THE SCRIPTURES WARN US THAT THE LAST JUDGMENT WILL BE PRECEDED BY TERRIFYING DISTURBANCES OF NATURE SUCH AS PESTILENCE, FAMINES, EARTHQUAKES, AND ALSO ACCOMPANIED WITH WARS.
 - g. **The Universal Conflagration will follow.**
 - 1) AGAIN IN THE SCRIPTURES A GENERAL CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD BY FIRE IS DESCRIBED, BUT IT WILL NOT ANNIHILATE THE PRESENT WORLD.
 - h. **Then will be heard the Trumpet of Resurrection which will awaken the dead to rise.**
 - 1) ALL WILL RISE WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD.
 - i. **Finally the Sign of the Son of Man will appear in the Heavens.**
 - 1) THIS SIGN IS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS CHRIST TO JUDGE THE WORLD. IT MAY BE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS ON WHICH THE SAVIOR DIED OR A WONDERFUL CROSS OF LIGHT.

Q.37. What events will take place on the Last Day?

- A. On the Last Day the following events will take place:
- The General Conflagration of the world.
 - The sign of the Son of Man in Heaven shall appear.
 - Jesus Christ in great power and majesty with His angels shall come in the clouds of Heaven.
 - The angels shall sound a trumpet to resound throughout the world.
 - The dead will rise to life with their bodies and then they will come to the place of judgment and all the devils, likewise.
 - Jesus Christ will then sit on His judgment seat and the general judgment will take place. *"Then shall He sit upon the seat of His Majesty, and all nations shall be gathered together before Him and He shall separate them one from another"* (Matt. 25:31-32).
 - The execution of the sentence will immediately follow: The just will go body and soul to heaven; the wicked will fall body and soul into Hell. *"And the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting."* (Matt. 25:46).
 - The world will be restored.

Q.38. What is meant by the Resurrection of the Dead?

- A. By the Resurrection of the Dead is meant that at the end of the world, on the last day, at the sound of the trumpet, the bodies of all men, just or damned, will rise and be reunited with their souls forever.
- 1) THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IS THE DOGMA OF THE CHURCH, WHICH WE PROFESS IN THE APOSTLES CREED.
 - 2) OUR LORD HIMSELF STATES IN THE SCRIPTURE: *"For the hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."* (John 5-28, 29); AND *"He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I raise him up on the last day."* (John 6:55)

Resurrection of the Body

Belief in the resurrection is very consoling. It was this belief that gave the early Christians and martyrs such fortitude under persecutions. Firm in this belief, we should not mourn for our beloved dead excessively: "But we would not, brethren, have you ignorant concerning those who are asleep, lest you should grieve, even as others who have no hope"

(1 Thess. 4:13). We shall see them again in the resurrection.

We should remember the words of Our Lord, Who will raise us from the dead: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me, shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

Q.39. Will all dead men, righteous or damned, rise?

- A. Yes, all dead men without exception will rise again.
- 1) ST. PAUL WRITES: *"As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive"* (I Cor. 15:22).

Q.40. Will all men have the same, entire and immortal body at their resurrection?

A. Yes, all men will have the same and immortal body at their resurrection.

- 1) BUT ONLY THESE THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF IDENTITY, ENTIRETY AND IMMORTALITY WILL BE COMMON TO THE RISEN BODIES OF THE JUST AND THE WICKED.

Q.41. Is the resurrection natural?

A. No, the resurrection is not natural, but miraculous.

- 1) JUST AS WE CANNOT BE DELIVERED NATURALLY FROM SPIRITUAL DEATH, EXCEPT BY THE GIFT OF GRACE, SO NEITHER CAN WE BE DELIVERED NATURALLY FROM BODILY DEATH, EXCEPT BY RESURRECTION WROUGHT BY DIVINE POWER.

Q.42. Will the resurrection be brought about suddenly or in degrees?

A. The resurrection will be effected suddenly.

- 1) ST. PAUL SAYS: "*In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump shall be raised incorruptible*" (1Cor.15:57). AT THE RESURRECTION SOMETHING WILL BE DONE ALMOST INSTANTLY BY THE ANGELS AND SOMETHING INSTANTLY BY THE POWER OF GOD
- 2) IT SEEMS THAT THE ANGELS WILL BE EMPLOYED IN GATHERING THE REMAINS AND THE RESTORATION OF HUMAN BODIES, WHILE GOD HIMSELF WILL REUNITE THE SOUL WITH THE BODY AND GLORIFY IT.

Q.43. What will be the cause of our resurrection?

A. The cause of our resurrection will be the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1) BY MEANS OF HIS DIVINE POWER, HE WILL WORK OUR RESURRECTION IN THE LIKENESS TO HIS OWN RESURRECTION.
- 2) THUS HIS RESURRECTION IS THE EFFICIENT AND EXEMPLAR CAUSE OF OUR RESURRECTION.
- 3) IT IS AN EFFICIENT CAUSE INASMUCH AS JESUS CHRIST'S HUMANITY IS AN INSTRUMENT OF HIS DIVINE POWER.
- 4) IT IS AN EXEMPLAR CAUSE FOR US ON ACCOUNT OF HIS BEING FIRST IN DIGNITY AND PERFECTION AS OUR RESURRECTION WOULD BE LIKENED TO HIS.
- 5) AS TO THE EFFICIENCY OF BOTH JESUS CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION, THEY ARE BOTH THE CAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH AND OF THE RENEWAL OF LIFE.
- 6) BUT WHEN CONSIDERED AS EXEMPLAR CAUSES, JESUS CHRIST'S DEATH IS THE CAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR DEATH, WHILE HIS RESURRECTION IS THE CAUSE OF REPAIRING OF OUR LIFE BY RISING TO LIFE.
- 7) NEVERTHELESS OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST MERITED BY HIS PASSION BOTH HIS AND OUR RESURRECTIONS.

Q.44. Why should there be resurrection of the body if the soul does not perish and can live by itself?

A. There should be resurrection of the body for the following reasons:

- a. As both body and soul form a whole man, so after death they both should be reunited by the resurrection of the body to form again a whole man.
- b. Since the body shares with the soul in both its sinful and virtuous acts, hence, the justice of God demands that the body be also the sharer in both the soul's punishments and rewards: Thus the bodies of the just will rise to share forever as a reward in the glory of their souls, whereas the risen bodies of the damned will share in the eternal punishment of their souls.
- c. As the separated soul is naturally imperfect and cannot be happy even in this life, it needs to be united with its body at its resurrection to reach its eternal happiness in the state of its natural perfection.

Q.45. Will all the bodies be glorified at their resurrection?

A. No, not all the bodies will be glorified at their resurrection; only the bodies of the just will be glorified, while those of the wicked will be hideous and repulsive, horrible to behold.

Q.46. Where will the place of the General Judgment be?

A. The place of the General Judgment is uncertain, but it will most probably take place on earth.

- 1) ACCORDING TO THE PROPHECY OF JOEL, IT COULD BE IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT.
- 2) ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS, IT IS INFERRED TO BE HELD IN THE AIR.

Q.47. What will the duration of the General Judgment be?

A. The duration of the General Judgment is uncertain, but most probably it will take place mentally, not by word of mouth.

- 1) CONSIDERING AN IMMENSE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND INNUMERABLE EVENTS OF THEIR LIVES, IT WOULD TAKE AN INCONCEIVABLE LENGTH OF TIME TO REVEAL THE GOOD AND BAD DEEDS OF EACH ONE OF THE JUDGED.
- 2) RATHER IT SEEMS THAT ALL MERITS AND DEMERITS OF ONE'S OWN AS WELL AS THOSE OF OTHERS WILL BE SEEN MENTALLY EITHER INSTANTLY OR WITH GREAT RAPIDITY, BOTH BEING EFFECTED BY THE DIVINE POWER.
- 3) THE MENTAL PROCESS SEEMS TO BE ALSO SUPPORTED BY ST. PAUL IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE (ROMANS 2: 15, 16):
"Their conscience bearing witness to them and their thoughts between themselves accusing or also defending one another in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

Q.48. How will the present world be destroyed?

A. The present world will be destroyed by fire with all its products and ornaments.

- 1) ST. PETER WRITES: *"The Heavens shall pass away with great violence and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burned up (2 Peter 3:10).*
- 2) IT SEEMS THAT THE ELEMENTS WILL REMAIN AS TO THEIR SUBSTANCE AND PROPER QUALITIES IN THEIR NATURE, BUT THAT THEY WILL BE CLEANSED BOTH FROM THE STAIN AND UNNATURAL DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS THE CORRUPTION, WHICH THEY CONTACTED FROM THE SINS OF MEN.

Q.49. How will the present world be renewed after its destruction?

A. As a man will be renewed after his resurrection so will the world befit his glorified state.

- 1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE PREDICTS: *"For behold I create a new heaven and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17), "I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth are gone" (Apoc. 21:1).*
- 2) THE WORLD WILL BE RENEWED BY ITS CLEANSING AND THEN WILL INCREASE ITS BRIGHTNESS AND ITS BEAUTY BY AN ADDITION OF CERTAIN PERFECTION OF GLORY.

Q.50 Will the plants and animals be also restored during the renewal of the world?

A. It seems that plants and animals will not be restored during the renewal of the world.

- 1) AS MEN WILL BE GLORIFIED, THEY WILL PASS FROM THE STATE OF CORRUPTION TO THE STATE OF INCORRUPTION AND CORRESPONDINGLY THE WORLD WILL ALSO BE CLEANSED FROM ANY CORRUPTION TO A NEW STATE OF BEAUTY.
- 2) THEREFORE, ONLY THAT WHICH IS A SUBJECT OF INCORRUPTION CAN BE RENEWED.
- 3) BUT THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS TOTALLY PERISH BOTH IN BODY AND SOUL AND HENCE ARE NOT THE SUBJECT OF INCORRUPTION; THEREFORE THEY CANNOT REMAIN IN THE RENEWAL OF THE WORLD.

Q.51. What will the glorified body of the just look like?

A. The glorified body of the just will be perfect and will have the qualities of Our Lord Jesus Christ's risen Body.

- 1) IT IS EXPLAINED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE: *"Until we all meet... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13).*
- 2) THE GLORIFIED BODY WILL BE WITHOUT BLEMISH OR ANY DEFORMITY OR DEFECT OF THE NATURAL BODY.
- 3) FURTHER IT WILL RISE OF A YOUTHFUL AGE AND IT WILL HAVE NO NEED TO EAT AND DRINK, TO SLEEP, AND TO BEGET.

Q.52. What are the qualities of the glorified body?

- 1) The qualities of the glorified body are:
 - a. Impassibility
 - b. brightness or glory
 - c. agility and
 - d. subtlety or spirituality

Q.53. "What does the quality of impassibility mean?"

A. The quality of impassibility means that the new body is no longer subject to pain, disease, death, and other physical inconvenience or suffering.

- 1) ST. JOHN TELLS US: *"Death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow"* (Apoc.21:4).
- 2) HOWEVER, THERE WILL BE SOME SENSATION IN THEIR BODIES, BUT ALL GLORIFIED BODIES WILL BE EQUALLY IMPASSIBLE.

Q.54. What does the quality of brightness mean?

A. The quality of brightness means that the body will carry its own light and shine with great radiance and glory.

- 1) IT SAYS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE: *"It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory."* (I Cor. 15:43). *"Then the just will shine forth like the sun"* (Matt. 13:43).
- 2) HOWEVER, THEY SHALL BE SHINING WITH DIFFERENT DEGREES OF GLORY DEPENDING ON THE MERIT OF THEIR SOULS, AS ST. PAUL WRITES: *"One is the glory of the sun, another is the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars"* (I Cor. 15: 41, 42).

Q.55. What does the quality of agility mean?

A. The quality of agility means that the body shall be endowed with the capability of moving with utmost quickness wherever the soul wishes.

- 1) ST. PAUL REVEALS TO US: *"It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power"* (I Cor. 14:43).

Q.56. What does the quality of subtilty mean?

A. The quality of subtilty means that the body becomes capable of penetrating material substances.

- 1) AGAIN ST. PAUL SAYS: *"it is sown in a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body."* (I Cor. 15:44).
- 2) THE BODY PARTICIPATES IN THE SOUL'S MORE PERFECT AND SPIRITUAL LIFE SO THAT IT BECOMES ITSELF LIKE A SPIRIT.
- 3) IT CAN ALSO PASS THROUGH MATERIAL OBJECTS, AS OUR LORD DID WHEN HE PASSED THROUGH THE WALLS OF THE TOMB AND THE DOORS OF THE CENACLE.

III. HELL

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). *Those who disobey God will be condemned to hell, a "place of torments"* (Luke. 16:28), and a *"furnace of fire, where there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth"* (Matt. 13:42). *Those damned souls will be plunged "into destruction and dam-*

nation" (I Tim. 6:9), *"and the smoke of their torments goes up forever and ever, and they rest neither day nor night"* (Apoc. 14:11). *But the most terrible of torments will be the loss of the Beatific Vision—seeing God face to face—the greatest joy of the soul. "Depart from me, accursed ones"* (Matt. 25:41).

The Torments of Hell

Q.57 What is Hell?

A. Hell is the place and state of eternal punishment for the fallen angels and the souls of men who die in mortal sin.

- 1) AFTER THE GENERAL RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT, THE BODIES OF THE DAMNED SOULS WILL BE REUNITED WITH THEM IN HELL.

Q.58 What are the four meanings of the word hell?

A. The four meanings of the word hell are as follows:

- a. the hell in the strict sense of the term, signifying the place of punishment for the damned demons and men;
- b. the Limbo of the Fathers, in which the souls of the just who died before the Ascension of Jesus Christ waited for the entrance to Heaven, but which no longer, after that entrance, exists;
- c. the Limbo of infants, where those who died in Original sin alone and without personal mortal sin are confined;
- d. the Purgatory.

Q.59 How does the word hell correspond to the Latin *infernus*, the Greek *Hades* and the Hebrew *sheol*?

A. All four words, hell, infernus, Hades and sheol have very similar and related meanings:

- a. Hell by derivation denotes a dark and a hidden place;
- b. Infernus designates a dark place within and below the earth;
- c. Hades is referring to an invisible, hidden and dark place; and
- d. Sheol in the Old Testament is used in general to designate the kingdom of dead, whether good or bad.

Q.60 What are some of the names for the abode of the damned in the New Testament?

A. Some of the names used in the New Testament for the abode of the damned are: Hades, Gehenna, lower hell, abyss, place of torments, pool of fire, exterior darkness, furnace of fire, unquenchable fire, everlasting fire, etc.

- 1) THE WORD GEHENNA SIGNIFIES THE VALLEY OF HINNON, SOUTH OF JERUSALEM, WHERE THE DUMPED TRASH WOULD ALMOST CONTINUALLY BE BURNED AND WHERE IN EARLIER DAYS A NOTORIOUS WORSHIP OF MOLOCH TOOK PLACE. HENCE THE PLACE, WHICH WAS HELD IN ABOMINATION BY THE JEWS, CAME TO FITTINGLY EXPRESS THE REAL HELL, THE ABODE OF THE DAMNED.
- 2) OTHER NAMES IDENTIFY THE PLACE OF HELL WITH THE SUFFERINGS EXPERIENCED THERE.

Q.61 Where is hell?

A. According to the Holy Scripture hell is within the earth.

- 1) IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE HELL IS DESCRIBED AS AN ABYSS IN WHICH THE WICKED FALL:
 - A) *“And immediately as he had made an end of speaking (Moses), the earth broke asunder under their feet (of Core, Dathan, Abiron and their relatives and followers). And opening her mouth devoured them with their tents and all their substance. And they went down alive into hell, the ground closing upon them”* (Num.16:31-33).
 - B) *“Let death come upon them and let them go down alive into hell”* (Ps.54:16), AND SIMILARLY THERE ARE OTHER REFERENCES IN OTHER PLACES OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE SUCH AS, Is.5:14 AND Ez.26:20.
- 2) THE CHURCH HAS DECIDED NOTHING ON ITS LOCATION, BUT THE GENERAL OPINION OF THE THEOLOGIAN IS THAT HELL IS REALLY WITHIN THE EARTH.

Q.62 Is the existence of hell a dogma of the Catholic Church?

A. Yes, the existence of hell is the dogma of the Catholic Church.

- 1) THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO DIE IN THE CONDITION OF PERSONAL GRIEVOUS (MORTAL) SIN ENTER HELL (DE FIDE)
- 2) THEREFORE, SINCE THE EXISTENCE OF HELL IS THE ARTICLE OF FAITH, IT MUST BE UNQUESTIONABLY BELIEVED.

Q.63 How does the Catholic Church teach the reality of hell?

- A. The Catholic Church teaches the reality of hell in accordance with:
- the Divine Revelation in both the Old and New Testaments;
 - the unanimous teaching of the Fathers of the Church that the wicked will be punished after death;
 - professing her faith in the Athanasian Creed: “They that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into everlasting fire”;
 - her many councils during which the reality of hell was reaffirmed: “the souls of those who depart in mortal sin or only in original sin go down immediately into hell.”

Q.64 Are there any other ways of supporting the Catholic Church’s teaching on the existence of hell?

- A. Yes, there are other ways, as for example:
- there is a universal belief among all nations that evil-doers will be punished after death;
 - by the light of mere reason the existence of hell can be demonstrated;
 - there were reported various manifestations of hell by the dead people returning briefly to life and by the apparitions of the damned.

Q.65 How does the Holy Scripture reveal to us the existence of hell?

- A. Both Testaments reveal to us the existence of hell but in a different manner:
- In the Old Testament the reality of hell is described progressively from the warning terms of the darkness of sin and the resulting judgment before the time of prophets to a later-on clearer and a more definite depiction of the fate of sinners as perishing forever, of their dwellings of everlasting burnings, of devouring fire, of their undying worm and unquenchable fire and of their unending reproach among the dead (Job 4:20; Wisdom 4:11-20; Is.33:14 & 66:24; Dan.12:2,etc.).
 - In the New Testament the reality of hell is affirmed: Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaims it as many as 15 times in all the Gospels, Epistles of St. Paul, and the Apocalypse. He warns us before being *“cast out into the exterior darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* and *“going into hell into unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished.”* (Mark 9:42-48, Matt.18:8, 9).

Q.66 How can we demonstrate the existence of hell by the light of mere reason?

- A. We can demonstrate the existence of hell in the following ways:
- God in His perfect justice must punish a violator of His moral order to make him realize the gravity of sin and the following severity of punishment as a inevitable consequence of committing the moral evil: as God is the Creator of the existing moral order so is He the Punisher of those who break it.
 - But as it is well known from experience that God does not always inflict punishment in this life; then it necessarily follows that it must be done after death and that it is taking place for the unrepented sins in hell.
 - Further, if men were fully convinced that the sinner need fear no punishment after death, moral and social order would be seriously disrupted, the violence would run rampant and consequently the justice would be trampled on. This however the Divine Wisdom cannot permit and makes it clear that there is hell, where the violators, the sinners, must and will be punished, at least, after death.
 - Also, if there were no punishment beyond that which takes place on earth, God would be considered as indifferent to good and to evil, justice and injustice and thus could not be followed and obeyed as holy and just God. Hence God being holy and just must and does punish the unrepented sinners in hell.

Q.67 Is hell and punishment in hell eternal?

- A. Yes, hell is eternal and so is the punishment there.
- 1) THE PUNISHMENT LASTS FOR ALL ETERNITY (DE FIDE).
 - 2) SINCE THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT IN HELL IS THE ARTICLE OF FAITH, IT MUST BE BELIEVED WITHOUT ANY QUESTIONING OR DOUBT.

Q.68 What is the teaching of the Catholic Church on eternal punishment in hell based on?

- A. The teaching of the Catholic Church on eternal punishment is based on:
- a. first of all, and mainly, the Divine Revelations as stated in the Holy Scripture;
 - b. the authentic doctrinal decisions of the councils;
 - c. the teaching of the Fathers of the Church.
- 1) THUS THE CHURCH PROFESSES HER FAITH IN THE ETERNITY OF THE PAINS OF HELL BEYOND THE POSSIBILITY OF DOUBT, AS THE TRUTH OF FAITH WHICH NO ONE CAN DENY OR CALL INTO QUESTION.

Q.69 How does the Catholic Church profess her faith in the eternity of the pains of hell?

- A. The Catholic Church professes her faith in the eternity of the pains of hell :
- a. in her teaching,
 - b. in the Athanasian Creed,
 - c. many passages of her liturgy, and
 - d. by never praying for the damned.

Q.70 In what way does the Holy Scripture teach about the eternal punishment in hell?

- A. Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke clearly of hell 15 times, sometime referring to its existence and sometime to the type of suffering and its unending duration:
- a. “ *The torment of the damned shall last forever and ever*” (Apoc.14:11),
 - b. “*Their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be extinguished* (Is.66:24; Mark 9:43), and
 - c. the fire of hell He repeatedly calls everlasting and unquenchable (Matt.18:7-9; 25:4).

Q.71 Is it proper and necessary to teach about eternal hell and why?

- A. Yes, it is proper and necessary to teach about eternal hell for the following reasons:
- a. It is the dogma of the faith and thus it must be taught like any other article of the faith.
 - b. If the preaching on hell is neglected or even omitted, people consequently forget not only how salutary this revealed truth is, but also have no fear of hell. But the fear of hell is the beginning of wisdom and thus in this sense has saved many souls.
 - c. There are in the world many superficial objections to the revealed truth of hell, which are too readily accepted by some of the faithful, not to speak of unbelievers, because they either rarely hear of hell or know very little about it or never bother to examine the answers of the Church to these objections.
 - d. Teaching the dogma of eternal hell along side with that of Heaven helps the faithful to better appreciate the value of salvation.

Q.72 What are some of the most repeated objections to the Church’s teaching about the existence of hell?

- A. Some of the most repeated objections to the teaching of the Church about the existence of hell are:
- a. I do not believe in hell;
 - b. the future life is an insoluble problem and hell a “perhaps”;
 - c. no one has returned from beyond the grave to testify that there is hell.

Q.73 What is the answer to the objection “I do not believe in hell”?

- A. It is obvious how illogical this objection is since from our experience we know that a thing or an event is not non-existent just because a person says that he does not believe in it. Hence, if one does not believe in hell that belief, obviously, does not put hell out of existence.
- 1) IT IS FURTHER OBVIOUS THAT SUCH PERSONS BY EXPRESSING THEIR DISBELIEF NOT ONLY DO NOT KNOW THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ABOUT HER DOGMAS, BUT ALSO CANNOT BRING ANY EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER AGAINST THE WELL ESTABLISHED BELIEF IN HELL.
 - 2) IN FACT, THEY MOST PROBABLY DO NOT WANT TO BELIEVE IN HELL BY DOING THEIR UTMOST IN CONVINCING THEMSELVES OF ITS NON-EXISTENCE BECAUSE IF THERE IS ONE, THEY KNOW THEY WOULD END UP THERE.
 - 3) FURTHER, THEY WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE THEIR SINFUL LIVES IF THEY BELIEVED BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BEAR THE REPROACHES OF THEIR CONSCIENCE REGARDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR UNREPENTED SINS.

Q.74 How can the objection that the future life is an insoluble problem and hell a “perhaps” be answered?

A. For the faithful the future life has never been a problem nor has there been a doubt about the existence of hell, since we have a certainty of Divine Revelation, the infallible word of God.

- 1) BUT EVEN IF THERE WERE AN UNCERTAINTY, EVEN IF IT WERE ONLY PROBABLE, THAT PERHAPS THERE IS NO HELL, IT IS STILL CONTRARY TO REASON WHEN CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ETERNITY OF UNIMAGINABLE SUFFERINGS. WHO IN HIS RIGHT MIND WOULD TAKE SUCH A RISK, SUCH A CHANCE OF EXPOSING HIMSELF TO THE PUNISHMENT OF AN EVERLASTING FIRE AND PAIN JUST UPON SUCH A “PERHAPS?”
- 2) ALSO FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF LOGICAL REASONING, IF IT IS JUST A QUESTION OF HELL EITHER EXISTING OR NOT EXISTING, EACH POSSIBILITY WOULD HAVE A 50% CHANCE. THUS IF THERE WERE NO HELL, THE UNBELIEVERS WOULD BE RIGHT; NEVERTHELESS, BOTH BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS WOULD END UP IN THE SAME WAY. BUT IF THERE IS HELL, THE UNBELIEVERS HAVE NO CHANCE OF ESCAPING IT, WHEREAS THE BELIEVERS WOULD HAVE A 100% CHANCE OF ESCAPING IT, PROVIDED THEY DIED IN THE STATE OF GRACE. IN CONCLUSION IT IS EVIDENT THAT UNBELIEVERS WOULD BE LOSERS IN EITHER CASE.

Q.75 What is an answer to the objection that no one has returned from hell to testify about it?

A. People who make this claim that no one has returned from hell to testify about it are either not aware of many historical and proved facts, by reliable witnesses and supporting circumstances, of a number of apparitions of damned souls and the dead people briefly returning to life to testify about the existence of hell or stubbornly refusing to believe even the compelling evidence because they do not want to believe. Such a blindness of mind is fittingly described in the Holy Scripture in the case of a rich man in hell who was told by Abraham that his brothers would not believe in hell even if the dead men appeared to them. Let us list several examples of the dead men testifying about the existence of hell:

- a. A person who concealed a mortal sin to the moment of his death, even though he had lived a holy life in a monastery, appeared to a brother in the church just before his funeral and told him not to pray for him since he was in hell. After he had vanished he left in the church a disgusting smell, which spread all over the monastery, as if to prove the truthfulness of the witnessing brother.
- b. Shortly before Napoleon attacked Russia in 1812, one count and a general, who were living in Moscow, and ridiculed hell in one of their meetings, promised one to another that he who dies first would come back to inform the other of what is on the other side. But soon after the war started, the general was called off to the war front and was killed there. Early in the morning of the day he had died, he appeared to the count, who was still in Moscow, and told him: “What do we do now? There is hell and I am there.” About ten days later an army messenger brought the news to the count about the death of the general, who was shot and killed in the same morning and hour when he appeared to the count.
- c. A dissipated young lord suddenly died and afterwards appeared to a widow, who participated in his sinful life, at one o’clock in the morning and grabbing her by her wrist told her in a hissing voice: “There is a hell.” The pain in her wrist was so intense that she lost her conscience; in fact, the flesh of her wrist was burned out, exposing the bone and the size of the burn was that of man’s hand. Her wound was witnessed by her maid, in addition to a strong smell of burning in the room and the burned out imprints of a man’s steps on the carpet to her room and outside of it. The following day she was informed that the young lord died indeed at one o’clock in the morning on the night of his apparition.
- d. There are many other well-documented cases of the deceased persons who briefly came to life and revealed their presence in hell, thus confirming its existence.
- e. Finally in Fatima, Our Lady, during one of her Church approved apparitions, opened a terrifying view of hell to three children, who saw demons and souls plunged in a sea of fire.

Q.76 What are the main teachings of the Catholic Church regarding the Divine Revelations about hell?

A. The main teachings of the Catholic Church about hell in accordance with Divine revelations are:

- a. hell exists;
- b. hell was created by God for the Devil and his angels, but destined also for the punishment of men who would imitate their rebellion;
- c. The punishment of hell is of eternal duration, therefore no one, whether a demon or a condemned soul will ever be converted or released from hell;
- d. Persons who die in the state of mortal sin, be it only one, condemn themselves to hell;

- e. Mortal sin(s) unrepented at the moment of death leaves the soul for ever in a habitual and unchangeable state of rebellion against God;
- f. The eternal punishment consists of the pain of loss and the pain of senses;
- g. The pain of the damned is unequal in accordance with the gravity of their sin.

Q.77 How can we explain according to our reason that the eternal sufferings in hell are just?

- A.** The justice of eternal suffering can be explained according to our reason in the following ways:
- a. Mortal sin as a voluntary offence committed and measured against the infinite authority, dignity and goodness of God has consequently an infinite gravity and malice, and thus accordingly deserves an eternal punishment. But since a finite being cannot bear an infinite punishment, then the intensity of it can only be made equivalent by an infinite duration.
 - 2) If God in His mercy threatens man with the eternal pains of hell so that he would pay heed and seriously tried to avoid falling into hell, He must then in justice carry out His threat. Otherwise, the obstinate sinner would persevere in his revolt against God, whether in this or the next life, and thus his revolt, despite the length of his stay in hell, would eventually, when released, have the last word, so to speak, and be the triumph of iniquity.
 - 3) If beatitude, the reward of the just, is eternal, then the suffering due to obstinate malice should also be eternal. Both justice and mercy are infinite; therefore, their manifestation in a reward and punishment, respectively, must also be of infinite duration.

Q.78 Does reason even demand that the eternal suffering be a fate of the lost?

- A.** Yes, even the reason demands that the eternal suffering be a fate for the lost because when man sins mortally, he in fact chooses the finite things forbidden by God in preference to Him, who is an infinite Good. And if he dies without repentance, his will, being fixed in an immeasurable malice, continues to reject God so that, he would, consequently, do the same sinful thing again if he could. Therefore, because his rejection of God will last forever so will and must his suffering last forever.

Q.79 How can an objection of there being no proportion between the brief moment of mortal sin due either to one's weakness or committing just one sin and the eternal punishment be answered?

- A.** There is indeed no proportion in duration between a brief moment of mortal sin or just one sin and the eternal punishment, but rather a proportion between the law, the gravity of sin in breaking this law, and the consequent punishment. Since even one mortal sin regardless the shortness of its duration has gravity without measure and is in itself irreparable, the guilt of sin remains forever and thus the punishment also never ends.
- 1) A LAW IS NOT A LAW WITHOUT A PROPORTIONATE PENALTY. EVEN IN OUR LIVES A DEED OF MURDER, WHICH LASTS A FEW MOMENTS, DESERVES DEATH OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT OR A MOMENTARY ACT OF BETRAYAL IS PUNISHED BY A PERMANENT EXILE OR EVEN DEATH.
 - 2) THE OBJECTION THAT PEOPLE ARE TOO WEAK TO AVOID SIN IS GROUNDLESS BECAUSE NONE BUT DELIBERATELY WILLED AND UNREPENTED MORTAL SIN MEETS WITH ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. THE INHERENT WEAKNESS, WHICH EVERYONE BEARS DUE TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ORIGINAL SIN, CAN AND IS OVERCOME WITH THE HELP OF GRACE. NEVERTHELESS, THE HELP OF GRACE MUST BE ASKED FOR AND THEN WITH IT A SERIOUS EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO AVOID SINNING. BUT IF THE PEOPLE WHO MADE THE OBJECTION REFUSE THE HELP OF GRACE AND CONTINUE CHOOSING SIN, THE EXCUSE OF THEIR SUPPOSED WEAKNESS TO RESIST SIN WILL NOT JUSTIFY THEIR CONDUCT, BUT RATHER HELP THEM TO BE DAMNED.

Q.80 How can we reconcile eternal hell with God's love?

- A.** As Heaven and hell in eternity are total opposites, so are good and evil, their counterparts, on earth. Good is desirable and pleasing; evil is undesirable and displeasing. Thus love seeks good and rejects evil. God's love is infinite and thus desires good infinitely and consequently rejects the evil also infinitely. And because God is an infinite and the most desirable Good, He has an unquestionable right to be loved by us, His creatures, above everything else, especially because it was for the love of God and His creatures that Jesus Christ Our Lord died and gave His Blood for us. Thus it is God's crucified Love which either saves and gives an eternal reward if loved or punishes eternally if rejected or hated. The crucified Love of God cannot be mocked.

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- 1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE CLEARLY ATTESTS TO GOD'S LOVE FOR US: "*For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting*". (John 3:16).

Q.81 What is mercy?

- A. Mercy is a moral virtue by means of which we have a compassion for and give help to those who are in temporal and spiritual needs, especially in need of pardon and reconciliation.

Q.82 To whom is it accounted as most proper to be merciful and why?

- A. To God it is accounted as most proper to be merciful because being the Supreme and Omnipotent Being, He can be and is merciful to all sinners in the most generous manner, as no other being can possibly be.

Q.83 What is Divine Mercy?

- A. Divine Mercy is not sadness or weakness or a sensible feeling of a pity, which arises from the fear of or grief over some evil, or a feeling of sympathy. On the contrary, it is a virtue, an absolute perfection of God's benevolent and beneficent will, a most glorious manifestation of His omnipotence and goodness. It comes from God's love of the Supreme Good and from His unbounded generosity, which triumphs over evil by drawing good from it and saving souls from the moral evil of sin.

- 1) "*With the Lord there is mercy and with Him plentiful redemption; the mercies of the Lord I will sing forever*". (Ps 129:7;Ps 88:2).

Q.84 What are the two objects of Divine Mercy?

- A. The two objects of Divine Mercy are to manifest the Glory of God and the misery of sinful man. Thus man can make an irresistible appeal in confidence to God's mercy and receive it because God is Goodness, Happiness, Glory and Omnipotence.

- 1) "*Show forth Thy wonderful mercies, Thou who savest them that trust in Thee*" (Ps.16:7), "*Help us O God, Our Savior, for the glory of Thy name*" (Ps.78:9, "*For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness*" (Ps.129:4).

Q.85 How can we reconcile God's punishment of eternal hell with His boundless mercy?

- A. God offers His boundless mercy to all sinners who, in fact, deserve boundless misery in hell for their mortal sin(s). He constantly offers it to sinners throughout their lives, but also warns them of the eternal sufferings in hell if they reject it and die in unrepented sin(s). Therefore, if His boundless mercy is rejected, it cannot be forced upon the sinners, who, clearly, cannot both reject and still receive it. Thus there is no other place left for them but hell, which they, in fact, have chosen themselves by rejecting God's mercy.

- 1) WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT GOD ALWAYS FORGIVES THE SINNERS ANY OR ALL OF THEIR SINS, NO MATTER HOW GRIEVOUS THEY MAY BE, IF THEY ASK AND ACCEPT GOD'S MERCY, WHICH IS CONCRETELY REALIZED IN THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.
- 2) GOD ALSO STATED CLEARLY IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE THAT HE DOES NOT WANT THE ETERNAL DEATH OF THE SINNERS IN HELL, THE EXISTENCE OF WHICH HE HIMSELF HAS TAUGHT, BUT THEIR SALVATION. HE PROVES IT BY WARNING US ABOUT HELL AND TEACHING US THROUGH HIS CHURCH HOW TO AVOID IT AND THAT ITSELF IS A GREAT SIGN OF MERCY: "*The Lord delayeth not his promise, but dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should turn to penance*" (2 Peter 3:9). BUT THERE IS EVEN A GREATER SIGN OF MERCY OF GOD; HE HAD SENT HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON TO SUFFER AND DIE FOR US, THE SINNERS, FOR OUR SALVATION THAT WE THUS MAY AVOID HELL: "*By this the charity of God appeared towards us because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into this world that we may live by Him*" (John 4:9,10).

Q.86 What is justice?

- A. Justice is a moral virtue, which inclines our will to give what is due to God, to the neighbor and to ourselves. Therefore, by the help of justice we always recognize each one's right, under any and all circumstances, and give what is rightful to others and oneself.

Q.87 How is human justice divided?

A. Human justice is divided into a legal and commutative justice and distributive justice. The former two refer to the exchange between equal individuals; the latter between the state and the individuals; that is, what is due from state to them and vice versa.

Q.88 Is there a proportion between human justice and the justice of infinite Creator towards His finite creatures?

A. If we consider the commutative and distributive justice separately it can be answered:

- There is no commutative justice between God and man because there can be no mutual exchange of goods, as it is between equals, since God is incomparably above and superior to us. We also cannot offer to God anything that does not already belong to Him. In fact, all that we have we owe to Him.
- In regard to distributive justice, even though the human distributive justice is similar to that of God, it is still infinitely inferior to His because only God can justly distribute His gifts.

Q.89 What does Divine Distributive Justice consist in?

A. Divine Distributive Justice consists in the distribution of natural and supernatural (graces) goods, of the distribution of rewards, and of inflicting ^{the} punishment on guilty, which is also called God's vindictive justice.

Q.90 What does God's vindictive justice mean?

A. God's vindictive justice, which is a virtue and His absolute perfection, means the punishment for the violators of the Divine order, the order of things and the social order for the purpose of upholding and restoring the very principles by which the society is governed.

- 1) THE VINDICTIVE JUSTICE IS GOD'S PROPER AND NECESSARY PUNISHMENT OF SIN, WHICH HE, IN HIS INFINITE LOVE OF GOODNESS AND BEING THE LIGHT OF ABSOLUTE PURITY, TOTALLY REJECTS AND DETESTS, AS THE SIN IS DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO HIS DIVINE PERFECTION AND BEING NOTHING BUT DARKNESS, MALICE, CORRUPTION AND DESTRUCTION.
- 2) IT IS AS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH GOD'S LOVE OF HIS OWN INFINITE GOODNESS AS TO BE A NECESSARY PROCLAMATION OF HIS INALIENABLE RIGHTS TO BE LOVED ABOVE ALL THINGS. HENCE IT IS JUST OF GOD TO PUNISH INTELLECTUAL BEINGS, WHO RATHER GIVE LOVE TO OTHER FINITE CREATURES IN PLACE OF GOD.

Q.91 How does vindictive justice of God terminate in eternal punishment in hell?

A. The justice of hell depends on the injustice of mortal sin, and every punishment is proportional to the gravity of the offence. A sinner dying with unrepented sin(s) is, in fact, denying to God the infinite dignity of being our only last end because by sinning mortally he turns away from the infinite Good offered to him in preference to a finite creature. The malice of his offence is infinite and the punishment is accordingly infinite, at least in its duration, and can be realized in justice only in eternal hell.

- 1) THE INFINITE GOODNESS OF GOD IS THE SOURCE BOTH OF GOD'S MERCY AND HIS JUSTICE. IF A SINNER CONSISTENTLY AND DELIBERATELY REFUSES GOD'S MERCY, WHICH IS ALWAYS OFFERED TO HIM, HE MUST NECESSARILY ENCOUNTER GOD'S JUSTICE. SO MUCH AS THE SINNER IS REJECTING THE INFINITE GOODNESS OF GOD, SO MUCH MUST HE END UP, IN JUSTICE, WITH THE LOSS OF THAT INFINITE GOOD. AND IF HE DIES UNREPENTED, THE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS CHOICE IS ETERNAL HELL, THE ONLY PLACE PROPORTIONAL TO THE INFINITE MALICE OF SIN.
- 2) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE REMANDS US CONSTANTLY THAT GOD IS JUST, THAT HIS JUDGMENT IS ALWAYS RIGHT, AND THAT ALL THINGS WILL FIND THEIR READJUSTMENT IN THE ORDER OF MERCY, OF JUSTICE, AND OF LOVE. *"Thou art just, O Lord: and Thy judgment is right"* (Ps.118:137), AND *"all His ways are mercy and truth"* (Ps.24:10).

Q.92 Since the effects of Divine mercy and Divine justice seem to be contrary one to another, are they opposing virtues?

A. Even though the effects of Divine mercy and justice seem to be contrary one to another, they are not opposing virtues. In fact, they are perfectly reconciled in Divine life by being coordinated in such a way that the gentleness of mercy offsets the rigor of justice without taking away its rights. Thus in a way mercy is superior to justice and makes its presence felt even in hell by mitigating the just punishment of the damned.

Q.93 Some people cannot believe in hell because they say that Jesus Christ, being so kind and gentle, had come to redeem men and not to condemn them to hell.

A. Indeed, Jesus Christ, being so kind and gentle, did come to redeem men, but first of all to restore men to the friendship with God for His glory, and then to save them exactly from hell of which He spoke as equally as He did of Heaven.

- 1) JESUS CHRIST FOR THE VERY REASON OF BEING KIND AND GENTLE HAD TO SPEAK OF HELL IN ORDER TO AWAKEN IN US THE FEAR OF DREADFUL CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING OR REJECTING HIS COMMANDMENTS, WHICH HE HAD TAUGHT AND ENJOINED ON US SO THAT WE WOULD NOT BE LOST FOREVER. *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15).
- 2) IF THERE WERE NO HELL TO SAVE US FROM AND IF WE WERE TO GO TO HEAVEN WHETHER WE KEPT OR REJECTED HIS COMMANDMENTS, THEN HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH WOULD BE TOTALLY USELESS AND IN VAIN. AND THAT IS OBVIOUSLY IMPOSSIBLE, SINCE ALL OF IT WOULD THEN BE CONTRARY TO GOD'S INFINITE WISDOM AND JUSTICE.

Q.94 Is it correct to claim that the sole object of painful punishment should be only for the reform of the evildoer and not eternal, since it is also contrary to the soul's nature?

A. This claim is not correct for the following reasons:

- a. There are truly punishments for the correction of the sinner. But there are also punishments for the satisfaction of justice, which necessarily demands that whoever rejects the happiness offered to him will not only lose it, but also, on the contrary, be afflicted with eternal pain in hell.
- b. Pain is contrary to the soul's nature, but it is in harmony with the soul as stained by unrepented mortal sin, which being a permanent disorder, lasts forever; consequently, the pain also lasts forever.

Q.95 What are the two kinds of punishments and their reason?

A. The two kinds of punishments are:

- a. a so called medicine punishment, which is the suffering inflicted for the correction of sinners and of temporal duration, and
- b. a punitive punishment, which is everlasting suffering and not corrective for the sinner, but rather medicinal only for others as a deterrent against their sinful lives.

Q.96 Would it be better not to create than to punish some souls in hell forever?

A. In our finite minds we cannot comprehend God's plan of creation, reward and retribution. He said Himself in the Scripture: *"My thoughts are not your thoughts nor your ways my ways."* Nevertheless, out His infinite goodness and love he created all intelligent beings to share with Him in His eternal bliss, a free and undeserved supernatural gift. And He gives always an opportunity and means to all intelligent beings, which He creates, to reach this eternal happiness, though He knows that some of them will reject His offer and as a result end up in hell forever. This punishment is according to His infinite justice and spurned love and also His wisdom, since it can be considered that general good is greater than an individual good. That is, if some men were not created because God would foresee their own damnation, then all their descendents would be deprived of the opportunity of attaining eternal happiness, since on that account they would not be born.

Q.97 What is most terrible about hell?

A. Even though the pain of loss and the pain of senses are inconceivably terrible, the worst thing is that this terrible punishment will last forever, without any hope or remedy whatsoever.

Q.98 If the damned see that their terrible sufferings will last forever, do they not ask for pardon?

A. No, the damned do not ask for pardon.

Q.99 Why the damned in hell do not ask for pardon?

A. To ask for pardon would mean to be truly sorry for one's sins and to submit to God with humility and obedience and prayer of mercy. But this they would never do, even if it meant the release from hell because of their intense and unchangeable hatred of God.

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- 1) AS SOON AS THE DAMNED SOUL FINDS ITSELF IN HELL AND IMMEDIATELY EXPERIENCES THE TERRIBLE PAIN AND THE FINAL REALIZATION OF NO HOPE, OF BEING CONDEMNED TO HELL FOR ETERNITY, IT CONCEIVES IN PLACE OF LOVE OF GOD AN INTENSE HATRED OF HIM, OF HIS REDEMPTION, OF ALL HIS CREATURES. THEREFORE, UNDER THE OVERWHELMING PRESSURE OF THIS HATRED, THE DAMNED SOUL WOULD RATHER BLASPHEME GOD AND RAVE AGAINST HIM THAN TO ASK HIM FOR PARDON.

Q.100 What is the cause of the damned soul's impenitence?

A. The mortal sin is the primary cause of the damned soul's impenitence. It is guilt of sin, which the soul, as man, committed on earth and with which it passed into eternity. Then it became confirmed, obstinate in evil and being turned away from God and filled with hatred of Him, it cannot receive God's graces and thus becomes totally incapable, but also unwilling, of repentance.

- 1) IN HELL THERE IS NO REDEMPTION. THE SEPARATION OF THE SANCTIFYING POWER OF DIVINE LOVE FROM THE DAMNED IS COMPLETE, FINAL AND IRREVERSIBLE.

Q.101 Due to their terrible sufferings, are the damned not at least sorry for their sins as it is said in the Holy Scripture?

A. It seems that the damned are sorry for their sins, and that they are, but not at all with contrition. In fact they do deplore, are sorry with the greatest intensity for the punishment inflicted on them, but not for the guilt, not for the malice of sin, which they will never be sorry for. Had they an opportunity of committing the same sin(s), they would do it again, if for no other reason but out of sheer hatred of God.

- 1) IT SAYS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE OF THE DAMNED: *"Saying within themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit... we have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction... what hath pride profited us? ...All these things are passed away like a shadow... and we have been able to show no mark of virtue, but are consumed in our wickedness. Such things as these the sinners said in hell."* (Wis.5:3-14).

Q.102 Should we be sorry for the damned?

A. Since the Church never prays for the damned and the saints in Heaven do not pity them, since they are absolutely beyond any redemption and true sorrow for their sins and hate God as well as all of His creatures, we should not be sorry for them. Otherwise it would be not only of no use but also detrimental:

- a. It would be detrimental because Satan has worked through his followers to move people to commiserate the damned. He falsely presents to us the damned, including himself, as unfortunate beings asking to be forgiven and unable to obtain forgiveness.
- b. As a result some people, misled by his false charity, may believe it and even accept his accusation of God's supposed cruelty and injustice, and eventually turn away from God and His Church, follow Satan and end up in hell with him.

Q.103 Do the damned wish their own annihilation?

A. The damned will wickedness but shun punishment and because the punishment and the accompanying void of happiness is so unbearable, they long for annihilation, not in itself, but as the means of escaping the suffering. Not in vain did Our Lord warn us of it when He said of Judas: *"It were better for him if that man had not been born."* (Matt.26:24).

Q.104 Do the damned see the glory of the blessed?

A. Before and during the Judgment Day the damned will see the blessed in glory in such a way as to know not what that glory is like, but only that they are in the state of glory that surpasses all thoughts. In the Holy Scripture the rich man "saw Abraham...and Lazarus in his bosom." (Luke16:23). After the Judgment Day they will never see the blessed.

Q.105 How do the damned react to seeing the glory of the blessed?

A. Seeing the glory of the blessed greatly trouble the damned because they grieve through their envy for their happiness and through their remorse of conscience that they forfeited this glory by their wicked lives. *"Seeing (the just) they shall be troubled with terrible fear and shall be amazed at... their unexpected salvation."*

(Wis.5:1-2). And yet they will be still tormented even after the Judgment Day, when they will be deprived of seeing the blessedness of the saints on account of remembrance of it.

Q.106 Do the damned in hell wish the blessed to be damned also?

- A. Hatred and envy reigns supreme in the damned and, therefore, they grieve for the happiness of the blessed and also desire their damnation.
- 1) SO GREAT WILL BE THE ENVY OF THE DAMNED THAT THEY WILL ENVY THE GLORY EVEN OF THEIR KINDRED, SINCE THEY THEMSELVES ARE SUPREMELY UNHAPPY. NEVERTHELESS, THEIR PUNISHMENT WOULD BE GREATER IF ALL THEIR KINDRED WERE DAMNED THAN IF SOME OF THEM WERE SAVED.
 - 2) AN EXAMPLE OF IT IS SHOWN IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE WHEN THE RICH MAN PRAYED TO ABRAHAM TO WARN HIS BRETHREN ABOUT THE FALLING INTO HELL, IF THEY DO NOT AMEND THEIR SINFUL LIVES.

Q.107 In what way do the damned hate God?

- A. The damned hate God in accordance to as they view Him in His punishments, which is the effect of His Justice, but not for what He is, for His Essence.
- 1) GOD IS APPREHENDED IN HIMSELF, IN HIS ESSENCE, AS THE BLESSED SEE HIM, AND IN HIS EFFECTS, AS THE LIVING AND THE DAMNED SEE HIM.
 - 2) SINCE HIS INFINITE GOODNESS IS HIS ESSENCE, HE CANNOT BE POSSIBLY DISPLEASING, MUCH LESS HATEFUL TO ANY CREATURE WHATSOEVER WHO CAN SEE HIM AS HE IS.
 - 3) ON THE OTHER HAND, AS SOME OF HIS EFFECTS ARE DISPLEASING TO SOME BECAUSE THEY OPPOSE THEIR WILL, HE MAY BE HATED, BUT AGAIN, NOT IN HIMSELF, BUT FOR HIS EFFECTS. AND THAT IS WHAT THE DAMNED, AND FOR THAT MATTER ANY SINNER ON EARTH, EXPERIENCE IN HELL.

Q.108. Is it true that Divine Justice demands annihilation of the sinners?

- A. No, it is not true. The Revelation states not that the damned are to be annihilated but to be punished eternally.
- 1) GOD COULD ANNIHILATE THE SINNERS, BUT HE DOES NOT AND WILL NOT. WHAT HE CREATED, HE ALSO PRESERVES.
 - 2) IF EVERY MORTAL SIN WERE PUNISHED BY ANNIHILATION, ALL SINS WOULD BE EQUALLY PUNISHED, WHICH IS CONTRARY TO HOLY SCRIPTURE.
 - 3) FURTHER, IF GOD WERE TO ANNIHILATE SINNERS, HE WOULD BE FORCED TO UNDO WHAT HE HAS DONE AND WHAT HE HAS MADE TO LAST FOREVER. THAT WOULD THEN MEAN THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW ALL FUTURE, THAT HIS WISDOM IS NOT PERFECT AND THAT HE IS SUBJECT TO UNEXPECTED CHANGES, ALL OF WHICH IS TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR INFINITE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

Q.109. If God lets a soul to condemn itself to hell, is He not losing glory that is due to Him?

- A. The glory of God is not diminished if the soul goes into hell because even there God turns the lost souls into the proclamation of His justice: God receives glory both through His mercy as well as His justice.

Q.110. Is it possible that God may in an exceptional case liberate a soul from hell?

- A. No, it is not possible: no such exception has ever taken place or will take place.

Q.111. Does God hate anything?

- A. God hates nothing and the hatred of no thing befits Him, as the Holy Scripture says: *"For Thou lovest all the things that are and hatest none of the things, which Thou hast made"* (Wis.11:25).
- 1) HOWEVER, GOD IS SAID BY SIMILITUDE TO HATE SOME THINGS IN TWO WAYS:
 - (A) BY LOVING THINGS AND THUS WILLING THE EXISTENCE OF THEIR GOOD, GOD WILLS THE NON-EXISTENCE OF THE CONTRARY EVIL. THUS HE IS SAID TO HAVE A HATRED OF EVIL, THE MORAL EVIL, THE SIN, WHICH HE DID NOT BRING INTO EXISTENCE, BEING THE CONTRARY EVIL TO THE GOOD OF NATURE OF THE SINNER WHOM HE MADE.
 - (B) GOD WILLS SOME GREATER GOOD THAT CANNOT BE WITHOUT THE LOSS OF SOME LESSER GOOD. THUS INASMUCH AS GOD WILLS THE GOOD OF JUSTICE OR OF THE ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE, WHICH CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE PUNISHMENT OR CORRUPTION OF SOME THINGS, HE IS SAID TO HATE THINGS WHOSE PUNISHMENT OR CORRUPTION HE WILLS: *"Thou hatest all workers of iniquity; Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie"* (Ps.5:7).
 - (C) THUS HE WILLS THE PUNISHMENT OF SINNERS FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF JUSTICE OR THE ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE

Q.112. If the appeal to love is more efficacious for salvation, why does the Church appeal to fear of hell?

A. It is certainly better to be saved by way of love than by fear, but fear has always been a necessary element of salvation. This is especially true for sinners who by the obstacle a habitual evil life no longer respond to love but more to fear in as much as it threatens them of future eternal pains and suffering, which exactly they try very hard to avoid in this life.

- 1) BUT IF THE SINNER ABANDONS HIS EVIL LIFE THROUGH FEAR OF HELL, HE WILL GRADUALLY REPLACE THIS FEAR WITH CHARITY AND WILL EFFICACIOUSLY REACH HIS SALVATION.

Q.113. Have even saints been warned of eternal pains in hell?

A. Yes, Our Lord has given even to the saints a perceiving knowledge of hell by contemplation or by visions in order to carry them through the filial fear to greater hatred of sin, to more intense growth in charity and to more burning zeal for the salvation of souls.

Q.114. Name two of the saints who had visions of hell and what they said about it.

A. St. Teresa of Avila and St. Catherine of Sienna were two of the saints whose account of hell is as follows:

- a. About her vision of hell St. Teresa said: "This vision was one of the greatest graces the Lord has given me. From it arise also these vehement desires to be useful to souls... to deliver (them) from these terrible torments."
- b. St. Catherine had vision of the various torments of the damned, which she described most vividly in details, to show by contrast the value of eternal live versus that of eternal suffering and the accompanying value of time, which we have only in this life, of gaining merit for life eternal.

Q.115. If the love of God drives the fear out, why is it still instilled in the hearts of men?

A. There are three kinds of fear and the only one of them is a gift of the Holy Ghost, called the **filial fear**, which actually grows with an increase in charity. This fear is salvific, good and very effective in avoiding sinful life because it fears offending God and being separated from Him.

Q.116. What are the other two kinds of fear?

A. The other two kinds of fear are:

- 1) **Mundane fear**, which fears the opposition of the world and thus turns souls away from God. This kind of fear is always bad and leads to hell
- 2) **Servile fear**, which avoids sin because it fears the punishment which God may inflict on the soul. This kind of fear is good and useful for salvation, but its mode is bad because the soul still loves itself more than God and retains affection of mortal sin.

Q.117. How does mundane fear manifests itself?

A. Mundane fear, the fear of temporal evils under the pressure of which a man is willing to offend God, manifests itself in: (a) human respect, (b) culpable timidity or cowardice, and (c) the slavery to the judgment of the world. Also under this fear a man may neglect Mass on Sunday, Communion at least at Easter, the duty of confession, and even come to the point of denying one's faith to avoid the loss of certain goods or personal liberty or of life itself.

- 1) BUT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SAYS: *"Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matt.10:28). HE ALSO SAYS: *"What is a man advantaged, if he gains the whole world and lose himself and cast away himself? For he that shall be ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of man shall be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty and that of His Father and of the holy angels."* (Luke 9:26).
- 2) THOSE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE NO FEAR OF GOD AND EVEN LOOK WITH DISDAIN ON IT, ARE STILL RULED BY MUNDANE FEAR, WHETHER THEY BELIEVE IT OR NOT, BECAUSE THEIR ATTITUDE IS BASED ON A MORAL CODE, WHICH IS FOUNDED ON HUMAN RESPECT.

Q.118. How does servile fear differ from mundane fear?

- A. Servile fear differs very much from mundane fear since it is good and salutary and leads a man towards fulfilling the Divine commandments.
- a. But if through servile fear one avoids sinning only to escape punishments, being otherwise still willing to sin, and thus has mere fear of God and no love of Him, this fear is evil, it cannot coexist with charity, and is called servilely servile.
 - b. On the other hand, if the servilely servile fear turns into initial fear, then with its help the sinner starts approaching God with charity while loosing his affection for sin. Nevertheless, it is still a part of servile fear until charity expels all servility.
 - 1) IN THE JUST MAN SERVILE FEAR MAY CONTINUE ALONG WITH THE FILIAL FEAR THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE. IT IS THIS SERVILE FEAR, AFTER THE MUNDANE FEAR, THAT IS DRIVEN OUT BY CHARITY: *"Fear is not in charity, but perfect charity casteth out fear."* (John 4:18).

Q.119. Explain how different is filial fear from mundane and servile fears.

- A. Filial fear differs essentially from servile fear and still more from the mundane fear because **filial fear**:
- a. is not afraid of the punishment of God but rather of sin which offends God and separates man from Him,
 - b. is the supernatural gift of the Holy Ghost,
 - c. is the beginning of wisdom,
 - d. corresponds to the beatitude of the poor in spirit, of those who fear the Lord and thus possess Him,
 - e. grows with charity; whereas, servile fear diminishes while mundane fear is already non-existent, and
 - f. continues forever with saints in Heaven without servile fear and is called there reverential fear: *"The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring forever and ever"* (Ps. 18: 10).

Q.120. Is God present in Hell?

- A. Yes, as God is present everywhere, so He is present also in hell: *"Whither shall I go from Thy spirit or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into Heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present"* (Ps. 138:8).

Q.121. If God is present in hell, is it any longer hell?

- A. God is present in hell and its inhabitants, all the demons and damned souls, as their Creator and Preserver of their being in the same way as He is to all of His creation. But He does not make His presence known to the damned as He does to the souls in the state of grace and the saints in Heaven. Therefore, since those in hell do not perceive His presence as their Father and the Author of grace but as their Judge and Avenger, they experience no relief whatsoever in their sufferings.

Q.122. What are the two major kinds of suffering in hell?

- A. The two major kinds of suffering in hell are:
- a. **The pain of loss**, and
 - b. **The pain of sense**.

Q.123. What is the pain of loss?

- A. The pain of loss is the eternal loss of the Beatific Vision in hell. It is a total separation of the soul from God, the privation of the possession of God. It is but natural consequence of that aversion from God which lies in the nature of every mortal sin.

Q.124. What does the pain of loss mean?

- A. The pain of loss means the essential and principal suffering due to unrepented sin.

Q.125. What is the pain of sense?

- A. The pain of sense is the physical punishment in hell of first the soul and then of the body and soul, after the General Resurrection.

Q.126 What does the pain of sense mean?

- A. The pain of sense means the suffering from fire and other torments inflicted on the senses of the damned due to unrepented sins.

Q.127 Which of the two major kinds of suffering is primary and which is secondary?

- A. The pain of loss is the primary punishment of the lost, while the pain of sense is secondary.

Q.128 Explain how it can be said that the pain of loss is infinite, whereas the pain of sense is finite?

- A. Every sin consists of two aspects:
- There is a turning away from God, the Immutable Good, which is infinite; hence the related sin is also infinite. And that corresponds to the pain of loss, which is infinite because it is the loss of infinite Good, God Himself.
 - There is also an inordinate turning to mutable (changeable) finite things; hence, the related sin is also finite. And that corresponds to the pain of senses, which is finite because the act of the creature, turning to finite things, is also finite.
 - It must be borne in mind that every inordinate turning to things is necessarily followed by a turning away from God.

Q.129 What privation of good that arises from the Beatific Vision is caused by pain of loss?

- A. The privation of good, that arises from the Beatific Vision, and is caused by the pain of loss, is as follows:
- the love of God and the charity to our neighbor;
 - the immeasurable and unending joy;
 - the company of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother, St. Joseph, His foster father, and all the angels and the saints;
 - all the virtues, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost and the glory and beauty of both the soul and body.

Q.130 How does the Scripture confirm the privation of all good and the eternal separation from God in hell?

- A. The Holy Scripture affirms explicitly the loss of all goods and the eternal separation from God in hell by stating: *"Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devils and his angels."* (Matt.25:41).

Q.131 Describe the severity of the pain of loss.

- A. The pain of loss is a positive pain which consists of:
- an immense void,
 - interior contradiction,
 - utter despair,
 - perpetual remorse without repentance,
 - hate and envy of one's neighbor,
 - hate of or grudge against God.

Q.132 What is meant by an immense void caused by pain of loss?

- A. By an immense void is meant the total absence of God in the soul, which God created to be filled to its utmost capacity with an unimaginable enjoyment of Himself, the Supreme Good, Truth and Beauty.
- BLOCKED BY OUR PASSIONS AND THE SENSE GOODS, WE DO NOT HAVE ON EARTH A SUFFICIENT CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL'S IMMENSE DEPTH, WHICH ONLY GOD CAN FILL AND FOR WHOM WE WERE CREATED.
 - BUT THE MOMENT THE SOUL IS SEPARATED FROM ITS BODY AND THUS FROM ALL INFERIOR AND TEMPORAL GOODS AND PASSIONS, IT IMMEDIATELY ATTAINS FULL CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS OWN IMMEASURABLE DEPTH. INSTANTLY IT REALIZES THAT IT WAS MADE TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD AND AT THE SAME TIME, UNDER THE OVERWHELMING WEIGHT OF ITS OBSTINACY IN SIN, THAT THIS VOID WILL NEVER BE FILLED WITH GOD, CAUSING IT AN INDESCRIBABLE ANGUISH.

Q.133 What is meant by interior contradiction caused by the pain of loss?

A. The damned soul is literally torn by interior contradiction because as it is naturally carried towards the source of its natural life, God its creator, and yet it is, at the same time, repelled by its hatred of God, as its Judge, and by the effects of His Justice.

- 1) THE SOUL CREATED BY GOD HAS A NATURAL INCLINATION TO LOVE HIM MORE THEN ITSELF. AND EVEN THE CONDEMNED SOUL STILL HAS THIS NATURAL INCLINATION TO LOVE GOD, THOUGH CONSIDERABLY WEAKENED, IN ORDER TO SATISFY THIS GOD GIVEN DESIRE FOR HIM.
- 2) ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS SAME SOUL HAS A HORROR OF GOD, AN INSURMOUNTABLE AVERSION THAT COMES FROM UNREPENTED SIN AND TOTALLY DOMINATES IT.

Q.134 In what way is the utter despair caused by the pain of loss?

A. The loss of all goods is the consequence of the pain of loss and the utter despair is the consequence of fully realizing that all these goods, for which the souls were destined, have been forever lost by their own fault.

- 1) DESPAIR OF THE DAMNED IS ROOTED IN THE TOTAL ABSENCE OF ANY HOPE FOR THE END OF THEIR SUFFERINGS AND THE EVENTUAL SATISFACTION OF THEIR DESIRE FOR HAPPINESS, WHICH IS INHERENT IN THEIR VERY NATURE AND CAN NEVER BE ERASED.

Q.135 Where does the perpetual remorse of the damned in hell come from?

A. The perpetual remorse of the damned in hell comes from the **voice of conscience**, which repeats endlessly that it was their own fault when they refused to listen to the teaching of what they must do to be saved while there was yet time.

- 1) EVERY REPROBATE HAS A NATURAL INCLINATION TO VIRTUE WHICH LEADS HIM TO THE REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE, SINCE HE CANNOT DESTROY IN HIS MIND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.
- 2) WITH THE MOST CLEAR REMEMBRANCE THE LOST SINNER WILL RECALL SIN AFTER SIN:
 - A) HE WILL REMEMBER ALL THE GRACES, INSPIRATIONS AND OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS WHICH HE MISUSED OR REJECTED, EVEN TO THE POINT OF DENYING HIS FAITH;
 - B) HOW HE NEGLECTED TO ATTEND HOLY MASS AND THE SACRAMENTS, TO READ HOLY BOOKS, TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE CHURCH, AND TO FOLLOW UP ON GOOD INSTRUCTIONS;
 - C) BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, HOW HE LOVED COMFORT AND LUXURY, DEFRAUDED HIS NEIGHBOR OR STOLE HIS GOODS, LIED AND BROKE THE MARRIAGE LAWS;
 - D) HOW HE FREQUENTED THE PLACES OF THE NEAR OCCASIONS OF SIN, COMMITTED ACTS OF IMPURITY, LOVED TO READ FILTHY BOOKS AND LOOK AT IMMODEST PICTURES AND OBJECTS, AND GRATIFIED HIS BASEST PASSIONS.
- 3) NOW HE KEENLY REALIZES HOW EASILY HE COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED AND ENJOY THE HAPPINESS IN HEAVEN IF HE HAD JUST LISTENED AND CORRECTED HIS EVIL WAYS, LIKE MANY OTHER AND EVEN WORST SINNERS HAD DONE AND WERE SAVED. THIS UNBEARABLE THOUGHT, THIS TERRIBLE REMORSE WILL DRIVE HIM CRAZY AND MAD WITH DESPAIR, RAVING AND RAGING IN TOTAL HOPELESSNESS AND INVOKING THE CURSES ON HIMSELF, BUT ALL IN VAIN.

Q.136 What is meant by “where their worm dieth not” in the Holy Scripture?

A. The expression “where their worm dieth not” in the Scriptures refers to the keenest and the most constant remorse of the reprobates’ conscience, which will never give them rest.

Q.137 Is the worm of the damned corporal in nature?

A. The worm of the damned is understood not as of corporal or material nature, but of the spiritual nature. It is really the remorse of conscience which is called a worm because it originates from the corruption of sin and torments the soul as a corporal worm, which being born in the corruption of flesh torments it by gnawing it.

Q.138 Does the hatred of God by the damned involve the hatred of everything, including themselves?

A. Yes, the hatred of God involves the hatred of one’s neighbor, of the devils and of themselves whether on earth, Heaven or hell.

- 1) THERE IS NOTHING IN HELL BUT HATRED, ENVY AND ENDLESS SUFFERING.
- 2) HELL IS THE PLACE AND STATE OF THE GREATEST AND THE MOST COMPLETE MISFORTUNE AND MISERY.

Q.139 Are the damned in hell punished only by fire?

A. No, the damned are punished not only by fire but also by many other torments.

- 1) EVEN THOUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT ONLY DIRECTLY MENTIONS THE FIRES IN HELL IN THE WORDS: *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire”* (Matt. 25:41), IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IT IS ALSO WRITTEN AND INTERPRETED THAT THERE ARE OTHER TORMENTS IN HELL: *“Fire and brimstone and storms of winds shall be the portion of their cup* (Ps.10:7) AND *“Let him pass from the snow waters to excessive heat”* Job 10:7).
- 2) FURTHER MORE THE NAME OF FIRE IS GIVEN TO ANY GREAT TORMENT TO SHOW HOW INTENSE IT IS BECAUSE THE FIRE IS KNOWN TO BE THE MOST PAINFUL OF ALL SUFFERINGS.

Q.140 Describe the various torments of the pain of sense.

A. The pain of sense includes first of all:

- a. the pain to all senses, especially to touch, by an intense fire; then
- b. the pain to eyes to see dreadful devils and flames, but otherwise the total darkness, no light;
- c. the pain to the ears to hear the ceaseless, heartbreaking wailing and penetrating shrieks and blaspheming words of the devil and the damned;
- d. the pain to the tongue to taste sulfur and burning thirst and hunger;
- e. the pain to the nose to smell the unbearable stench of all bodies and the devils.

Q.141 Is the fire of hell of material substance?

A. Yes, the fire of hell is of a real, substance; it is neither imaginary fire nor so called metaphorical fire.

- 1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION REPEATEDLY SPEAK OF THE FIRE IN HELL IN ITS TRUE SENSE AND NOT AS METAPHORICAL (A FIGURE OF SPEECH WHEN ONE THING IS APPLIED FOR ANOTHER) FIRE.
- 2) SOME PEOPLE CLAIMED THE HELL FIRE TO BE METAPHORICAL, BUT THEIR ARGUMENTS ARE WEAK AND NOT REASONABLE:
 - A) FOR EXAMPLE, SOME PHILOSOPHERS DENIED THAT THE CORPORAL FIRE COULD BE IN HELL, SINCE THEY DISBELIEVED IN THE RESURRECTION AND THUS THOUGHT IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE INCORPOREAL SOUL TO BE PUNISHED CORPORALLY.
 - B) THEY ALSO TRIED TO BOLSTER THEIR WEAK ARGUMENTS BY CLAIMING THAT THE DAMNED ARE PUNISHED NOT BY BODIES BUT BY THE IMAGES OF BODIES. HOWEVER THIS STATEMENT LACKS ANY VALIDITY INASMUCH AS AFTER DEATH THE SOUL CANNOT HAVE ANY IMAGINATION, SINCE IT IS SEPARATED FROM ALL BODY ORGANS.

Q.142 How can it be proven that the hell fire is corporal.

A. That the hell fire is corporal can be proven in the following two ways:

- a. In the Gospel of St. Matthew Our Lord stated that the hell fire was prepared for the devil and his angels who are all incorporeal, just like the soul, and since it is for their punishment, they must suffer from it.
- b. Also, after the General Judgment all the wicked with their bodies will be cast into hell and since the punishment for a body must be corporal, then the fire as their punishment must likewise be corporal. And it is the same fire that, prior to the Resurrection, was torturing their souls.

Q.143 Is the fire of hell the same as the fire on earth?

A. Under whatever conditions fire is found, it is always of the same species so far as the nature of fire is concerned. But there maybe a difference of species as to the matter which fuels it and some of the properties by which it differs from the fire on earth.

Q.144 Name the differences between the hell fire and the earthly fire.

A. The differences between the hell and earthly fires are as follows:

- a. The fire on earth must be kindled by man or exceptionally by a lightning and kept alive in a bodily fuel, which is consumed and therefore must be constantly renewed. It also gives off heat and light.
- b. The fire in hell, on the contrary, even though it is corporal fire, is neither kindled by man nor kept alive by fuel nor consuming. But it subsists eternally in its own nature, as created, kindled and maintained by God Himself. It gives off no light, but heat only.
 - 1) *“Hell is prepared from yesterday, deep and wide. The nourishment thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it”* (Is 30; 27,33).

Q.145 How can demons and the lost souls before the resurrection of their body be detained by a corporeal fire?

A. A material fire cannot naturally act on or detain a spirit in place, nor be hurtful or distressful to it, unless the spirit is made in some way united to it. And this happens in the case of the corporal hell fire, which by Divine power is enabled to detain the spirit to itself as an instrument of Divine Justice.

- 1) EVEN THOUGH OF ITS NATURE A CORPORAL THING IS ABLE TO CONFINE A SPIRIT TO A PLACE, IT IS NOT ABLE TO KEEP IT IN THAT PLACE, SINCE THE SPIRIT IS NOT BY NATURE IN A PLACE SO AS TO BE SUBJECT TO IT, TO BE TIED TO IT (EXCEPTING MAN), BUT HAS THE POWER TO LEAVE IT AT ITS WILL.
- 2) ALSO, IF THE SOUL, WHICH IS A SPIRIT, OF A LIVING MAN IS HELD BY THE BODY, GIVING IT LIFE, AND BY THE JOY OF THIS UNION CONCEIVES A GREAT LOVE OF IT, THEN, BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE SAME SOUL CAN ALSO BE DETAINED THROUGH DIVINE POWER BUT AGAINST ITS WILL TO THE CORPORAL FIRE, THOUGH AS A PENAL, NOT JOYFUL, EFFECT OF THIS UNION CONCEIVES, ON THE CONTRARY, A LOATHING FOR IT AND THUS BECOMES TORMENTED BY IT.

Q.146 How do demons and souls suffer from a corporal fire?

A. Since the hell fire is enabled as an instrument of Divine Justice to hold a spirit, both demons and souls, in place, preventing it to exercise its will, it is in this respect considered hurtful to the spirit. And as the spirit sees the fire as something hurtful, it is then tormented by it.

- 1) BY ACTING ON THE SPIRIT THE FIRE BESTOWS NOTHING ON IT BUT DETAINS IT AND THIS IS SUFFICIENT TO DISTRESS THE SPIRIT.
- 2) SINCE THE SPIRIT HAS NO ORGANS, NEVERTHELESS ITS INTELLECTUAL VISION MAY CAUSE IT A GREAT SORROW IN SO FAR AS THE FIRE SEEN IS APPREHENDED AS HURTFUL, THOUGH NOT BY SEEING, BUT BY EXPERIENCING ITS DETAINING EFFECT AND THUS RECEIVING PUNISHMENT THERE FROM.

Q.147 How does the intensity of hell fire compare to the fire on earth?

A. Even though the earthly fire can cause an intolerable agony, the heat of the hell fire is incomparably more intense and more penetrating than any fire we are familiar with on earth.

- 1) THE SAINTS FOR EXAMPLE SAY:
 - A) ST. AUGUSTINE WRITES THAT THE MOST FEARFUL FIRE ON EARTH IS IN COMPARISON TO THE FIRE OF HELL LIKE A PAINTING OF FIRE COMPARED TO A REAL FIRE;
 - B) ST. BRIDGET SAYS IN HER REVELATIONS THAT THE HEAT OF HELL FIRE IS SO GREAT THAT IF THE WHOLE WORLD WERE WRAPPED IN FLAMES, THE HEAT OF IT WOULD BE AS NOTHING IN COMPARISON WITH IT.

Q.148 How penetrating is hell fire?

A. As the damned are immersed in the fiery lake, its flames surround them not only below, above and all around, but also in every inner portion of their body so that their whole being, body and soul, within and without, will be steeped, burning and breathing in fire.

- 1) TO FURTHER INCREASE THEIR TORMENT, THEY ARE ALSO CAST OUT OF A RANGING FIRE INTO ICY COLD WATER AND BACK AGAIN INTO THE FIRE, AS PREDICTED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE: *"Let him pass from the snow waters to excessive heat and his sin even to hell"* (Job 25:19).

Q.149 If by Divine permission the souls of the damned are outside hell, do they suffer less from its fire?

A. No, the punishment of the damned is not in any way diminished, if by Divine permission they may be allowed to be outside hell because they always see the hell fire wherever they go or are, dragging, so to speak, with them the torments of its flames.

Q.150 How do the damned see the devils and flames if there is a total darkness in hell?

A. There is, indeed, a total darkness in hell and yet by Divine disposition there is a certain amount of light inasmuch as it suffices for seeing those things, which can add torments to the damned.

- 1) THE SCRIPTURES SAY: *"Bind his hand and feet and cast him into exterior darkness"* (Matt. 22:13) AND *"The land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth"* (Job 10:20-23).
- 2) THE ENVIRONMENT OF HELL, CONSISTING BOTH IN SOME LIGHT AND DARKNESS, IS ADAPTED TO THE UTMOST UNHAPPINESS OF THE DAMNED.

Q.151 Does the appearance of the demons and of the lost souls increase the pain to the eyes of the damned?

A. Yes, the torment of the damned is increased by the frightful appearance of their own body and others and by the resulting horror and pain to the eyes. This horror and pain to the eyes is further aggravated by the most frightful appearance of the demons, especially of Lucifer, their chief, who is the most abominable of all the fallen spirits.

- 1) IF SOME OF THE SAINTS WOULD RATHER WALK THROUGH A FLAMING FIRE OR BE PUT IN A RED-HOT FURNACE THAN TO SEE JUST ONE DEVIL AGAIN EVEN FOR AN INSTANT, WHAT MUST BE THE FEAR AND HORROR OF THE DAMNED WHO ARE DWELLING IN THE MIDST AND SEEING THESE COUNTLESS FIENDS IN HELL FOR ALL ETERNITY WITHOUT ANY REPRIEVE?!
- 2) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAIN WARNS US: *"And they shall go out and see the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; their worm shall never die and their fire shall not be quenched and they shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh"* (Is. 66:24).
- 3) EVEN THOUGH SEEING IS NORMALLY PLEASING, IN HELL IT IS, ON THE CONTRARY, VERY PAINFUL BECAUSE THE LOST SOULS SEE NOTHING BUT THAT WHICH IS HURTFUL AND HORRIBLE.

Q.152 What does "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" mean and how does it relate to the pain of hearing?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ repeated these words more than once to impress on man's mind the magnitude of the torture by the lost, and to represent by weeping how they will howl and lament piteously, cry with anguish, and despair and with gnashing of teeth rave, curse and blaspheme under the unbearable weight of their suffering. And to this the devils will also add their shrieks and howls so that the whole hell becomes and continues to reecho forever the most painful and intolerable clamor to the ears, the sense of hearing, and maddening commotion for all eternity.

- 1) HOWEVER, THERE WILL BE NO CORPORAL WEEPING, WEEPING AS SUCH, IN HELL EVEN AFTER GENERAL RESURRECTION BECAUSE, SINCE THERE WILL BE NO BODILY ALTERATION, NO ACTUAL FLOW OF TEARS IS POSSIBLE, THOUGH IT WILL NOT BE SPIRITUAL AS SOME PEOPLE THINK. BUT THERE MAY BE A CERTAIN MOVEMENT OF THE HEAD AND OF THE EYES, WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED A PART OF CORPORAL WEEPING IN THE DAMNED AFTER THE RESURRECTION.
- 2) ALSO, IN THE ABOVE SENSE, THE WEEPING IS A PROOF OF THE BODY RESURRECTION, SINCE ONLY IN RELATION TO THE BODY IT IS POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT THE WEEPING, AND OF THE PUNISHMENT FOR THE PLEASURE OF SIN, AS EXPERIENCED BY BOTH THE SOUL AND THE BODY. AND THIS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE IF THE WEEPING WERE ONLY SPIRITUAL.

Q.153 Are the lost souls in hell tortured by the devils?

A. Yes, with their undying envy and hatred of God and of men, the devils torment unrelentlessly the lost souls and with such ferocity that it is beyond description and nothing on earth can compare to it.

- 1) SOME PEOPLE BOLDLY, BUT FOOLISHLY, ANSWER, WHEN FOR THEIR CRIMES OR EVIL LIVES ARE THREATENED BY FALLING INTO HELL, THAT WHEREVER THEY GO THEY WILL, AT ANY RATE, NOT LACK COMPANY. IN FACT THEY THINK THAT THE COMPANY OF THEIR FELLOW MEN WILL GIVE THEM SOME RELIEF OF THEIR TORMENT, SOME CONSOLATION IN SHARING THEIR MISERY IN HELL. BUT THEY COULD NOT BE MORE WRONG, MORE OFF THE TRUTH AS SHOWN BELOW.
- 2) THE COMPANY OF ALL THE DAMNED CONSISTS OF THE COUNTLESS NUMBER OF DEVILS AND LOST SOULS. BUT THE GREATER NUMBER OF THEM THERE IS IN HELL, THE MORE HELLISH IT BECOMES, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF DEMONS THAT HATE THE LOST SOULS INTENSELY AND THUS TORTURE THEM ACCORDINGLY.
- 3) FURTHER THERE IS NO LOVE WHATSOEVER OF ONE'S NEIGHBOR. IN FACT, ALL THE DAMNED SOULS ARE SO EMBITTERED ONE AGAINST ANOTHER AND BEING SO FILLED WITH HATRED, THEY MUTUALLY MOCK AT AND CURSE ONE ANOTHER WITH THE MOST MALICIOUS MANNER.
- 4) AND WHEN ONE OF THE LOST SOULS IS SORELY TORMENTED BY THE DEVILS, NOT ONE OF THE OTHER SOULS WOULD SHOW THE SLIGHTEST SYMPATHY, BUT EVERY ONE WOULD RATHER LAUGH AT HIM AND REJOICE IN HIS MISERY.
- 5) EVEN ONE'S FATHER OR MOTHER OR SIBLINGS OR ALL OF HIS RELATIVES AND FRIENDS WOULD BE HIS DECLARED ENEMIES AND SEEK ONLY TO FURTHER INJURE HIM.
- 6) THE ACCOUNT THE BOOK OF JOB IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE GIVES OF HIS PERSECUTORS DESCRIBES VIVIDLY AND ACCURATELY, AS WE CAN UNDERSTAND IT, THE TORMENT OF A LOST SOUL IN HELL: *"He hath gathered together his fury against me, and threatening me, he hath gnashed with his teeth upon me: my enemy hath beheld me with terrible eyes. They have opened their mouth upon me, and reproaching me they have struck me on the cheek, they are filled with my pains. He hath taken me by my neck, he hath broken me, and hath set me up to be his mark. He hath compassed me round about with lances, he hath wounded my loins, he*

hath not spared. He hath torn me wound upon wound, he hath rushed in upon me like a giant" (Job 15:10-15).

- 7) THE ABOVE EXAMPLES WILL GIVE US SOME IDEA OF THE AWFUL, DREADFUL CHARACTER OF THE COMPANY THE LOST SOULS WILL FIND IN HELL AND WHICH WILL EFFECT ABSOLUTELY NO RELIEF OR CONSOLATION TO THEM, AS THEY MAY HAVE EXPECTED IN THIS LIFE. ON THE CONTRARY, THE COMPANY OF THEIR FELLOWMEN WILL MAGNIFY THEIR TORMENTS WITH AN INCREASE IN ITS NUMBER.

Q.154 Describe how intensely the damned suffer through the sense of taste.

A. The damned suffer on the tongue by tasting sulfur and the fire in the ranging flames, but especially by the burning thirst and an accompanying hunger. In fact, fire and brimstone will be their food and their drink the wine of God's anger: "*He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine in the cup of His wrath, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb*" (Apoc.14:10) and "*the beast was taken and with him the false prophet... These two were cast alive into the pool of fire, burning with brimstone*" (Apoc.19:20).

- 1) EVEN THOUGH ON EARTH THE THIRST IS SIMPLY UNBEARABLE, THE THIRST SUFFERED BY THE DAMNED IN HELL IS IMMEASURABLY GREATER AND, CONSEQUENTLY, MORE INTENSE AND PAINFUL. IT IS THE HEAT OF HELL FIRE THAT IS THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF THEIR INTOLERABLE THIRST.
 - A) THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE DEPICTS IT WELL IN REGARD TO THE RICH MAN WHO FELL INTO HELL: "*Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame*" (Luke 16:24).
- 2) BESIDES THE MOST BURNING THIRST, THE DAMNED ARE ALSO CONSTANTLY TORMENTED BY THE MOST CRAVING AND RAVENOUS HUNGER, BY THE HUNGER SO GREAT AND UNABATING SO AS TO EXCEED BEYOND MEASURE ANY HUNGER THAT MAY HAVE BEEN ENDURED ON EARTH BY MAN.
 - A) OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WARNED US: "*Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger*" (Luke 6:25) OR "*they shall suffer hunger like dogs*" (Ps.58:7) OR "*Behold my servants shall eat and you shall be hungry... and you shall cry out for sorrow of heart and shall howl for grief of spirit*" (Is. 65:12-14).

Q.155 Are the vile odors in hell strong enough to increase the pain of the damned?

A. Yes, the vile odors in hell are so strong and pervading and so concentrated, since they have no outlet, that any stench on earth would rather be a pleasant odor, when compared to them.

- 1) SINCE IT IS HIGHLY UNBEARABLE TO OUR SENSE OF SMELL TO BE NEAR ONLY ONE SOURCE OF HORRIBLE STENCH, LIKE A DECAYING ANIMAL, IT IS DOWNRIGHT PAINFUL, AND ADDING IMMEASURABLY TO THEIR SUFFERING, FOR THE DAMNED IN HELL TO SMELL IT NOT ONLY FOREVER BUT ALSO FROM MANY SOURCES AT THE SAME TIME SUCH AS HELL ITSELF, THE BODIES OF THE DAMNED, THE DEVILS AND THE FIRE OF PITCH AND BRIMSTONE WITH ITS DENSE SMOKE: "*The smoke of their torments shall ascend up forever and ever*" (Apoc.14:11).
- 2) THE BODIES OF THE REPROBATES ARE SO DISGUSTING AND FOUL THAT THEY EMIT A MOST OFFENSIVE ODOR. IT IS SO STRONG THAT, AS ST. BONAVENTURE SAYS, IF IT TAINTED THE AIR ON EARTH, IT WOULD CAUSE DEATH TO ALL LIVING BEINGS COMING NEAR IT. THUS IF ONE SINGLE BODY OF THE DAMNED EMITS SO HORRIBLE A STENCH, OF WHAT AN UNIMAGINABLE INTENSITY IT MUST BE IN HELL WITH MILLIONS OF ITS INHABITANTS!
- 3) ALSO WE READ IN THE LIFE OF ST. MARTIN THAT, AFTER BEING VISITED BY ONE OF THE DEVILS WHO LEFT BEHIND THE ROOM FILLED WITH AN OVERWHELMING STENCH, HE SAID TO HIMSELF: "IF ONE OF THE DEVILS HAS SO DISGUSTING ODOR, WHAT THE STENCH MUST BE LIKE IN HELL WHERE THERE ARE THOUSANDS (AND THOUSANDS) OF DEVILS ALL TOGETHER."

Q.156 Will the shame and infamy add more to the torments of the damned?

A. Yes, the shame and infamy will add further sufferings to the torments of the damned: "*I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you and a perpetual shame which shall never be forgotten*" (Jer. 23:40).

Q.157 Why will the shame and infamy augment the suffering of the damned?

A. The shame and infamy will augment the suffering of the damned for these reasons:

- a. The shame will keep constantly before their remembrance the sins, their infamy, by which they defiled themselves on earth and before others like a branded mark and thus be fully known to them, since it cannot be erased nor concealed.
- b. Consequently, others with great malice laugh at, scorn and deride each other for their sins, causing themselves great anguish through the shame.

Q.158 What are the accidental pains of the damned?

- A. Beside the pain of loss and pain of sense, which, in addition to their eternal duration, constitute the very essence of hell, the damned also suffer various, so called accidental, punishments:
- Just as the blessed in Heaven are forever free from any pain, so, on the other hand, the damned will never experience the slightest relief or break in their sufferings. But there may be accidental changes when they are sometimes more or sometimes less tormented by their surroundings and the devils.
 - The company of the damned and the devils and their mutual outbursts of hatred, reproaches, torture and their hideous appearance are ever continuing sources of additional torment.
 - The reunion of the soul with its body after Resurrection will be a special punishment, as the body now must share in the sufferings of the soul and thus increase its torment.

Q.159 Can the damned merit?

- A. No, the damned cannot merit because their will can never be inclined to anything except to evil; their will can never be good. Besides, no separated soul can merit, be it in Heaven, Purgatory or hell.
- THERE IS A TWO-FOLD WILL IN THE DAMNED: THE DELIBERATE WILL AND THE NATURAL WILL.
 - THE NATURAL WILL IS AN INCLINATION TO GOOD AND COMES FROM GOD. THE DELIBERATE WILL IS THEIR OWN, INASMUCH AS IT IS IN THEIR POWER TO INCLINE EITHER TO GOOD OR TO EVIL.
 - BUT IN HELL THEIR OWN DELIBERATE WILL IS FIXED IN EVIL BECAUSE THEY ARE COMPLETELY TURNED AWAY FROM THE GOOD WILL, THE LAST END, WHICH IS GOD. HENCE THEY CANNOT WILL GOOD, SINCE ONLY BY DIRECTING A DELIBERATE WILL TO GOD CAN THE WILL BE GOOD AND THAT THEY CANNOT DO.

Q.160 Can the damned demerit?

- A. Before the General Judgment the damned may possibly demerit, which means an increase in their secondary punishment by their perverse will, but after the Judgment they will not.
- BEFORE THE GENERAL JUDGMENT EVIL CONTINUES TO TAKE PLACE, WHICH IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF THE DEMONS ACTIVITY BY WHICH SOME MEN ARE DRAWN TO DAMNATION. FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER THE FALL OF DEMONS, THEY STILL DEMERIT WHEN GOD INFLICTED PUNISHMENT ON THEM THROUGH THE SERPENT, WHO INDUCED MAN TO SIN.
 - ON THE OTHER HAND THE DAMNED ARE NOT OCCUPIED IN DRAWING OTHERS TO HELL, THOUGH THEIR EVIL WORKS THEY LEFT BEHIND ON EARTH MAY CONTINUE TO DO JUST THAT.
 - BECAUSE DEMERIT IS AIMED TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF FURTHER EVIL, IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE AFTER THE GENERAL JUDGMENT, SINCE AT THAT TIME THE EVIL WILL REACH ITS ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION AND THUS ANY DEMERIT CEASES.

Q.161 What are the basic characteristics of the pain in hell?

- A. The basic characteristics of the pain in hell are:
- they differ in degree according to demerit; this applies to both the pain of loss and the pain of sense,
 - they are essentially immutable,
 - they are eternal.

IV. HEAVEN and PURGATORY

Q.162 Do all souls in state of grace enter Heaven directly?

- A. No, some souls enter Heaven from Purgatory.

Existence of Purgatory



Both reason and faith tell us that there is a middle ground of expiation, where the soul is cleansed from all stain of sin before it can enter the glory of heaven. "There shall not enter into it anything defiled" (Apoc. 21:27). Christ said, "Amen, I say to thee, thou wilt not come out from it until thou

hast paid the last penny" (Matt. 5:26). Even persons who deny the existence of purgatory instinctively pray for their loved ones who have died. This would be great inconsistency if their reason did not tell them that their prayers would do the dead good. Prayers are useless for those in heaven or hell.

Q.163 What is Purgatory?

- A. Purgatory is a place and a state in which the souls of the just after their death are purified from the remaining stains of venial sins or the temporal punishment due to their sins already forgiven or their remains of sin before they enter Heaven.
- 1) THE MEANING OF "REMAINS OF SIN" IS EXPLAINED BY ST. THOMAS AS FOLLOWS: "MORTAL SIN IS FORGIVEN WHEN GRACE TURNS THE SOUL BACK TO GOD, BUT THERE MAY REMAIN AN INCLINATION TOWARDS CREATED GOOD. THIS INCLINATION, THIS DISPOSITION CAUSED BY PRECEDING ACTS, IS CALLED "THE REMAINS OF SIN". THEY DO NOT HAVE THE UPPER HAND, BUT THEY DO SOLICIT THE SOUL TO FALL BACK INTO SIN.
 - 2) IN OTHER WORDS, THE REMAINS OF SIN ARE DEFECTIVE DISPOSITIONS THAT REMAIN AS INORDINATE DISPOSITIONS OF THE WILL.

Q.164 Is the existence of Purgatory an article of faith?

- A. Yes, the existence of Purgatory is an article of faith.

Q.165 At which general councils was the faith of the Church on Purgatory clearly expressed?

- A. The faith of the Church on Purgatory was clearly expressed at the Council of Florence in 1438-45 and at the Council of Trent in 1545-63.

Q.166 How was the faith of the Church on Purgatory expressed in dogmatic way at the Council of Trent?

- A. The dogmatic statement on the Church's faith on Purgatory at the Council of Trent is as follows:
- a. "Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has from the Sacred Scriptures and the ancient tradition of the Fathers taught in councils and very recently in this Ecumenical synod that **there is a Purgatory and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar**; The Holy Synod enjoins on the Bishops that they diligently endeavor to have the sound doctrine of the Fathers in Councils regarding Purgatory everywhere taught and preached, held and believed by the faithful".

Q.167 Where does it state in the Holy Scripture that there is a Purgatory?

- A. In the Holy Scripture the word "Purgatory" is not stated, but it does mention an intermediate state of purification which is the same as Purgatory because in Latin it means a place for cleaning from the word "purgare", to make clean.

Q.168 What exactly is stated in the Holy Scripture regarding Purgatory?

A. In both the Old and the New Testaments there are the following references to Purgatory:

1) In the Old Testament:

- a. The belief of the Jews was well expressed by the action of Judas Machabees, the commander of the forces of Israel, who after a battle *“exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin...And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seem^{ed} superfluous and vain to pray for the dead”* (2 Mach. 12: 42-44).

2) In the New Testament:

- a. Our Lord says: *“He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come”* (Matt. 12:32).
- b. St. Paul also says: *“You are God’s building...I have laid the foundation...other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be manifest and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is...If any man’s work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire”* (1 Cor. 3: 9-15).

Q.169 What is the interpretation of the words on Purgatory in the Old Testament?

A. It is clear from the words on Purgatory in the Old Testament that:

- a. the place of purification after death or Purgatory exists;
- b. the offering of sacrifice for the dead aids them in the purification of their souls; and
- c. that as St. Thomas sums it well: *“We are not taught to pray for the souls who are in heaven, nor for those who are in hell, hence there must be a purgatory after death, where the souls of the just pay the debts which they did not pay on earth.”*

Q.170 What is the interpretation of the sins against the Holy Ghost re Purgatory in the New Testament?

A. The words of Our Lord, that sins against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven in this nor in the other world, are interpreted according to the Tradition in the following way:

- a. These words presuppose that certain sins can be forgiven after death, but because they cannot be mortal sins, they must be either venial sins or punishment for mortal sins forgiven though not sufficiently expiated on earth.
- b. In other words by saying that some men’s sins are not forgiven in this nor in the next world, it is implied that there are some sinners who though not forgiven in this world must be in the next one. Otherwise, it makes no sense to state that some are not forgiven even in the next world.

Q.171 What is the interpretation of St. Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians regarding the cleansing after death?

A. St. Paul’s words on trying every man’s work by fire and still be saved had been considered by many Fathers, such as Sts Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Jerome and others, who have seen in this text the doctrine of Purgatory. There the dross of lighter transgressions, such as venial sins and mortal sins forgiven though not sufficiently expiated will be burned away (wood, hay, stubble), and the souls thus purified by fire will be saved.

- 1) ST PAUL SAYS THAT EVERY MAN’S WORK BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST, SHALL BE TRIED BY FIRE. IF THE WORK IS GOOD, SUCH AS GOLD, SILVER AND PRECIOUS STONES, IT WILL NEED A LITTLE OR NO CLEANSING OF THE SOUL. BUT IF IT IS WITH A LOWER QUALITY OF THE WOOD, HAY OR STUBBLE, SUCH WORKS, AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE DONE IN VANITY OR IN ORDER TO ADVANCE ONESELF OR NOT SOLELY FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, WILL BE BURNED BY FIRE IN THE PROCESS OF CLEANSING AND SAVING THE SOUL.

Q.172 Does Tradition support the doctrine of Purgatory?

A. Yes, Tradition supports the doctrine of Purgatory.

Q.173 How does Tradition support the doctrine of Purgatory?

- A. Tradition supports the doctrine of Purgatory in three general ways:
- a. In the Apostolic practice of praying for the dead and in the inscriptions in the catacombs;
 - b. in the Liturgy of the Church;
 - c. in the teaching of the Fathers, and the saints and the Doctors of the Church.

Q.174 Into how many periods can Tradition regarding Purgatory be divided?

- A. Tradition regarding Purgatory can be divided into two periods: the first one lasting 400 years from the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the second in the following years to present.

Q.175 What kind of testimony on Purgatory can we find in the first 400 years?

- A. According to Patristic tradition the existence of Purgatory was clearly affirmed already in the first 400 years of Christianity by the universal practice of prayer and sacrifice offered for the dead. Also this belief, as initiated by the Apostles, found then its way into the ancient liturgy of the Church and in the inscriptions in the catacombs and was described by Tertullian, Origen, Sts. Ephrem, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanius, John Christostom, Ambrose and others.
- 1) ON THE TOMBS OF THE DEPARTED IN THE CATACOMBS WERE INSCRIBED WORDS OF HOPE, WORDS OF PETITION FOR PEACE AND FOR REST, AND AS THE ANNIVERSARIES CAME AROUND, THE FAITHFUL GATHERED AT THE GRAVES OF THE DEPARTED TO MAKE FURTHER INTERCESSIONS FOR THEM.
 - 2) ALSO ABOUT THIS TIME THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION HAD GIVEN US THE FORMULARIES USED IN SUCCORING THE DEAD: "LET US PRAY FOR OUR BRETHREN WHO SLEEP IN CHRIST, THAT GOD WHO IN HIS LOVE FOR MEN HAS RECEIVED THE SOUL OF THE DEPARTED ONE, MAY FORGIVE HIM EVERY FAULT, AND IN MERCY AND CLEMENCY RECEIVE HIM INTO THE BOSOM OF ABRAHAM, WITH THOSE WHO IN THIS LIFE HAVE PLEASSED GOD" (P.G.,I, COL. 1144).

Q.176 How was the doctrine of Purgatory further explained and understood after the first four centuries?

- A. After the first four centuries the doctrine of Purgatory was further explained and understood in the following way:
- a. Beginning with the writings of St. Augustine and then continued with the writings of Sts Caesarius of Arles and Gregory the Great, they all affirmed explicitly the fiery punishments undergone by the just who had not sufficiently expiated their sins during their lives.
 - b. Then during the following centuries the liturgy for the dead was gradually developed and finally the doctrine of the Church on Purgatory was solemnly defined at the councils of Lyons II, of Florence and of Trent.

Q.177 What were the four basic truths on Purgatory declared in the first seven centuries by the saints?

- A. In the first seven centuries the Sts Augustine, Caesarius of Arles and Gregory the Great and others affirmed the following four basic truths on Purgatory:
- a. After death there is no longer a possibility of merit or demerit;
 - b. Purgatory exists and it is the place where souls undergo temporary pains for their sins;
 - c. The souls in Purgatory can be aided by the prayers of the living, especially by the Eucharistic Sacrifice;
 - d. Purgatory will end on the Day of Judgment.

Q.178 Where is the location of Purgatory?

- A. The location of Purgatory is not known, but the most common opinion which corresponds the most with the language of the Scriptures and is generally accepted by the theologians is that it is in the interior of the earth, in the same subterranean space where the hell of the lost is located and thus is also called hell.

Q.179 What does the word hell in the Apostles' Creed signify?

- A. The word hell in the Apostles' Creed signifies those secret abodes in which are detained the souls that have not obtained the happiness of Heaven.

- 1) IN THE ABOVE SENSE THE WORD HELL IS FREQUENTLY USED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE: *“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell”* (Ps.15:10), *“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that he should be holden by it”* (Acts 2:24); *“That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth (hell)”* (Phil.2:10).

Q.180 How many abodes in the earth’s interior are called hell?

- A. There are three abodes called hell in the interior of the earth, but they are of different nature:
- a. The first abode and the deepest is hell strictly so-called where the souls of the damned dwell and are tormented for eternity;
 - b. the second abode is the Purgatory where the souls of the just are purified in order to be eventually admitted into Heaven; and
 - c. the third abode, which is also called the Limbo of the Fathers or the bosom of Abraham or the paradise, is the one where the just dwelled before the coming of Jesus Christ, waiting in peaceful repose to be released by Him to Heaven. Hence after Our Lord’s Ascension this abode no longer exists.
 - 1) Note: if THE WORD HELL SIGNIFIES ABODES IN WHICH ARE DETAINED THE SOULS THAT HAVE NOT OBTAINED THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN, THEN THE LIMBO OF THE CHILDREN MAY ALSO BE CALLED HELL, SINCE THEY WILL NEVER ENTER HEAVEN.
 - 2) OUR LORD SAID TO THE GOOD THIEF ON THE CROSS: *“This day thou shalt be with me in paradise”* (Luke 23:18), WHICH WOULD MEAN THE LIMBO OF THE FATHERS.
 - 3) THE LATIN WORD “LIMBO” (FROM LIMBUS, BORDER) IS TAKEN FROM “IN LIMBO PATRUM”, WHICH MEANS IN THE BORDER OF HELL RESERVED FOR THE FATHERS, A PHRASE USED BY THE CHURCH FATHERS.

Q.181 What are the arguments of appropriateness based on natural reason that there is Purgatory?

- A. The arguments of appropriateness based on natural reason are:
- a. When the order of justice is broken, it demands reparation;
 - b. If this reparation is not made before death, it must be undergone after death;
 - c. The reparation or payment of him who has died without repentance must be considerably different from the reparation to be made by him who has repented;
 - d. Also, religious convictions of many ancient nations confirm their recorded belief in temporal punishment and expiation after death:
 - 1) For example, Plato, the Greek philosopher in the 4th century BC wrote: *“Souls come at once before the judge who examines them with care. If he finds one disfigured by faults, he sends it to the place where it will suffer the punishment it has merited... Pain alone delivers them from injustice.”*
 - 2) There are also many demonstrated examples of ancient Egyptians who buried their dead with various provisions for their future life.

Q.182 How does the reason of appropriateness differ from the strict theological reasoning?

- A. The reason of appropriateness differs from the strict theological reasoning mainly because it rests on the principles of natural reason that can be known without Divine revelations, while the theological reasoning is based on Divine revelations.
- 1) THE REASON OF APPROPRIATENESS IS OPEN EVEN TO NON-BELIEVERS BECAUSE IT IS BASED ON NATURAL REASONING, BUT NOT, GENERALLY, ON THE STRICT THEOLOGICAL REASONING.
 - 2) HOWEVER, THE REASON OF APPROPRIATENESS BECOMES STILL STRONGER WHEN UNITED WITH THEOLOGICAL REASONS WHICH MAKE THE EXISTENCE OF PURGATORY EVEN MORE CERTAIN.

Q.183 What are the basic theological reasons for the necessity and existence of Purgatory?

- A. The basic theological reasons for the necessity and existence of Purgatory are:
- a. The sins already forgiven often demand a temporal suffering, a necessity of making a satisfaction for them, which may not have been done before the moment of death;
 - b. Venial sins may still remain at the moment of death and thus must be expiated after death;
 - c. The “remains of sin”, the defective disposition or an inclination towards created goods may also remain at the moment of death, of which the soul also must be purified.

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- 1) ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE JUSTICE, HE WHO DIES A CONTRITE DEATH (IN THE STATE OF SANCTIFYING GRACE), BUT HAS NOT UNDERGONE THE TEMPORARY PUNISHMENT DUE TO HIS SINS, MUST THEN ENDURE THIS PUNISHMENT IN THE OTHER LIFE IN PURGATORY.
- 2) IF THE JUST SOUL WAS SEPARATED FROM ITS BODY WITH UNREMITTED VENIAL SINS AND ALSO WITH A PERSISTENT ATTACHMENT TO CREATED GOODS, CALLED REMAINS OF SIN, IT MUST BE PURIFIED FIRST IN PURGATORY BEFORE IT IS ADMITTED INTO HEAVEN.

Q.184 Is the theological reason regarding the necessity of satisfaction for sin founded on the description of penance in Holy Scripture?

- A. Yes, the theological reason regarding the necessity of satisfaction for sin is founded on the description of penance both in the Old and the New Testament, where almsgiving, fasting and in general the penitential acts are the real works of repentance and satisfaction for sin.
- a. Nevertheless, as reminded by the Council of Trent, God does not always remit the whole punishment due to sin together with the guilt. Therefore, if the sinner does not do the satisfactory penance in this life, he must then do it in Purgatory.

Q.185 Give some examples of how the theological reason regarding the necessity of satisfaction for sin is founded on what the Holy Scripture says concerning penance.

- A. Some examples of what the Holy Scripture says concerning penance are as follows:
- a. In the Old Testament we read that even after the remission of sins God still required a temporal punishment:
 - 1) In the Book of Wisdom it is related that God “brought Adam out of sin” but still condemned him to continue cultivating the soil “in the sweat of his brow” for about another 900 years, as a penance for his sin (Wisdom 10:2);
 - 2) God forgave the incredulity of Moses, but in punishment for his sin He did not allow him to enter the promised land (Num. 20:10);
 - 3) God also pardoned the sin of David, but the life of his son He took away as a punishment, even though David strongly repented of his transgression (II Kings, 12:12-14).
 - b. In the New Testament we also read that God requires satisfaction for sins, even forgiven:
 - 1) Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles preached the necessity of penance and of good works to satisfy for sins already forgiven (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31; Matt. 4:17; Apoc. 2:4-5);
 - 2) St Paul speaks of labors, watchings, and fasting, which the Church has always considered of worthy fruits of penance (2 Cor. 6:5).

Q.186 Have there been revelations of the saints and of the souls in Purgatory to confirm its existence?

- A. Yes, there have been revelations of the saints and of the souls detained in Purgatory to confirm its existence and these revelations are called particular revelations.

Q.187 How do particular revelations differ from Divine revelations?

- A. Particular revelations differ from the Divine revelations in the following way:
- a. Divine revelations are found in the Holy Scripture and Tradition, forming part of the doctrine revealed for mankind and being proposed by the Church for our belief as dogmas of faith;
 - b. Particular revelations do not belong to the deposit of faith, being private in their nature and thus based upon human testimony. But if this testimony is sufficiently demonstrated, they should not be rejected without offending reason, especially those revelations that have been approved by the Church.

Q.188 Are the particular revelations of more than one kind?

- A. Yes, Particular revelations are of two kinds: of vision and of apparitions.

Q.189 What are the visions and who is known to have experienced them?

- A. Visions are subjective lights infused by God into the understanding of His creatures in order to reveal to them some of His mysteries. Such are the visions of the prophets of the Old Testament, of St. Paul, St. Bridget, St. Teresa of Avila and of many other saints.

Q.190 What do these visions consist of?

- A. These visions consist of certain mysterious representations as figures, symbolic images and things purely spiritual, but also of visions of hell and Purgatory.

Q.191 To whom the visions of Purgatory have been granted?

- A. The visions of Purgatory have been granted to many saints. For example, of those better known, to St. Catherine de Ricci, St. Lidwina, Blessed Osanne of Matua and Veronica of Binasco and St. Frances of Rome.

Q.192 What did the saints experience during their visions of Purgatory?

- A. Generally the saints were led, while in their raptures, by an angel and shown the gloomy abodes of Purgatory and how the souls detained there suffer.

Q.193 What do apparitions of particular revelations consist of?

- A. Apparitions of particular revelations consist of apparitions of the saints who are in Heaven or of souls either still in Purgatory or when being released therefrom to the saints still living.
- 1) IT IS KNOWN FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURE THAT MANY APPARITIONS TOOK PLACE IN THE PAST, SUCH AS WHEN MOSES AND ELIAS APPEARED WITH TRANSFIGURED JESUS CHRIST ON MOUNT TABOR TO THE APOSTLES, SAMUEL TO KING SAUL, THE ANGEL RAPHAEL TO TOBIAS, ETC.
 - 2) TO THOSE SAINTS WHO HAD GREAT CHARITY TOWARDS THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, GOD OFTEN SHOWED THE RELEASE FROM SUFFERING AND THE ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN OF THOSE SOULS WHOM THEY PRAYED FOR.
 - 3) FOR EXAMPLE, ST. TERESA OF AVILA, ST. LOUIS BERTRAND AND ST. MARY MAGDALENE DE PAZZI HAD SEEN MANY SOULS BEING DELIVERED TO HEAVEN.

Q.194 How do the souls still detained in Purgatory appear to the living?

- A. When the souls still detained in Purgatory appear to the living, they present themselves in such a way as to excite compassion; for example:
- a. in garments of mourning, with a sad countenance, imploring looks and expressions of extreme suffering or enveloped by flames; or
 - b. like a mist, a light, a shadow or some kind of fantastic figure, but accompanied by a sign or word by which they may be recognized.
 - c. At other times they make their presence known by moans, sighs, sobs, or hurried breathing or even by blows the living receive, the violent shutting of doors, the rattling of chains and the sounds of voices.
 - d. When they speak, they do so to express their sufferings, to deplore their past faults, to ask suffrages or even to address reproaches to those who ought to succor them.

Q.195 Does Purgatory have more than one place for expiation?

- A. According to St Thomas, it is a very probable opinion, which also corresponds with the words of the saints in particular revelations, that Purgatory has a double place for expiation.

Q.196 Explain the nature of the double place of expiation the Purgatory is believed to have.

- A. The first place of the Purgatory is for the generality of souls and it is situated below the earth near to hell. The second place may vary according to each particular case, and it is from thence that many apparitions occur, St Thomas says.
- 1) THUS ST. THOMAS ADMITS WITH MANY OTHER DOCTORS THAT SOMETIMES DIVINE JUSTICE ASSIGNS A SPECIAL PLACE OF PURIFICATION TO CERTAIN SOULS.
 - 2) IT EVEN PERMITS THEM TO APPEAR EITHER TO INSTRUCT THE LIVING OR TO OBTAIN, BY MAKING KNOWN THEIR SUFFERINGS, THE SUFFRAGES OF WHICH THEY ARE IN NEED.

Q.197 Is the existence of Purgatory a consoling doctrine?

A. Besides the fact that the doctrine of Purgatory has been revealed by Almighty God, it is also on its own a consoling doctrine by being reasonable, one of wisdom, filled with hope and justice for both the dying and those still in good health, and medicinal against despair. It consoles the faithful when death bereaves them.

Q.198 What does the faith in Purgatory give further rise to?

A. The faith in Purgatory gives rise to:

- a. Understanding of the Sanctity, Justice and Mercy of God:
 - 1) God is Sanctity Itself and thus no stain or shadow of sin can appear before Him;
 - 2) Therefore, He requires and exacts expiation and when this expiation is made in the rigor of justice in Purgatory, it is terrible. Consequently, it follows that His Justice is terrible because His Sanctity is infinite.
 - 3) Nevertheless, the trust in His equal Mercy gives us confidence that we will not be put to confusion and not fall into despair, but, on the contrary, be held up by Him.
- b. Salutary fear which animates us with zeal to purify our lives of any sin, vice or an inclination to it and also of the smallest faults in order to avoid the fire of Purgatory. And thus we can satisfy Divine Justice already in this world, where it is very much less rigorous, rather than in the other.
- c. A special viewpoint on the mysterious communion of the saints, the unity in the relation between the Church militant and the Church suffering. Thus it inspires us to a charitable and active compassion and devotion towards the suffering souls, with the hope for us, the living, that the same will be offered for us when we will be in Purgatory.

Q.199 Have there been taught errors about Purgatory or has its doctrine been rejected?

A. Yes, despite the deep belief in Purgatory by common consent of the mankind, there have been not only errors taught about it, but also its existence has been denied.

Q.200 What are the errors in regard to Purgatory which have been condemned by the Church?

A. The errors as condemned by the Church are:

- a. Existence of Purgatory cannot be established by Scripture;
- b. The souls in Purgatory suffer by impatience;
- c. The souls in Purgatory are not sure of their salvation;
- d. The impossibility of merit in Purgatory cannot be proven;
- e. The souls in Purgatory may sin by attempting to escape the sufferings they are undergoing;
- a. There is no necessity of satisfaction for our sins.

Q.201 Who denied the doctrine of Purgatory?

A. The doctrine of Purgatory was denied by:

- a. The Albigenses, the Hussites and the so-called Apostolici in the middle ages and then by the Protestants;
- b. The modern Orthodox Church and the modern Protestants, many of who either deny it or hold varying opinions about its nature.

Q.202 Who of the Protestants were the first to deny the doctrine of purgatory?

A. Of the Protestants, who first denied the doctrine of Purgatory, were Luther and then shortly afterwards Calvin and Zwingly, who followed him early in the 16 century.

Q.203 Describe the Church's condemnation of the error of denying any necessity of satisfaction for sins.

A. At the Council of Trent the Church condemned the Protestant error of denying the necessity of making satisfaction for our sin in the following way: "If anyone says that the man who has repented and received the grace of justification is forgiven and released from obligation to eternal punishment, in such a fashion that he

no longer has any obligation to temporal punishment, whether in this world or in Purgatory, before he can be given entrance into Heaven, let him be anathema.”

- 1) WHEN, IN 1530, LUTHER DENIED ABSOLUTELY ANY NECESSITY OF SATISFACTION FOR OUR SINS, HE CLAIMED THAT IT WOULD BE AN INJURY TO CHRIST, WHO HAS SATISFIED SUPERABUNDANTLY FOR ALL SIN.
- 2) CLEARLY, IT IS THE DENIAL OF A LIFE OF REPARATION, AS IF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SAINTS FOR THE EXPIATION OF SIN WOULD BE AN INJURY TO THE REDEEMER.
- 3) TO THIS ERROR THE CHURCH HAS ALWAYS REPLIED THAT THE SATISFACTORY MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST ARE CERTAINLY SUFFICIENT TO REDEEM ALL MEN, AND YET THEY MUST BE APPLIED TO EACH INDIVIDUAL IN ORDER TO BE EFFICACIOUS. THEY ARE APPLIED TO US IN BAPTISM AND THEN BY THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE, OF WHICH SATISFACTION IS ONE OF THE BASIC PARTS.

Q.204 Do Protestants who believe in the purification of the souls use the word “Purgatory”?

- A. Protestants who believe in the purification of the souls do not, in general, use the word “Purgatory”. They use instead the words “middle state” or “intermediate state” for the place where the souls are to be purified. But, of course, it means the same as the word Purgatory, as long as it represents a place of purification and expiation for the sins of not any soul, but only of those whose sins were forgiven, though were insufficiently satisfied for in this life.

Q.205 Is it true that the existence of Purgatory cannot be established by the Holy Scripture?

- A. No, it is not true. In questions 170-173 above it was clearly shown that the existence of Purgatory can be established by both the Old and the New Testaments.

Q.206 Is it true that the souls in Purgatory suffer by impatience?

- A. No, it is not true. The souls in Purgatory are in perfect union with the Divine Will, fully recognizing and thus accepting with patience the length of time God assigned for their purification.

Q.207 Is it true that souls in Purgatory are not sure of their salvation?

- A. No, it is not true. On the contrary, the souls in Purgatory have assurance of their salvation due to the particular judgment, at which they received this special revelation. They know with absolute certainty that they are predestined to see God face to face.

Q.208 Can the souls in Purgatory merit?

- A. According to the four basic truths stated in Q.179 above, the souls in Purgatory cannot merit. Christian tradition has always considered that only in this life can man work for merit and an increase of grace. Theologians now also agree that no merit is possible in Purgatory.
- 1) IN THE BULL “EXURGE DOMINE” LEO X CONDEMNS THE PROPOSITION THAT “THERE IS NO PROOF FROM REASON OR SCRIPTURE THAT THE SOULS IN PURGATORY CANNOT MERIT OR INCREASE IN CHARITY.”

Q.209 Is it true that the souls in Purgatory may sin by attempting to escape the suffering they are undergoing?

- A. No, it is not true for the following reasons:
- a. The souls in Purgatory cannot sin because they are confirmed in grace, which is the consequence of the particular judgment and also for the fact that they are called holy souls;
 - b. The Church has already condemned this false proposition made by Luther;
 - c. Purgatory pain is accepted by the souls not only as the necessary element for their purification, but also offered by them as an act of adoration with both peace and joy that come from the certitude of confirmed grace and salvation.

Q.210 How can the souls in Purgatory be confirmed in grace before entering into Beatific Vision?

- A. Any intelligent being when coming to the moment of having Beatific Vision is instantly confirmed in grace and cannot sin anymore. But in the case of the holy souls in Purgatory, their confirmation in grace before entering Beatific Vision is explained by the fact that:
- a. After the particular judgment, being in state of grace, they were turned to God in an immutable way; they were fixed in good.

- b. Their totally dominating desire of the earliest final union with God, their last end, could not be achieved, or at least would be extended indefinitely by renewed purification by offending Him, which would be impossible, in any way, since they love Him totally.
- c. Also, this is the teaching of the Church, proclaimed by Leo X in the Bull "Exurge Domine."

Q.211 Is Purgatory the place of merit, satisfaction and repentance?

- A. No, Purgatory is not the place of merit, satisfaction and repentance, all of which are done only on earth, but the place of expiation and purification of the souls of the just to prepare them for their eventual entry into Heaven.
- 1) IN FACT, SOULS IN PURGATORY CANNOT HELP NOR HURT THEMSELVES: HENCE, THEY CANNOT MERIT NOR DEMERIT, SINCE THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO PERFORM ANY WORKS OF SATISFACTION OR PENITENTIAL WORKS DUE TO REPENTANCE.

Q.212 How long will the Purgatory itself last?

- A. Purgatory itself will last until the Last Judgment.

Q.213 How long must each soul remain in Purgatory?

- A. Each soul in Purgatory must remain there until the debt it owes to Divine Justice is paid:
- a. It all depends on how much expiation each soul must undergo. Since suffering corresponds to the debt of pain proceeding from sin and its duration to the degree of attachment to sin, one soul may suffer long, but with less affliction than another; whereas ^{the} other with more intense affliction, but for a shorter time. Thus some may suffer in Purgatory only ^a few hours, while the others for many years.
 - b. However, if the Sanctity of God imposes long expiation upon some of His elect, they may also be shortened or entirely remitted by the suffrages of the living.
 - c. Theological opinion, in general, favors a long duration of purgatorial purification. For example, after a life of grave disorder, souls converted at the last moment remain in Purgatory much longer than ten or twenty years, which is the limit some theologians claim. On the other hand, private revelations state three or four centuries, or even more, especially for those who have had high office and great responsibility.
 - 1) NEVERTHELESS, WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT PURGATORY IS NOT MEASURED BY SOLAR TIME, BUT BY EVITERMINITY AND DISCONTINUOUS TIME, WHICH IS COMPOSED OF SUCCESSIVE SPIRITUAL INSTANTS. AND EACH OF THESE INSTANTS MAY CORRESPOND TO TEN, TWENTY, THIRTY, OR SIXTY HOURS OF OUR SOLAR TIME.
 - 2) AS AN EXAMPLE, HERE ON EARTH A PERSON CAN REMAIN THIRTY HOURS IN ECSTASY ABSORBED BY ONLY ONE THOUGHT, WHICH COULD CORRESPOND TO ONE SPIRITUAL INSTANT.
 - 3) HENCE SINCE THERE IS NO PROPORTION BETWEEN OUR SOLAR TIME AND THE DISCONTINUOUS TIME IN PURGATORY, WE DO NOT REALLY KNOW, BY APPLYING THE SOLAR TIME TO THEIR SUFFERING, HOW LONG THE SOULS ACTUALLY SUFFERED THERE BEFORE THEIR RELEASE.

Q.214 Are the pains of the souls in Purgatory voluntary?

- A. Yes, the pains of the souls in Purgatory are voluntary because the souls realize the necessity of satisfying Divine Justice for their sins. They also know that in order to be purified from any stain of sin and enter into the Glory of God, they must undergo willingly all the punishment inflicted on them.
- 1) PURGATORIAL SATISFACTION IS ACCEPTED WILLINGLY BY THE SOULS WHO LOVE THEIR SUFFERING BECAUSE SUCH IS THE DIVINE WILL; THE MORE THEIR SUFFERING PENETRATES THE DEPTH OF THEIR WILL, THE MORE LOVINGLY THEY ACCEPT IT!!
 - 2) SATISFACTION IS THE SO-CALLED SUFFERING OF ATONEMENT, THE WILLINGNESS OF BEARING OF THE EXPIATORY PUNISHMENT IMPOSED BY GOD.

Q.215 When is the guilt of venial sins remitted to the souls who die with these stains on their souls?

- A. The guilt of venial sins is remitted to the souls at the moment they are separated from their body by their act of charity and the perfect contrition during the particular judgment.
- 1) THIS ACT OF CHARITY AND CONTRITION THE SEPARATED SOUL MAKES WITH THE HELP OF GOD OBTAINS FROM IT THE REMISSION OF VENIAL SINS, BUT IT IS NO LONGER MERITORIOUS. THEREFORE, THE SOUL MUST ENDURE THE SUFFERING DUE TO THESE FAULTS.
 - 2) NEVERTHELESS, SUCH A SOUL IS A SAINT AS THE GUILT OF ALL ITS VENIAL SINS IS AT ONCE REMITTED, AND IT CAN NO LONGER SIN WHEN ENTERING PURGATORY.
 - 3) THIS DOCTRINE IS VERY PROBABLE AND HELD BY THE GENERALITY OF THEOLOGIAN.

Q.216 When are the defective dispositions that remain in the separated soul removed?

- A. The defective dispositions, which are the inclination toward created goods, do not seem to be removed upon the entrance to Purgatory like the venial sins, but may gradually be removed during the soul's expiatory time.
- 1) SOME THEOLOGIANS THINK THAT THESE DISPOSITIONS ARE REMOVED UPON THE ENTRY TO PURGATORY. ST. THOMAS, HOWEVER, TEACHES THAT UPROOTING OF SUCH DEFECTIVE DISPOSITIONS IS GENERALLY A LONG PROCESS, DEMANDING A LONG AFFLICTION OR A LONG PENANCE, SINCE THEY ARE LIKE RUST, WHICH PENETRATES DEEPLY INTO THE INTELLIGENCE AND THE WILL.
 - 2) AS A RULE IT IS BELIEVED THAT THESE DISPOSITIONS DISAPPEAR PROGRESSIVELY, BUT EXCEPTIONS MAY OCCUR.

Q.217 What does the nature of punishment in Purgatory consist of?

- A. The nature of punishment in Purgatory consists of:
- a. the delay of the Beatific Vision, also called a temporary pain of loss and
 - b. the pain of sense.

Q.218 Which of these two kinds of punishments is more painful and why?

- A. The delay of the Beatific Vision is more painful than the pain of sense because not being any more held back by the passions of the body and the distractions of the life on earth, the souls in Purgatory clearly understand the measureless value of the immediate vision of God. They now fully realize that their will can be filled completely only by God seen face to face. Consequently, having such an unsatiable, overwhelming supernatural desire, the "hunger" for God, the absence of this vision, even though temporary, causes them the greatest pain, the most excruciating torture.
- 1) IN THE PRESENT LIFE WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND AND THUS APPRECIATE THE ABSENCE OF THE BEATIFIC VISION BECAUSE DUE TO OUR SENSES, PASSIONS AND TEMPORAL DESIRES, WE HAVE A TOO LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME INEFFABILITY OF THE SOVEREIGN GOOD FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED.

Q.219 What does the pain of sense in Purgatory consist of?

- A. The pain of sense in Purgatory consists mainly of the purgatorial fire, along with other positive affliction, the sorrow for sins and the shame of conscience.

Q.220 Is there a difference between the fire in hell and in Purgatory?

- A. St. Gregory the Great says that the same fire torments the damned but purifies the souls in Purgatory. St. Bellarmine also says that almost all theologians teach that the reprobate and the souls in Purgatory suffer the action of the same fire.

Q.221 What is the doctrine of the purgatorial fire based on?

- A. The doctrine of the purgatorial fire is based on the following reasons:
- a. The consent of scholastic theologians and the authority of St. Gregory the Great and St. Augustine;
 - b. The agreeing testimonies of Sts Cyprian, Basil, Caesarius and the liturgy, which begs refreshment (from the heat of the fire) for these souls;
 - c. The unanimous decision on its existence by the Latin fathers at the Council of Florence;
 - d. A very probable reference by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians regarding, "if any man's work burn... but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire";
 - e. The testimony of the particular revelations.

Q.222 Is the suffering in Purgatory greater than that on earth?

- A. The suffering in Purgatory is greater than all suffering on earth. Such is the doctrine of tradition, supported by theological reasoning and particular revelations.
- 1) FIRE ON EARTH IS INDEED TERRIBLE, BUT IN PURGATORY IT IS INCOMPARABLY MORE, SINCE THERE THE FIRE IS ENKINDLED BY GOD AS HIS INSTRUMENT OF JUSTICE, AS IT SEIZES UPON SOULS AND TORMENTS THEM WITH DREADFUL INTENSITY.

Q.223 What is the testimony of tradition on the intensity of pain in Purgatory?

- A. The testimony of tradition on the intensity of pain in Purgatory is as follows:
- a. St. Augustine: "This fire of Purgatory will be more severe than any pain that can be felt, seen or conceived in this world."
 - b. St. Gregory the Great: "The pain will be more intolerable than anyone can suffer in this life."
 - a. St. Bonaventure: "This punishment by fire is more severe than any punishment coming to men in this life."

Q.224 What is the theological reasoning for the severity of pain in Purgatory?

- A. St. Thomas says that in regard to the delay of the Divine Vision, the temporal sense of loss, and the pain of sense in Purgatory surpasses the greatest pain of this life. The reasons are as follows:
- a. The more a thing is desired, the more painful is its absence.
 - 1) Now, since the souls in Purgatory desire to see God in the most intense way, but cannot until they are perfectly purified and ready to enter Heaven, it follows that they suffer exceedingly for this delay.
 - 2) On earth such an intense desire is either not possible or rarely occurs, hence the delay in seeing God is not so painfully felt.
 - b. Also, the more sensitive a thing is, the greater pain it can experience. Therefore the injuries on the most sensitive parts are the greatest pain.
 - 1) Now, because the body and all bodily sensations have been removed from the soul in Purgatory, it follows of necessity that the soul feels the greatest pain when the fire is inflicted directly on the soul itself, as it is no longer shielded by the absent body, which can, in a way, absorb and intercept a part of the physical and even moral pain.

Q.225 What is the testimony of particular revelations that support the intensity of pain in Purgatory?

- A. There are many testimonies of the saints on earth and of the souls in Purgatory about the intensity of the suffering in Purgatory. For example:
- a. St. Catherine of Genoa who experienced the pains of the purgatorial fire on earth writes: "The souls endure a torment so extreme that no tongue can describe it, nor could the understanding conceive the least notion of it, if God did not make it known by a particular grace."
 - b. St. Teresa of Avila writes in the "Castle of the Soul": "The pain of loss or the privation of the sight of God exceeds all the most excruciating sufferings we can imagine because the souls urged on towards God as the center of their aspiration are continually repulsed by His Justice."
 - c. Venerable Bede writes about a singular prodigy concerning a man who, after his return to life from death, related frightful and unheard of details of suffering in Purgatory. Then he continued for the rest of his new life in prayer, the hardest labor and extraordinary penances, all of which he counted as nothing when compared to those in Purgatory.
 - d. Cardinal Bellarmine also relates a similar story in the history of St. Christine the Admirable, who after dying at the age of 32 also returned to life, just before her burial. Full of vigor she then described the torments of the souls in Purgatory, which appeared to her so excessive that it was impossible to give an idea of their rigor, on account of which she first thought that she was in hell. She also had undergone in the rest of her new life the most rigorous penance, such as throwing herself into a burning furnace and staying there for a long time in the fire, plunging herself in winter into the cold river and remaining there for several weeks and other extraordinary mortification, though never dying from their bad effects. She accomplished it all as a mission of charity and suffering, in response to the offer of the Heavenly Father during her death, in order to deliver the souls from the flames of Purgatory.

Q.226 Do souls in Purgatory suffer also from demons?

- A. No, the souls in Purgatory do not suffer from demons.
- 1) IT WOULD BE UNJUST THAT HE WHO HAS TRIUMPHED OVER SOMEONE SHOULD BE SUBJECTED TO HIM AFTER VICTORY.
 - 2) THEREFORE, THOSE SOULS WHO ARE IN PURGATORY ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THE TORTURE OF THE DEMONS, SINCE THEY HAD WON VICTORY OVER THEM BY DYING WITHOUT MORTAL SIN.

Q.227 Name some of the sins that became the common matter of expiation in Purgatory.

- A. Those men who passed their whole life in habitual state of mortal sin until the moment or near the moment of death, without expiating for them, but were spared Hell by Mercy of God, or those who lived good lives but neglected to expiate for their sins, they all had to, nevertheless, undergo the most frightful punishment in Purgatory. The examples of their most common sins are as follows:
- a. **The delay of conversion until death** – the delay of conversion to Catholic faith may be done on account of either human respect, social position, personal or other reasons, but in any case merits a long punishment by presuming on God's Mercy;
 - b. **Sins of lust and impurity** – a man who was a long time a slave of the demon of impurity deserves also a long time of suffering for his sins;
 - c. **Sins of youth** – even though a man can live a good life in his adulthood and had all the sins of youth forgiven, if he neglects to expiate for them, he must then do it in the most dreadful way in the Purgatory. The Justice of God demands expiation for the smallest sin.
 - d. **Worldliness** – those who abandoned themselves to the luxury, vanities, amusements and the illusions of the world and failed to make sufficient satisfaction for them, must then abandon themselves to their painful expiation in Purgatory;
 - e. **Pleasure, comfort and ease seekers** - those who lead effeminate and sensual lives filled with pleasure, feared sacrifices and scarcely observed the laws of fasting and abstinence prescribed by the Church, also suffer greatly in Purgatory, if they made no expiation for their forgiven sins on earth;
 - f. **Scandal, bad example** – immodest pictures, books, art, fashion, etc. and bad example, all of which leads to the seduction, the loss of innocence, is also punished severely in Purgatory, if not expiated for during life.
 - g. **Tepidity** – God wills to be served with fervor, with the whole heart, and thus will punish men severely, especially the religious, who neglect their duties, perform holy actions in a careless manner or apply themselves in a negligent or careless manner in His service.
 - h. **Negligence in Holy Communion** – all voluntary neglect, indifference or the reception without fervor or piety or willful omission in so holy an action is an offense to the Sanctity and Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, demanding, consequently, a just expiation in the Purgatory.
 - i. **Irreverence in religious exercises** – such as in prayer, dispensing or receiving the Sacraments, reciting the Holy Office, celebrating or assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is extremely displeasing to the Divine Majesty and is consequently severely punished by Him in Purgatory.
 - j. **Lack of mortification of the tongue** – many fail to speak without offending against meekness, humility, sincerity, or charity or fail to avoid slander and the disorder of the tongue. Thus we offend God by words and disedification to our neighbor and by the scandal to many others, all of which, if not repaired on earth, must then be expiated in a dreadful way in Purgatory.
 - k. **Failure in matters of justice** – God also chastises most painfully in Purgatory all unexpiated sins contrary to justice and charity or the failure in making restitution.
 - l. **Lack of charity or kindness towards our neighbor** – sins against mutual charity and friendship, harshness towards our neighbor and every other fault against charity, whether in a civil or religious community is severely punished in Purgatory.
 - m. **Abuse of grace** – this fault means the neglect to respond to or cooperate with the aids which God gives us or to follow up on the interior invitation by means of grace to practice virtue or to perform certain charitable works or the failure to resist the impulse of natural inclinations or the attachment to the relatives or the human respect. If for these sins the sufficient satisfaction is not made on earth, then it is expiated in Purgatory in a much more severe way.

Q.228 Do the sufferings in Purgatory diminish progressively?

- A. The sufferings due to the pain of sense do diminish progressively, but as to the temporary pain of loss, they do not diminish, but rather increase for the following reasons:

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- a. As the souls are purified from the remains of sin, the intense adoration of Divine Sanctity, Goodness and Justice takes their place and the desire to see God grows stronger and more impetuous, and yet, at the same time, it is accompanied with an increase in pain.
- b. The love of God does not diminish their pain, but rather increases it in parallel with an increase of their unfulfilled desire to see God.
- c. Nevertheless the souls enjoy inexpressible peace with joy and even pain; and yet, joy does not diminish pain, as pain does not diminish joy.
- d. St Frances de Sales says: "Their pain arises from delay, from deprivation for a time of the blessed joys and love of paradise. But this pain they endure with a loving song: *'Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right'*" (Ps.118: 137).

Q.229 When the soul is entirely purified, can the fire cause it pain?

- A. No, when the soul is entirely purified, the fire can no longer cause it pain or affect it in any way.

Q.230 If the souls could enter Heaven before being perfectly purified, would they do it?

- A. As long as the process of purification lasts, the souls clearly understand that the Beatific Vision is not yet for them. They would rather suffer more in Purgatory than to enter Heaven with the least stain on their souls!

Q.231 Is there peace and mutual love in Purgatory?

- A. Yes, in fundamental contrast to Hell, the mutual love governs in Purgatory and the souls still retained there have no envy of those who are delivered sooner. All have perfect peace in their complete abandonment into the hands of the Lord. In fact, they are so satisfied with Divine dispositions, with whatever He wills, that they love everything that pleases Him.

Q.232 Is there a growth of acquired virtues in Purgatory?

- A. Yes, it seems most probable that souls in Purgatory can grow in virtue by repetition of natural acts:
- a. Purely spiritual acquired virtues can grow in Purgatory as, for example, prudence and justice, but not those virtues that involve sense powers, since the soul has no body.
 - b. As the remains of sin gradually disappear, they are replaced with these acquired virtues.

Q.233 Is there a growth of infused virtues and the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost in Purgatory?

- A. This question is difficult, but since the traditional doctrine teaches that after death there is no way to acquire grace or to increase it, the opinion that the infused virtues may grow in Purgatory seems to be contrary to this doctrine. The reason being, according to this opinion, that the degree of glory would not correspond to the degree of grace at the moment of death, as the doctrine teaches, but at the end of Purgatory.

Q.234 Is there a probability of an increase of charity in Purgatory due to imperfect meritorious acts on earth?

- A. Yes, there is a probability that if the merits for the imperfect acts of charity may lie dormant until death, that then it may be granted to the souls in Purgatory to recover them after fervent acts of charity.
- 1) ST. THOMAS TEACHES THAT ON EARTH EACH ACT OF CHARITY MERITS ITS INCREASE, BUT IT MAY NOT HAPPEN AT ONCE, IF THE ACT OF CHARITY IS NOT INTENSE ENOUGH TO DISPOSE THE PERSON TO RECEIVE THIS INCREASE.
 - 2) MANY THEOLOGAINS DEFEND AND APPLY THIS INCREASE OF CHARITY TO PURGATORY ACCORDING TO THE ABOVE QUOTE OF ST. THOMAS. AND IT WOULD STILL REMAIN TRUE THAT THE DEGREE OF CHARITY IS PROPORTIONED TO THE DEGREE OF MERITS GAINED ON EARTH, BUT IT WOULD NOT BE PROPORTIONED TO THE DEGREE OF CHARITY AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH. THUS IT WOULD CORRESPOND TO THE DEGREE OF CHARITY AT THE END OF PURGATORY.

Q.235 Explain what is meant by ultimate disposition for Heaven.

- A. Ultimate disposition for the entry into Heaven consists of absolutely pure state of soul, which, on one hand, excludes all sin, all defective disposition and all remains of sin; while on the other hand, it includes, beside firm faith, assured hope and ardent charity, an intense, burning desire to see God.

- 1) THE SUBLIME GIFT OF THE BEATIFIC VISION CANNOT BE GRANTED TO THE SOUL WHICH DOES NOT HAVE THE FULLNESS OF THIS BURNING DESIRE, SINCE WITHOUT IT THE SOUL WOULD STILL BE UNPREPARED FOR THE VISION.

Q.236 How does St. Frances de Sales summarize the state of souls in Purgatory?

- A. St. Frances de Sales says: "The greater part of those who dread Purgatory... think only of the suffering without considering the peace and happiness which are there enjoyed by the souls. It is true that the torments are so great that the most acute sufferings of this life bear no comparison to them; but the interior satisfaction which is there enjoyed is such that no prosperity nor contentment upon earth can equal it:
- a. The souls are in a continual union with God. They are perfectly resigned to His will, or rather their will is so transformed into that of God that they cannot will but what God wills; so that if Paradise were to be opened to them, they would precipitate themselves into Hell rather than appear before God with the stains with which they themselves disfigured. They purify themselves willingly and lovingly because it is the Divine good pleasure.
 - b. They wish to be there in the state wherein God pleases, and as long as it shall please Him.
 - c. They cannot sin, nor can they experience the least movement of impatience, nor commit the slightest imperfection.
 - d. They love God more than they love themselves and more than all other things; they love Him with a perfect, pure and disinterested love.
 - e. They are consoled by angels.
 - f. They are assured of their eternal salvation and filled with the hope that can never be disappointed in its expectation.
 - g. Their bitterest anguish is soothed by a certain profound peace.
 - h. It is a species of Hell as regards the suffering; it is a Paradise as regards the delight infused into their hearts by charity – Charity, stronger than death and more powerful than Hell; Charity, whose lamps are all on fire and flame. (It is a) happy state, more desirable than appalling, since its flames are flames of love and charity."
 - i. Thus when imposing His cross upon us in this life, God pours upon it the unction of His grace; when purifying souls in Purgatory like gold in a crucible, He tempers their flames by ineffable consolations.

Q.237 Does Our Divine Master want us to fear Purgatory?

- A. Yes, Our Divine Master does want us to fear Purgatory and, indeed, it is impossible to reflect seriously on the rigors of Divine Justice there and not to tremble with fear.
- 1) WHO CAN BELIEVE THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK UPON THAT FIRE, THOSE EXCRUCIATING PAINS, WHICH FAR EXCEED THE COMBINED PENANCE OF THE SAINTS AND THE SUFFERING OF THE MARTYRS, AND NOT SHUDDER FROM FEAR?
 - 2) OUR LORD WANTS TO INSPIRE US WITH HOLY FEAR BY SHOWING US THROUGH VARIOUS MEANS THE CLEANSING CHAMBERS OF DIVINE JUSTICE, WHENCE WE SHALL NOT DEPART UNTIL WE HAVE PAID THE LAST FARTHING, AS HE WARNS US IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Q.238 Why does Our Lord Jesus Christ want us to fear Purgatory?

- A. Our Lord Jesus Christ wants us to fear Purgatory in order for us to prevent and avoid it. He desires that the thought of those avenging flames should stimulate us to fervor in His service and induce us to expiate our sins and faults in this world rather than in the next. There is no comparison between the expiation on earth versus in Purgatory, so much more rigorous and severe it is there.

Q.239 Is it Our Lord's intention that we have an excessive, gloomy fear without confidence in His Mercy?

- A. No, it is not Our Lord's intention, but on the contrary, He wishes that our fears should not only not to be excessive and gloomy but also not to be torturous and discouraging, but rather tempered by great trust and confidence in His Mercy.
- 1) EVEN IF WE HAVE WELL JUSTIFIED FEARS OF UNDERGOING OUR PURIFICATION IN PURGATORY, WE MUST STILL LOOK TO THAT CONTINGENCY WITH UNBOUNDED CONFIDENCE IN GOD, WHO NEVER FAILS TO CONSOLE THOSE WHOM HE PURIFIES BY SUFFERINGS.

Q.240 How is the Mercy of God demonstrated in regard to Purgatory?

- A. The Mercy of God is demonstrated in regard to Purgatory in three ways:
- a. In consoling the holy souls and
 - b. in mitigating their suffering there;
 - c. in giving to us a thousand means on earth of avoiding these penal flames.
 - 1) GOD RESERVES TERRIBLE CHASTISEMENTS IN PURGATORY FOR THE LEAST FAULTS, BUT HE INFLICTS THEM AT THE SAME TIME WITH HIS MERCY, WHICH SHINES FORTH THEREIN NO LESS THAN HIS JUSTICE DOES.
 - 2) THUS GOD SHOWS THE ADMIRABLE HARMONY OF HIS PERFECTIONS IN PURGATORY, WHERE THE MOST SEVERE JUSTICE IS EXERCISED TOGETHER WITH THE MOST INEFFABLE MERCY.

Q.241 By whom are the souls in Purgatory consoled?

- A. The souls in Purgatory are consoled by Our Divine Master, by the Blessed Virgin Mary and by the angels.

Q.242 How does God console the souls in Purgatory?

- A. God consoles the souls in Purgatory by inspiring them with a high degree of faith, hope, the Divine love, and virtues which produce in them conformity to the Divine Will, resignation and the most perfect patience.
- 1) ST. CATHERINE OF GENOA SAYS: "GOD INSPIRES THE SOUL IN PURGATORY WITH SO ARDENT MOVEMENT OF DEVOTED LOVE... THAT... SHE DETESTS THE LEAST STAIN THAT DISPLEASES HIM, THE LEAST HINDRANCE THAT PREVENTS HER UNION WITH HIM. THUS, IF SHE COULD FIND ANOTHER PURGATORY MORE TERRIBLE THAN THE ONE TO WHICH SHE IS CONDEMNED, THAT SOUL WOULD PLUNGE HERSELF THEREIN... IN ORDER THAT SHE MIGHT BE SOONER DELIVERED FROM ALL THAT SEPARATES HER FROM HER SOVEREIGN GOD."

Q.243 How does the Blessed Virgin Mary console the souls in Purgatory?

- A. The Blessed Virgin Mary is a Mother of Mercy not only to her children on earth, but also to those in Purgatory. She intercedes for the holy souls by her prayers and by her visits so that their chastisements, which are inflicted on them, are either removed or mitigated.
- 1) IT IS ESPECIALLY ON ALL SATURDAYS THAT THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN EXERCISES HER MERCY IN PURGATORY, WHEN SHE DESCENDS INTO PURGATORY TO VISIT AND CONSOLE HER DEVOTED SERVANTS:
 - A) ACCORDING TO THE PIOUS BELIEF, BASED ON PARTICULAR REVELATIONS, SHE DELIVERS THOSE SOULS WHO ENJOY THE SABBATINE PRIVILEGE AND AFTERWARDS GIVES RELIEF AND CONSOLATION TO OTHER SOULS WHO HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY DEVOTED TO HER.
 - 2) THOSE JOYFUL VISITS ALSO OCCUR ON HER OTHER FEASTS, ESPECIALLY THE FEAST OF HER GLORIOUS ASSUMPTION.
 - A) ST. PETER DAMIAN TELLS US THAT EACH YEAR ON THE DAY OF ASSUMPTION, THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY DELIVERS SEVERAL THOUSANDS OF SOULS.
 - B) OUR HEAVENLY MOTHER DELIGHTS TO BRING HER CHILDREN INTO THE GLORY OF HEAVEN ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERY DAY SHE HERSELF WAS DELIVERED INTO HER GLORY IN HEAVEN.
 - C) THIS PIOUS BELIEF IS ALSO FOUNDED ON A GREAT NUMBER OF PARTICULAR REVELATIONS.

Q.244 How do the holy angels console the souls in Purgatory?

- A. The doctors of the Church teach that the guardian angels conduct the souls, which they were in charge of, to the place of expiation, Purgatory, and remain there to procure for them all assistance and consolation in their power. Many doctors of the Church also share in the opinion that God, in addition, sends His angels from time to time into Purgatory to visit and console the suffering souls.

Q.245 Do the saints in Heaven also console the souls in Purgatory?

- A. The saints in Heaven do not console the souls in Purgatory like the angels do, but they assist them very effectively by way of supplication or by impetration to obtain from Divine Mercy a diminution of their sufferings. Also they cannot satisfy for them nor pay their debts to Divine Justice, which is a God given privilege of His Church militant, the faithful on earth.
- 1) MERCY OF GOD SHINES FORTH MORE CLEARLY, THOUGH INDIRECTLY, IN THE POWER HE GIVES TO HIS CHURCH ON EARTH TO SHORTEN BY ITS SUPPLICATION THE DURATION OF THE HOLY SOULS' SUFFERING OR TO MITIGATE THE INTENSITY OF THEIR PAIN.
 - 2) THUS, IT IS TO THE FAITHFUL THAT HE GIVES POWER TO HELP THE SOULS IN PURGATORY BY WAY OF SUFRAGES, THAT IS, BY MEANS OF IMPETRATION AND SATISFACTION FOR THEIR SINS.

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Q.246 What does the word suffrage in the Church usage mean?

A. The word suffrage in the Church usage means an intercessory prayer. It comes from Latin and means a recommendation.

Q.247 What is the general meaning of the word suffrage?

A. In general the word suffrage means and includes all that we, on earth, can offer to God in behalf of the departed souls. It is all our good works in so far as they are impetratory or satisfactory.

Q.248 What is the triple value of good works performed in the state of grace?

A. The triple value of good works performed in the state of grace is:

- a. **Meritorious** – it increases our merit in grace, thus entitling us to a higher degree of glory in Heaven. But it remains the property of the faithful who earned it and cannot be transferred to another;
- b. **Impetratory** – it has, like a prayer or petition, by appealing to the goodness of God, the virtue of obtaining some grace from God. But, in this case, the value of it can be transferred to and benefit others;
- a. **Satisfactory** – it has a reparatory value that can satisfy Divine Justice and pay our debts of temporal punishments for our offences committed against God before we die. Its value can also be applied to others in paying their debts to Divine Justice.

Q.249 What are the suffrages by which the living may aid the suffering souls in Purgatory?

A. The suffrages by which the living may aid the suffering souls in Purgatory are:

- a. prayers, indulgenced prayers, indulgences, alms, the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross;
- b. fasts, penance of any kind or works of satisfaction;
- c. above all the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Holy Communion; and
- d. heroic acts of charity.
 - 1) ST. THOMAS TEACHES THE PRINCIPLE: "ALL THE FAITHFUL IN THE STATE OF GRACE ARE UNITED ONE WITH ANOTHER BY CHARITY. THEY ARE ALL MEMBERS OF ONE SOLE BODY, THAT IS, OF THE CHURCH. NOW IN AN ORGANISM EACH MEMBER IS AIDED BY ALL OTHERS. THUS EVERY CHRISTIAN IS AIDED BY THE MERITS OF ALL OTHER CHRISTIANS."
 - 2) HENCE WE CAN AID THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

Q.250 How does the Church itself give us an example in helping the suffering souls in Purgatory?

A. During each Holy Mass the Church prays for the souls in Purgatory in the Memento of the Dead. She further opens her treasures, which are the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints in the form of indulgences for the poor souls in Purgatory.

- 1) THUS IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT THERE ARE SOULS IN PURGATORY NOBODY IS PRAYING FOR, SINCE THE CHURCH DOES. THIS IS TRUE ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO THE HOLY MASS ON ALL SOULS DAY, WHICH HAS A SPECIAL VALUE JUST FOR THE SOULS FOR WHOM NO ONE OFFERS A SPECIAL MASS.
- 2) ST. AUGUSTINE ALSO WRITES: "IT CANNOT BE DOUBTED THAT THE PAYERS OF THE CHURCH, THE HOLY SACRIFICE AND ALMS DISTRIBUTED FOR THE DEPARTED RELIEVE THOSE HOLY SOULS AND MOVE GOD TO TREAT THEM WITH MORE CLEMENCY THAN THEIR SINS DESERVE. IT IS AN UNIVERSAL PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH, A PRACTICE WHICH SHE OBSERVES AS HAVING RECEIVED IT FROM HER FOREFATHERS, THAT IS TO SAY, THE HOLY APOSTLES."

Q.251 What does the word indulgence mean?

A. The word indulgence means remission and comes from Latin.

Q.252 What is an indulgence?

A. An indulgence is the remission of the temporary punishment granted by the Church outside of the Sacrament of Penance.

Q.253 How does the Church exercise the power of the Keys received from Our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. In virtue of the power of the Keys received from Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church may free the faithful from every obstacle to their entrance into heaven:

- a. In the Sacrament of Penance, where the Church absolves the faithful from their sins and eternal punishment and
- b. outside of the Sacrament, by indulgences through which the Church remits the debt of temporal punishment which remains after the absolution.

Q.254 What are the indulgences not?

- A. Indulgences are not:
- a. a permission to sin, nor pardon for present or future sin nor a guarantee against temptation;
 - b. neither do they take away eternal punishment;
 - c. nor are they to be sold and
 - a. neither do they secure an immediate release of the souls detained in Purgatory.

Q.255 How are the indulgences divided?

- A. The indulgences are divided into **Plenary** and **Partial**.

Q.256 What is a plenary indulgence?

- A. A plenary indulgence is the remission of **all** the temporal punishments due to our sins.
- 1) ONE WHO DIES IMMEDIATELY AFTER GAINING PLENARY INDULGENCE GOES STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN.
 - 2) THE GOOD THIEF ON THE CROSS WAS GRANTED BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST A PLENARY INDULGENCE WHEN HE WAS TOLD: "*Amen I say to thee this day thou shalt be with meⁱⁿ paradise*" (Luke 23:43).

Q.257 What are the conditions prescribed for gaining plenary indulgence?

- A. The conditions prescribed for gaining plenary indulgence are:
- a. Confession (on the day itself or within the preceding or following eight days),
 - b. Communion (on the day itself or within the preceding or following eight days),
 - c. A visit to a church or a chapel,
 - d. Prayer for the intention of the Pope:
 - 1) Exaltation of the Church, 2) uprooting of heresies, 3) peace among Christian nations,
 - 4) propagation of faith, 5) conversion of sinners.
 - e. No attachment to venial sins.

Q.258 What is the partial indulgence?

- A. The partial indulgence is the remission of **part** of the temporal punishment due to our sin, specified by a certain number of days or years.
- 1) IF WE SHOULD FAIL TO GAIN THE PLENARY INDULGENCE BY NOT FULFILLING ALL CONDITIONS, WE SHALL NEVERTHELESS GAIN THE INDULGENCE AT LEAST PARTIALLY ACCORDING TO OUR DISPOSITIONS.

Q.259 What does the specification of a certain number of days or years for the partial indulgence mean?

- A. Each partial indulgence has a certain number of days or years, which means the remission of the same number of days or years of public canonical penance as it was imposed formerly upon sinners according to the ancient discipline of the Church, **but it in no way represents days and years of relieving the suffering of the soul in Purgatory.**
- 1) FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN AN INDULGENCE OF 300 DAYS OR 7 YEARS IS GRANTED, IT DOES NOT MEAN TO FREE A SOUL FROM 300 DAYS OR 7 YEARS OF SUFFERING IN PURGATORY. IT MERELY INDICATES THAT SO MUCH TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT IS REMITTED WHICH, IN GOD'S EYES, WOULD HAVE BEEN REMITTED IN THE EARLY CHURCH BY A CANONICAL PENANCE OF 300 DAYS OR 7 YEARS.
 - 2) NOBODY BUT GOD KNOWS WHAT PROPORTION THERE IS BETWEEN THOSE DAYS OF PENANCE AND THE DURATION OF THE SUFFERINGS IN PURGATORY. BESIDES, AS IT WAS EXPLAINED IN Q.215, THE TIME IN PURGATORY IS NOT MEASURED ACCORDING TO OUR SOLAR TIME. THEREFORE, IT REMAINS THE MYSTERY HOW MUCH INDULGENCE WILL FREE THE SOULS FROM THEIR SUFFERING.

Q.260 How does the Church by means of indulgences remit the temporal punishment due to sin?

A. The Church remit by means of indulgences the temporal punishment by applying to us from her spiritual treasury part of the infinite satisfaction of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints.

- 1) WHEN THE CHURCH GRANTS AN INDULGENCE, IT DOES NOT CANCEL ANY EXPIATION DUE TO GOD BUT ONLY SUPPLIES FOR OUR DEFICIENCIES BY DRAWING ON ITS SPIRITUAL TREASURY.

Q.261 Why does the Church grant indulgences?

A. The Church grants indulgences because :

- a. It knows that despite our good will, we often fail in our good resolutions;
- b. Usually the small penance of a few prayers imposed by a confessor is not sufficient to make satisfaction for our sins;
- c. We are often careless and have only imperfect contrition for our sins, and also through our negligence commit many venial sins and imperfections. Therefore, there remains some temporal punishment, which we have to suffer here or in Purgatory.
- d. Thus, if we make a good use of indulgences, we may not only reduce part of our debts with God here, but may also shorten our Purgatory or even completely cancel all our temporary punishment in this life and go straight to Heaven.

Q.262 Has the Church always exercised its right to grant indulgences?

A. Yes, the Church always exercised its right to grant indulgences. Already the Apostles granted indulgences, (2 Cor. 2:10), and with time more and more indulgences came to be granted. Today they are granted for assisting at the Holy Mass, reciting certain prayers, for visiting certain holy places, for fasting and almsgiving and for using certain sacred objects.

Q.263 How did the Council of Trent define indulgences?

A. The Council of Trent defined indulgences as the “most salutary for Christian people” and that “their use is to be retained in the Church.”

Q.264 What is the common teaching of Catholic theologians regarding the application of indulgences to the souls in Purgatory?

A. The common teaching of the Catholic theologians is that:

- a. Indulgences may be applied to the souls detained in Purgatory;
 - 1) ST. AUGUSTINE DECLARES THAT THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED ARE NOT SEPARATED FROM THE CHURCH, AND THUS FOR THIS REASON THE PRAYERS AND WORKS OF THE LIVING ARE HELPFUL TO THEM.
 - 2) ST. THOMAS ALSO SAYS THAT INDULGENCES AVAIL PRINCIPALLY THE PERSON PERFORMING THE WORKS FOR WHICH THE INDULGENCE WAS GIVEN, BUT SECONDLY IT MAY AVAIL EVEN FOR THE DEAD. FOR THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE CHURCH MAY NOT DISPOSE OF ITS TREASURE OF MERITS FOR THE DEAD AS IT DOES FOR THE LIVING.
- b. Indulgences are available to the souls in Purgatory “by way of suffrage”;
 - 1) ST. BONAVENTURE TEACHES THAT THE MITIGATION OF THE SOULS’ SUFFERING IN PURGATORY IS NOT EFFECTED BY THE MANNER OF ABSOLUTION, BUT ONLY BY SUFFRAGE.
 - 2) HIS OPINION IS ALSO AN ACCEPTED TEACHING OF OTHER DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH, WHO POINT OUT THAT THE CHURCH THROUGH ITS SUPREME PASTOR DOES NOT ABSOLVE JURIDICALLY THE SOULS IN PURGATORY FROM THE PUNISHMENT DUE TO THEIR SINS, SINCE THE JUDGMENT IS RESERVED TO GOD ALONE.
 - 3) THE DOCTORS ALSO TEACH THAT THE POPES, WHEN THEY GRANT INDULGENCES FOR THE DEAD, ADD THE RESTRICTION “PER MODUM SUFFRAGII ET DEPRECATIONIS”(THE BULL OF SIXTUS IV: ‘ROMANI PONTIFICIS PROVIDA DILIGENTIA, 1477’).
 - 4) THUS WHEN THERE IS A QUESTION OF APPLYING AN INDULGENCE FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, IT IS ONLY BY WAY OF SUFFRAGE AND SATISFACTION, AS ST. BELLARMINE ALSO SAYS:
 - A) “THE TRUE OPINION IS THAT INDULGENCES AVAIL AS SUFFRAGE BECAUSE THEY AVAIL NOT AFTER THE FASHION OF A JURIDICAL ABSOLUTION”
 - B) “THE POPE DOES NOT ABSOLVE THE SOUL IN PURGATORY FROM THE PUNISHMENT DUE TO HIS SIN, BUT OFFERS TO GOD FROM THE TREASURE OF THE CHURCH WHATEVER MAY BE NECESSARY FOR CANCELING OF THIS PUNISHMENT.”

Q.265 What are some advantages of indulgences?

- A. The advantages of the indulgences are:
- a. They cancel or lessen our temporal punishment;
 - b. They console us in our fear of God's judgment for our past sins;
 - 1) WHEN WE SIN, THE AVAILABILITY OF INDULGENCES ENCOURAGES US TO MAKE PEACE WITH GOD, SINCE THE STATE OF GRACE IS NECESSARY TO GAIN ANY INDULGENCE.
 - c. They also encourage us to go frequently to the sacraments and do good works;
 - d. They enable us to practice charity towards the suffering souls in Purgatory.

Q.266 What must we do in order to gain an indulgence?

- A. In order to gain^{an} indulgence we must:
- a. be baptized and in the state of grace,
 - b. have the intention, at least in^a general way, of gaining the indulgence, and
 - c. perform the works required by the Church: we must comply exactly with particular conditions required according to the prescribed time, place and manner.

Q.267 Who has the power to grant indulgences in the Church?

- A. To grant indulgences in the Church comes from two sources:
- a. The Pope, who alone has the power to grant plenary indulgences, as well as indulgences applicable for the living and the suffrages for the dead effective for the whole Church.
 - b. Archbishops and bishops, who, however, can grant only partial indulgences for the living in their own dioceses.

Q.268 May the indulgences be transferred to both the living and the dead?

- A. No, the indulgences may be transferred only to the dead and not to the living.
- 1) THE REMISSION OF TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT BY INDULGENCES IS GRANTED ONLY TO THE FAITHFUL WHO PERFORMED THE SPECIFIED WORKS AND IN THIS LIFE ONLY; IT CANNOT BE GAINED FOR ANOTHER LIVING PERSON.
 - 2) NEVERTHELESS, THE CHURCH MAY ALLOW THE FAITHFUL TO TRANSFER THE REMISSION THEY HAVE GAINED TO THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY TO RELIEVE THEIR SUFFERINGS.

Q.269 How are the indulgences applied to the suffering souls in Purgatory?

- A. To apply an indulgence to the suffering souls in Purgatory is to offer it to God in the name of His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Church that He may deign to employ it at His choice for the benefit of some particular soul or of certain souls He selects or of all souls in general.
- 1) NEITHER FAITHFUL NOR THE CHURCH CAN APPLY INDULGENCES TO ANY PARTICULAR SOUL IN PURGATORY. IT CAN BE DONE ONLY BY GOD, WHO ACCEPTS THEM EITHER OUT OF MERCY OR JUSTICE AND RESERVES THEM FOR HIMSELF, SINCE HE KNOWS THE BEST WHO DESERVES IT OR TO WHOM HE DEIGNS TO APPLY IT.
 - 2) IN OTHER WORDS, THE EFFICACY OF AN INDULGENCE OFFERED FOR THE SUFFERING SOULS IN PURGATORY, OVER WHOM THE CHURCH HAS NO JURISDICTION, DEPENDS ON THE ACCEPTANCE AND RESPONSE OF GOD AND TO WHOM HE DEIGNS TO APPLY IT.

Q.270 What are the required conditions for making indulgences available to the souls in Purgatory?

- A. To make indulgences available to the souls in Purgatory the following several conditions are required:
- a. The indulgence for the holy souls must be granted by the Pope.
 - b. There must be a sufficient reason for granting the indulgence and this reason must be pertaining to the glory of God and the utility of the Church, not merely the utility accruing to the souls in Purgatory.
 - c. The pious work enjoined must be performed by the living and if the enjoined satisfaction requires the state of grace, this must be verified as in the case of indulgence for the living.
 - 1) IF THE STATE OF GRACE WERE NOT AMONG THE REQUIRED CONDITIONS, IN ALL PROBABILITY THE PERSON PERFORMING THE WORK MAY GAIN THE INDULGENCE FOR THE DEAD, EVEN THOUGH HE HIMSELF IS NOT IN FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.

Q.271 Do the suffering souls in Purgatory have a special right to be helped by the living?

A. Yes, the suffering souls in Purgatory do have a special right to be helped by the living, since they can do nothing for themselves: they can no longer merit or give satisfaction or receive sacraments. They can only accept and offer their own suffering of satisfaction with the prayer of thanksgiving, adoration and praise of God.

- 1) DUE TO THE TERRIBLE SUFFERING OF THE SOULS IN PURGATORY AND MOVED BY THE SUPERNATURAL LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR, WHICH THE POOR SOULS STAND FOR IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD AND FOR HIS GREATER GLORY, AND FOR THE SAKE OF EXAMPLE, JUSTICE AND GENEROSITY, IT IS OUR DUTY TO ASSIST THE SUFFERING SOULS, ESPECIALLY OUR RELATIVES AND THOSE FOR WHOM WE OUGHT TO PRAY.
- 2) ALSO, OUR WORK FOR THEM CANNOT BE LOST BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, MUST BEAR FRUIT: TO OBTAIN FOR THE HOLY SOULS WITH THE SMALLEST DELAY THE VISION OF GOD IS THE GREATEST AND THE MOST CHARITABLE GIFT.

Q.272 What are the advantages for those who offer suffrages towards the suffering souls in Purgatory?

A. God Himself is pleased with our offerings towards the suffering souls in Purgatory, and as a reward we receive many benefits:

- a. Our Lord Jesus Christ will show His own gratitude by rewarding our least service for the souls in Purgatory in various ways.
- b. In their gratitude the holy souls will never fail to aid us by their own prayers and intercession in Heaven before God that we may also join them soon in the eternal praise of His Divine Majesty.
- c. Even while in Purgatory the holy souls will obtain from God by their prayers temporal and spiritual favors for their benefactors on earth.
- d. It stimulates the charitable faithful to the greater fervor in the service of God and inspires them with holy thoughts: to think of the souls in Purgatory is to think of the sufferings of the other life and that all sins demand expiation either in this life or in the other. Hence, these thoughts make us understand and willing to make satisfaction here and not to postpone it for the Purgatory, where one hour of punishment will be more grievous than a hundred years of the most bitter penance here.
- e. Through our charitable work for the suffering souls our Purgatory may be shortened or even avoided.

Q.273 What is the heroic act of charity in respect to the souls in Purgatory?

A. The heroic act is that act of charity in which a fervent faithful offers for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory all his works of satisfaction made to God. It also includes offerings to be made for him during his life or after his death, as suffrages, without reserving anything for his own debts.

- 1) THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFFS, BENEDICT XIII, PIUS VI, AND PIUS IX. HAVE APPROVED THIS HEROIC ACT AND HAVE ENRICHED IT WITH FOLLOWING INDULGENCES AND PRIVILEGES:
 - A) THE PRIESTS WHO MADE THIS ACT RECEIVED THE INDULT OF A PRIVILEGED ALTAR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.
 - B) THE FAITHFUL CAN GAIN A PLENARY INDULGENCE FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY ONLY EACH TIME THEY COMMUNICATE, PROVIDED THEY VISIT A CHURCH OR A PUBLIC ORATORY AND PRAY THERE FOR THE INTENTIONS OF THE POPE.
 - C) THEY MAY APPLY TO THE HOLY SOULS ALL THOSE INDULGENCES WHICH ARE NOT OTHERWISE APPLICABLE BY VIRTUE OF CONCESSION, AND WHICH HAVE BEEN GRANTED UP TO THE PRESENT TIME OR WHICH SHALL BE GRANTED IN THE FUTURE.
- 2) FR. MUMFORD SAYS: "I ADVISE ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS TO CEDE WITH HOLY DISINTERESTEDNESS TO THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED ALL THE FRUIT OF THEIR WORKS WHICH ARE AT THEIR DISPOSAL. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN MAKE A BETTER USE OF THEM, SINCE THEY RENDER THEM MORE MERITORIOUS AND MORE EFFICACIOUS, AS WELL FOR OBTAINING GRACE FROM GOD AS FOR EXPIATING THEIR OWN SINS AND SHORTENING THE TERM OF THEIR PURGATORY OR EVEN OF ACQUIRING AN ENTIRE EXEMPTION THERE FROM."

Q.274 If we give all our works of expiation to the poor souls, does it mean that we are going to undergo a long Purgatory ourselves?

A. No, it does not; on the contrary, it allows us to rely with more assured confidence on the Mercy of God in our regard as can be demonstrated in general from the case of St. Gertrude:

- a. St. Gertrude, as related by Venerable Denis, had made a complete donation of all her works of satisfaction towards the faithful departed, without reserving anything for herself to discharge her own debts. However

on her deathbed she was afflicted by the thought that having reserved nothing for herself, her soul should be condemned to horrible suffering.

- b. In the midst of her fears Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to her and told her: "Be assured, my daughter, your charity towards the departed will be no detriment to you. Know that the generous donation you have made of all your works to the holy souls was singularly pleasing to me; and to give you a proof thereof, I declare to you that all pains you would have had to endure in the other life are now remitted. Moreover, in recompense for your generous charity, I will so enhance the value of the merits of your works as to give you a great increase of glory in Heaven."

Q.275 Once we commit ourselves to the Heroic Act can we still chose any holy soul we wish to pray for?

- A. Yes, this act still leaves us the perfect liberty to pray for those souls in whom we are most interested.

Q.276 Does the Heroic Act oblige under pain of mortal sin?

- A. No, the Heroic Act does not oblige under pain of mortal sin; in fact, it can be revoked at any time.

Q.277 Can the Heroic Act be made without using any particular formula?

- A. Yes, the Heroic Act can be made without using any particular formula; it suffices to have the intention and to make it from the heart. Nevertheless, it is useful to recite the formula of offering from time to time in order to stimulate our zeal for the relief of the suffering souls by persevering in prayer, penance and good works.

Q.278 What is the formula of the Heroic Act?

- A. The formula of the Heroic Act is: "O Holy and Adorable Trinity, desiring to co-operate in the deliverance of the souls in Purgatory and to testify my devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I cede and renounce in behalf of those holy souls all the satisfactory part of my works, and all the suffrages which may be given me after my death, consigning them entirely in the hand of the most Blessed Virgin that she may apply them according to her good pleasure to those souls of the faithful departed whom she desires to deliver from their sufferings. Deign, O my God, to accept and bless this offering which I make to Thee at this moment. Amen."

Q.279 What is the most effective aid to the holy souls in Purgatory?

- A. The most effective aid to the holy souls in Purgatory is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
1) IN THE PARTICULAR REVELATIONS THERE ARE MANY TESTIMONIES REGARDING THE EFFICACY OF THE HOLY MASS IN RELIEVING OR CANCELING THE SUFFERING OF THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY

Q.280 How is the effectiveness of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass measured for both the living and the dead?

- A. One Holy Mass has an infinite merit, for it is the Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who is true God and true man, and is in itself sufficient to satisfy for all sufferings.
a. Nevertheless, its value both for those for whom it is offered and for those who offer it is measured by their devotion.
b. In the case of the holy souls, the measure of this devotion depends on the disposition they had at the moment of their death.

Q.281 What are the two fruits of the Holy Mass?

- A. There are two following fruits:
a. The **special fruit** which is granted to the soul(s) for whom the Holy Mass is said, and
a. the **general fruit** in which all the faithful participate, though in the measure of their own disposition.

Q.282 What is the special Liturgy that the Holy Church possesses for the dead?

- A. The special Liturgy that the Holy Church possesses is the Holy Mass for the Dead, called the Mass of Requiem, and it also includes Vespers, Matins and Lauds.

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- 1) AS THE MASS FOR THE DEAD CONTAINS SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR THE HOLY SOULS, ITS OFFERING ALSO OBTAINS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THEM.
- 2) DURING THE GREAT SOLEMNITY OF THE REQUIEM MASS OF ALL SOULS, ALL PRIESTS MUST OFFER THE HOLY SACRIFICE FOR THE DEAD.
- 3) IT IS ALSO FOLLOWED BY THE ASSISTING FAITHFUL WHO MAKE IT THEIR DUTY NOT ONLY TO ASSIST AT MASS, BUT ALSO TO OFFER THEIR HOLY COMMUNION, PRAYERS, AND ALMS FOR THE RELIEF OF THE SUFFERING SOULS.

Q.283 Name some of the most common indulgenced prayers offered for the holy souls in Purgatory?

- A. There are certain common indulgenced prayers which are easily gained and are applicable for the holy souls in Purgatory such as:
- a. **Short prayers and ejaculations** in the names of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary;
 - b. **The Holy Rosary:**
 - 1) The great indulgences are attached to the recitation of the Holy Rosary with indulgenced rosary beads;
 - c. **The Stations of the Cross:**
 - 1) According to the Briefs and Constitutions of the Sovereign Pontiffs Innocent XI and XII, Benedict XIII and XIV: Those who make the Stations of the Cross with proper dispositions gain all the Indulgences granted to the faithful who visit in person the Holy Places in Jerusalem, and these Indulgences are applicable to the dead.
 - d. **The acts of Faith, Hope and Charity;**
 - e. **The litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary;**
 - f. **The sign of the Cross;**
 - g. **The Angelus.**

Q.284 What are the most common indulgenced objects applicable for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory?

- A. The most common indulgenced objects applicable for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory are:
- 1) **Crucifixes,** 2) **Medals,** 3) **Rosaries,** and 4) **Statues.**

Q.285 What are the conditions for making and keeping the indulgenced objects?

- A. The conditions for making and keeping the indulgenced objects are:
- a. The objects must be blessed by the Pope or by a bishop or a priest possessing the powers to do so;
 - b. The indulgence is lost if the object is more than half destroyed or if it is sold;
 - c. However if the object is lent or given away, it still keeps its indulgence;
 - d. More than one indulgence may be attached to the same rosary or crucifix.

Q.286 What is the Raccolta?

- A. The Raccolta or the "Manual of Indulgences" is an authentic collection of prayers and devotional practices in English, which have been indulgenced by the Sovereign Pontiff.
- 1) EACH PRAYER OR PRACTICE IS NUMBERED, E.G. RAC.679, AND THERE ARE NEARLY EIGHT HUNDRED (800) PRAYERS AND PRACTICES LISTED IN THE BOOK.
 - 2) THE NAME OF THE OFFICIAL EDITION OF THE RACCOLTA IN LATIN IS "ENCHIRIDION INDULGENTIARUM PRECES ET PIA OPERA." FOR THIS REASON SOME OF THE BOOKS WITH INDULGENCED PRAYERS USE THE LATIN WORD "ENCHIRIDION" OR "ENCH.679" IN PLACE OF "RACCOLTA" OR "RAC.679."

Q.287 Do the souls in Purgatory pray or intercede for us?

- A. There has been no decision of the Church made on this subject, nor have the theologians agreed and pronounced with definiteness concerning the prayers and intercession of the souls in Purgatory for the living:
- a. St. Thomas says: "The souls in Purgatory are not in the state of living, but in the state of being prayed for."
 - b. St. Bellarmine holds, on the other hand, that in virtue of their greater love of God and their union with Him, their prayers may have a great intercessory power, for they are really superior to us in love of God and the intimacy of union with Him.

- c. In the ancient liturgies there are no prayers of the Church directed to those who are still detained in Purgatory, but we are not forbidden to pray to them, though we must give preference to prayer for them.

Q.288 May we pray to the souls in Purgatory?

- A. Since the Church has made no pronouncement on this subject, there are also different opinions among the theologians in regard to this question:
- a. St. Bellarmine this time says that when there is the question of invoking the prayer of the poor souls, it is superfluous, ordinarily speaking, for they are ignorant of our circumstances and condition.
 - b. St. Alphonsus in his book the "Great Means of Salvation" concludes: "so the souls in Purgatory, being beloved by God and confirmed in grace, have absolutely no impediment to prevent them from praying for us. Still the Church does not invoke them or implore their intercession because ordinarily they have no cognizance of our prayers. But we may believe piously that God makes our prayers known to them".
 - 1) ST. ALPHONSUS ALLEGES ALSO THE AUTHORITY OF ST. CATHARINE OF BOLOGNA WHO "WHENEVER SHE DESIRED ANY FAVOR HAD RECOURSE TO THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, AND WAS IMMEDIATELY HEARD".

Q.289 What are the general means of avoiding Purgatory or at least shortening it?

- A. The general means are:
- a. True devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and fidelity in wearing her brown scapula;
 - b. Charity to the living and the dead;
 - c. Pious and frequent reception of the Sacraments, especially at the approach of death;
 - d. Confidence in Divine Mercy;
 - e. Desire to go to Heaven;
 - f. The use of the indulgences;
 - g. The holy acceptance of death in union with the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1) BESIDES OTHER MEANS, THESE MEANS ARE SUFFICIENTLY POWERFUL TO PRESERVE US FROM, OR SIGNIFICANTLY SHORTENING, THE PURGATORY. BUT, THEY MUST BE DILIGENTLY MADE USE OF IN THE STATE OF GRACE, WITH CONSTANT PERSEVERANCE AND WITH THE FIRM RESOLUTION BASED ON THE HELP OF GRACE OF SATISFYING IN THIS WORLD RATHER THAN IN THE NEXT.
 - 2) THIS RESOLUTION MUST BE ALSO BASED ON THE UNDERSTANDING WITH BOTH THE MIND AND HEART:
 - A) THAT THE SUFFERING IN PURGATORY IS TERRIBLE, BEYOND DESCRIPTION,
 - B) THAT THE DELAY TO SEE GOD IS EVEN MORE UNBEARABLE, AND
 - C) THAT OUR LORD WARNS US: "*Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing*" (Matt.5:26).

Q.290 What is Heaven?

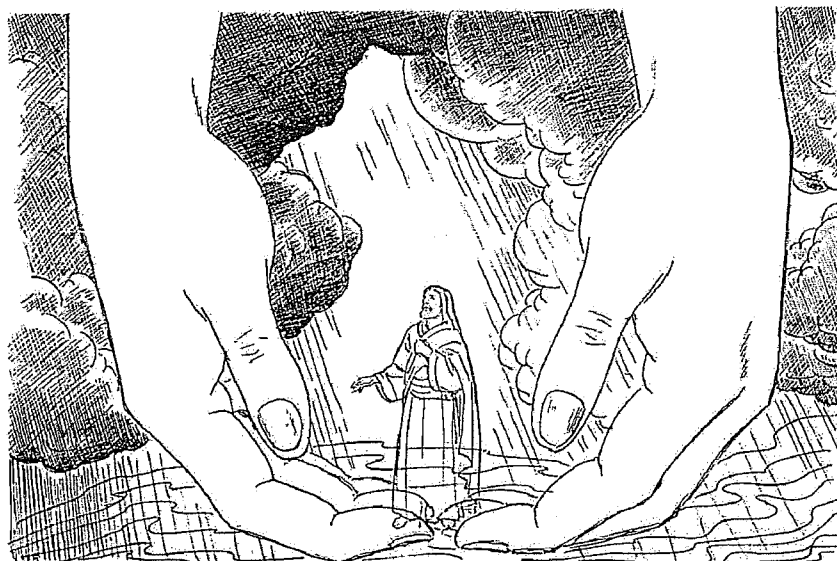
- A. Heaven is a place and a state of everlasting life with perfect supernatural bliss arising out of the immediate vision of God and the perfect love of God associated with it.

Q.291 Who can enter Heaven?

- A. The souls in the state of grace who in the moment of death or after their stay in Purgatory are free from all guilt of sin and punishment for sin can enter into Heaven (De fide).

Q.292 Why should man desire to enter Heaven?

- A. Man should desire to enter Heaven:
- a. because it is impossible for him to find the true happiness, which he seeks naturally, on earth in any limited goods he has available, such as pleasures, riches, honors, glory, power, knowledge, etc. and
 - b. because his destiny is supernatural and consummated in Heaven.

Life Everlasting: Heaven

It is impossible to describe Paradise. Even St. Paul to whom heavenly bliss was revealed, could only say: "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body

or out of the body I do not know, God knows—that he was caught up into paradise and heard secret words that man may not repeat (2 Cor. 12:2-4). Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Q.293 Why cannot man be satisfied with the limited goods offered to him on earth?

A. Man cannot be satisfied with the limited goods offered to him on earth because his mind, noticing the limits of these temporary goods, soon conceives a higher good and consequently carries him on to a natural desire to know and possess this higher, in fact a perfect good.

Q.294 What and where is the perfect good that can satisfy man's craving for a true, perfect happiness?

A. Only uncreated and perfect God, God Himself, Who is in Heaven, is that perfect good that can satisfy man's craving for a true, perfect happiness.

Q.295 What is the true and perfect happiness for man?

A. The true and perfect happiness for man is the vision of the Divine Essence, the knowledge and contemplation of God to the final degree of completely satisfying and even surpassing any desire of man's will and any conception of his intellect.

- 1) THE ULTIMATE BEATITUDE OR PERFECTION OF MAN CONSISTS IN THE OPERATION OF HIS INTELLECT IN THAT WHICH IS THE PRINCIPLE AND END OF HIS BEING AND THAT IS GOD. IF HE COULD NOT BE ABLE TO SEE GOD, THIS DESIRE FOR PERFECT HAPPINESS WOULD REMAIN VOID AND THAT WOULD BE AGAINST REASON, INASMUCH AS IT WAS GOD HIMSELF WHO GAVE MAN THE FACULTIES FOR ATTAINING PERFECT HAPPINESS.

Q.296 What is required for the completion of man's perfect happiness?

A. For the completion of man's perfect happiness the following is required:

- a. **Vision**, which is the perfect knowledge of the intelligible end, of the Divine Essence;
- b. **Comprehension**, which is the holding something already present and possessed, of God Himself;
- c. **Delight**, which is the enjoyment of the object in possession, of God Himself;
- d. **Rectitude of the will**, which consists in being duly ordered to the last end, of God Himself.

Q.297 Can man reach Heaven with the natural desire for perfect happiness?

A. No, man cannot reach Heaven with the natural desire for perfect happiness because the natural desire for perfect good can lead him only to a natural knowledge of God, as perfect Good on earth only, and not to a supernatural knowledge of Him in Heaven.

Q.298 What are the characteristics of the natural desire?

- A. The characteristics of the natural desire are that it is inefficacious and conditional in reaching man's perfect happiness of seeing God.

Q.299 When does the inefficacious natural desire become efficacious to see God?

- A. The inefficacious natural desire to see God becomes efficacious when man is elevated by grace to the supernatural state. It is in this elevated state that man has not only an efficacious desire to see God, but also a connatural desire, which proceeds from grace as from a second nature.
- 1) THEREFORE INFUSED FAITH, WHICH COMES FROM GRACE, TENDS OF ITS OWN ACCORD, NATURALLY, TO THE BEATIFIC VISION, AS OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SAYS: "*He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life*" (John 6:47; 3:36; 5:24;).
 - 2) FURTHER, THIS CONNATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL DESIRE IS CONTINUALLY RENOVATED IN US BY OUR JESUS CHRIST WHO SAYS: "*Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you*" (Matt. 7:7).
 - 3) FINALLY, ST. AUGUSTINE WELL DESCRIBES THIS DESIRE WHEN HE SAYS: "THOU HAS MADE US, O LORD, FOR THEE, AND RESTLESS IS OUR HEART UNTIL IT RESTS IN THEE."

Q.300 What do we mean by "Life everlasting"?

- A. By "Life everlasting" we mean that there will be another existence after this present life and that in it the just will be happy for all eternity.

Q.301 What is the destiny of man?

- A. The destiny of man is:
- a. To give glory to God;
 - b. To attain beatitude, the perfect happiness, by knowing, loving and possessing God.

Q.302 What kind of beatitude can man attain?

- A. Man can attain **natural** and **supernatural** beatitude.

Q.303 What is the natural beatitude?

- A. Natural beatitude is that knowledge and love of God which man can attain by his natural faculties.
- 1) A NATURAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PERFECTIONS AS ACQUIRED THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CREATION;
 - 2) A NATURAL LOVE OF GOD IS THE RATIONAL LOVE OF HIM AS THE CREATOR AND PROVIDER, CONSISTING OF REVERENT SUBMISSION, FIDELITY, AND FULL RECOGNITION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, BUT ONLY IN A RELATION OF A GOOD SERVANT AND THE BEST OF MASTERS;
 - 3) BUT THIS NATURAL BEATITUDE WOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY IF MAN WERE CREATED IN A PURELY NATURAL STATE, WITHOUT THE DESTINY OF HAVING A SUPERNATURAL VISION OF GOD, WHICH IS NOT THE CASE.

Q.304 What is the supernatural beatitude?

- A. The supernatural beatitude is sharing the very beatitude of God Himself, which is the beatitude whereby God rejoices in perfectly knowing and perfectly loving Himself for all eternity. Man, as an adopted son of God, can attain this beatitude only by supernatural means given to us by God.
- 1) INSTEAD OF THE ONLY KNOWLEDGE OF HIMSELF THROUGH HIS CREATION, GOD DESTINED MAN A DIRECT VISION OF HIS ESSENCE, WHICH NOT ONLY INCLUDES ALL EXCELLENCE OF NATURAL BEATITUDE, BUT ALSO SURPASSES IT BEYOND MEASURE.
 - 2) THEREFORE, MAN'S NATURAL BEATITUDE IS INCLUDED IN HIS SUPERNATURAL BEATITUDE.

Q.305 Is man's ultimate destiny only supernatural?

- A. Yes, man's ultimate destiny is only supernatural. It means that man has no choice between the natural and supernatural destiny; he cannot choose the natural destiny and reject the supernatural. But since some men do refuse it, they consequently do not reach their supernatural destiny, nor the natural one, and thus end up by their own choice in hell, exchanging the ever lasting beatitude for never ending suffering without God.

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- 1) THE FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL EXPRESSLY DECLARED THAT MAN HAS BEEN ELEVATED BY GOD TO A SUPERNATURAL END.

Q.306 What in general does the word Heaven mean in different languages?

- A. In general, the word Heaven in different languages means: the roof or ceiling of the world or the abode of the Godhead or the idea of covering or to be high.

Q.307 What does the word Heaven denote in the Holy Scripture?

- A. In the Holy Scripture the word Heaven denotes:
- a. the blue firmament or the region of the clouds or the stars;
 - b. the dwelling of God;
 - c. the abode of the angels and the saints and their happiness there.

Q.308 What is Heaven called in the Holy Scripture in regard to the abode of angels and the just?

- A. Heaven in the Holy Scripture in regard to the abode of the angels and the just is called:
- a. The kingdom of Heaven or of God or of the Father or of Christ;
 - b. The house of the Father, the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy place, Paradise;
 - c. Life everlasting, the joy of the Lord;
 - d. Crown of life or of justice or of glory, incorruptible crown;
 - e. The great reward, inheritance of Christ or inheritance;
 - f. The word Heaven is used many times in the Holy Scripture.

Q.309 Where is Heaven, the dwelling of God and the blessed?

- A. The Church has not formally decided on the location of Heaven, but the theologians generally hold that the Heaven of the blessed where they enjoy the presence of God is a special place with definite limits:
- a. According to the expressions in the Holy Scripture, Heaven is a definite place, but it is existing without and beyond the limits of earth.

Q.310 How do we know that Heaven exists?

- A. We know that Heaven exists from:
- a. Divine Revelations recorded in the Holy Scripture;
 - b. The teaching of the Catholic Church;
 - c. The tradition of the Fathers of the Church;
 - d. The reason and private revelations.

Q.311 What is the testimony of the Old Testament regarding the existence of Heaven?

- A. There are progressive revelations in the Old Testament regarding the remuneration of the just after death:
- a. In the early books before the prophets, the Scripture speaks of the souls of the dead who descend into the underworld where they cannot merit. But the lot of the good is better than that of the godless.
 - b. In the later books the prophets speak more clearly about the recompense for the just after their death:
 - 1) Isaias speaks of the new heavens and the new earth and the people rejoicing thereof (65:17,18);
 - 2) Daniel attests the bodily resurrection to everlasting life in the kingdom set up by God of Heaven, which shall be possessed by the saints forever and ever (Daniel 12: 2,3; 2:44; 7:18&27);
 - 3) The Book of Wisdom reveals to us the bliss and the peace of the souls of the just who rest in the hand of God and live with Him forever (3:1,9; 5:16); and
 - 4) The Book of Machabees describes the hope of eternal life for the just (2 Mach.6:26-28; 7:29,36).
 - c. One of the reasons why the revelations in the Old Testament are not as clear as in the New Testament is that the Old Testament was given not immediately as preparation for the life eternal, but as the preparation for the coming of the promised Savior.

Q.312 What is the testimony of the New Testament?

- A. In the New Testament the expressions of eternal life and the words referring to Heaven are frequent and also describe clearly the future happiness of the just.
- a. In the Gospels Our Lord Jesus Christ:
 - 1) depicts the bliss of Heaven under the picture of a wedding feast and calls it life or eternal life,
 - 2) sets as a condition of achieving life everlasting the knowledge of God and of Christ: "*Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou has sent*" (John 17:3) and
 - 3) promises the vision of God to the pure of heart in the Sixth Beatitude: "*...for they shall see God.*"
 - b. St. John writes:
 - 1) in his First Epistle: "*we shall see Him as He is*" (1 John 3:2); and
 - 2) in the Apocalypse: "*they shall see His face*" (Apoc.22:1-4)
 - c. St. Paul stresses the mysterious character of the future bliss:
 - 1) The "Face to Face" vision of God in Heaven takes ^{the} place of the imperfect knowledge of Him in this world (1Cor.13:12).
 - 2) The object of this vision, God, surpasses all that ear can hear, the eye can see and the heart can desire (1Cor.2:9).
 - 3) The just shall receive eternal life and a glory as a reward (Rom.2:6,7; 6:22,23).

Q.313 How do Fathers of the Church testify to the existence of Heaven?

- A. The Fathers of the Church testify to the existence of Heaven either by teaching directly that it does exist or indirectly about the existence of the Beatific Vision taking place there.
- 1) THERE ARE FATHERS OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE WHO TEACH ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF HEAVEN AS SS. IGNATIUS, IRENAEUS, AND POLYCARP;
 - 2) AFTER THAT THERE ARE MANY OTHER FATHERS WHO TEACH ABOUT IT, SUCH AS SS. HIPPOLYTUS, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, CYPRIAN AND AUGUSTINE.

Q.314 Is it the dogma of the Catholic Church that Heaven exists?

- A. Yes, it is the dogma of the Catholic Church that Heaven exists:
- a. Pope Benedict XII defined the existence of Heaven as an article of faith in 1336 (see Q.306);
 - b. The Council of Florence in 1438-45 declared that the souls ^{the} in state of grace, after being purified, are promptly taken up into Heaven.

Q.315 How can we prove the possibility of the existence of Heaven by mere reason?

- A. To prove the possibility of the existence of Heaven by mere reason is the same as showing the possibility that there is the happy state of the just in the next life, the Beatific Vision, because the meaning of Heaven presupposes a condition of perfect happiness. There are many suitable arguments, which show the appropriateness of the Beatific Vision, as for example:
- a. God made all things for His objective honor and formal glory
 - 1) Every creature manifests Divine perfections according to its capacity. After angels man has the greatest capacity to the likeness of God by knowing Him and loving Him with a knowledge and love analogous (comparable) to God's own love and knowledge. And this knowledge and love is to be eternal since man's soul is immortal. But this can be perfectly achieved only in everlasting Heaven, and not in temporal life on earth;
 - 2) Also to know God, the Supreme Being and Goodness is the noblest occupation of the human mind and consequently its supreme happiness. Therefore, man was created for eternal happiness, which again cannot be realized on earth but only in Heaven.

- 3) Since God made all things for His formal glory, which consists in the knowledge and love directed to Him by rational and intelligent creatures, men and angels, hence they are destined, for this task, to know and love God, in order to demonstrate His perfections. And because He is eternal, this demonstration must also be forever. But this can be done in the most perfect manner worthy of infinite dignity of God only in Heaven.
- b. Since God implanted in the heart of man a desire to seek and practice virtues and a love of joy and holiness, He must then in His infinite justice and holiness give virtues their due reward. Even nature teaches us to reward virtue in others and to also hope for a reward for our good work from them. So much more this is true for God, but as we know the virtuous do not obtain a full reward here. Therefore, they will receive their full reward hereafter in Heaven and that reward must be everlasting as God is eternal and the soul immortal.
- c. God also has given man an innate desire for perfect happiness, as experience proves it. But since their desire was given by God Himself, and thus it cannot be frustrated, He intends to bring it also to its perfect fulfillment, which can be no less than the Beatific Vision of Him in Heaven.
- d. In view of the above arguments, it can be concluded that the existence of Heaven as a state of perfect happiness can be admitted as possible by mere reason without the help of Divine Revelation.

Q.316 Is it a common conviction of all peoples that there is a Heaven where the just will receive their reward?

Yes, there is a common conviction of all peoples that there is a Heaven where the just will receive their reward and where their desires for truth and perfect happiness will be fully satisfied.

- 1) IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF OUR BEING AND OUR DESTINY, A CONVICTION SO UNANIMOUS AND UNIVERSAL, CANNOT BE ERRONEOUS.
- 2) OTHERWISE, THE ORDER OF THIS WORLD WOULD REMAIN AN UTTER ENIGMA TO INTELLIGENT CREATURES, WHO MUST KNOW, AT LEAST, THE NECESSARY MEANS FOR REACHING THEIR APPOINTED END.
- 3) THUS IT FOLLOWS LOGICALLY OUT OF THE FACT OF CREATURES BEING GIVEN INTELLIGENCE AND THE INFINITE WISDOM AND THE POWER OF THEIR CREATOR THAT THERE MUST BE A PLACE WHERE JUSTICE AND REWARD WILL REACH ITS FULFILLMENT AND THAT IS WHAT PEOPLE COMMONLY BELIEVE TO BE HEAVEN.

Q.317 Have some people denied the existence of Heaven?

A. Yes, there have been atheists, materialists, pantheists and rationalists who throughout the centuries denied the existence of Heaven.

- 1) IN GENERAL THESE MEN DENY THE EXISTENCE OF HEAVEN BECAUSE THEY DENY THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.
- 2) THERE ARE ONLY FEW OF THEM WHEN COMPARED TO THE REST OF MANKIND AND THUS THEY CANNOT BE THE TRUE GUIDES IN THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF MANKIND'S DESTINY, FOR APOSTASY FROM GOD OR UNBELIEF IN HIM AND HIS LAW CANNOT BE THE KEY TO WISDOM.

Q.318 Can reason left to itself demonstrate with certainty the existence of the Beatific Vision?

A. No, the reason left to itself can in no way demonstrate with certainty the existence of the Beatific Vision because this Vision is essentially supernatural and a mystery, as are the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, grace and the light of glory and hence beyond the possibility of demonstration.

- 1) AS THE CHURCH DEFINED AGAINST BAIUS, THIS NATURAL DESIRE CANNOT BE AN EFFICACIOUS DESIRE OR A NECESSITATING DESIRE, BUT ONLY A CONDITIONAL AND INEFFICACIOUS DESIRE.
- 2) BUT THE ARGUMENTS BASED ON THE MERE REASON AT LEAST SHOW:
 - A) THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PROVE THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE BEATIFIC VISION;
 - B) THAT IT ENABLES US TO REFUTE CONTRARY REASONS; AND
 - C) THE SUITABILITY OF OUR ELEVATION TO THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE.

Q.319 What is the Beatific Vision?

A. The Beatific Vision is a Vision of God without any medium, "Face to Face", directly and clearly as He is.

- 1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE DESCRIBES IT THUS: "*O Lord God of hosts, convert us: and show thy face and we shall be saved*" (Ps. 79:20), "*We now see through glass in a dark manner; but then face to face*" (1 Cor. 13:12), and "*We shall see him as he is*" (1 John 3:2).
- 2) THE BEATIFIC VISION ARISES FROM THE INTELLECTUAL FACULTY AS ITS RADICAL PRINCIPLE AND SECONDLY FROM THE LIGHT OF GLORY AS ITS PROXIMATE PRINCIPLE.

- 3) THUS THE BEATIFIC VISION IS A CREATED ACT INHERENT IN THE SOUL, WHICH CAN SEE OR KNOW GOD BY ITS OWN ACTIVITY ONLY, BUT SUPER NATURALIZED BY THE LIGHT OF GLORY.

Q.320 Why do we call the vision of God beatific?

- A. The vision of God we call beatific because it completely fills the saints in Heaven with an unutterable and unending bliss and joy.

Q.321 What does it mean to see God without medium?

- A. To see God without medium means that between God and the saints in Heaven there is no representative image, no idea or nothing by means of which He could be seen or could be seen more clearly, more intuitively or more directly than He is actually seen.

Q.322 Why could not there be any intermediary idea or image joining us to the vision of God?

- A. God is so perfect and yet absolutely simple that no idea or image could ever represent as He is in Himself because all created ideas or even infused created ideas, however elevated, can be only limited participation in the truth. Hence they cannot represent God Who is the Supreme Being, infinite Truth and infinite Wisdom.

Q.323 How is this direct vision of God distinguished from other types of knowledge or ideas of Him?

- A. Other types of knowledge or ideas of Him are found in the "mirror" of created world, in which we "see" God by means of reason and in the Divine Revelation by means of which we "see" God by faith.
- 1) BUT NO MATTER HOW PERFECT THE CREATURES ARE OR HOW PROFOUND THE FAITH IS, THE DIRECT VIEW OF GOD IS IMMEASURABLY SUPERIOR TO ALL KNOWLEDGE OR IDEAS.
 - 2) BY FAR IT SURPASSES ALL VISION THE GREAT MYSTICS RECEIVE HERE ON EARTH, SINCE THESE VISIONS CAN REMAIN ONLY WITHIN THE ORDER OF FAITH, WHICH IS OBSCURE AND THUS DOES NOT GIVE INTRINSIC EVIDENCE OF THE TRINITY, WHICH THE BEATIFIC VISION DOES.

Q.324 How does man know the possibility of the Beatific Vision and that he was destined to reach it?

- A. God created man for Himself and therefore gave him a desire for perfect happiness, which can be realized only by attaining the highest Good, God Himself. But man cannot desire that which he does not know. Hence, through the Divine Revelation man comes to know the possibility of the Beatific Vision and his supernatural destiny of reaching it, being inspired by the supernatural desire given to him by God.

Q.325 Can the Beatific Vision come to an end?

- A. No, the Beatific Vision can not come to an end for the following reasons:
- a. The Beatific Vision is not in time but in eternity, which cannot end;
 - b. As the blessed see all things in the Divine Essence, they would also see that it could come to an end in some future time. But this knowledge would inevitably cause them sorrow and hence the Beatific Vision could not be perfect felicity, which would be contrary to its nature. But since the Beatific Vision is the source of perfect happiness, it must be perpetual;
 - c. Since the cause of the Divine Vision is God and since there is no greater power than His, the vision cannot be taken away and thus will endure forever;
 - d. There also cannot be a possibility of failure to see God on account of the cessation of the souls, since they are immortal, or the failure of the light of glory, which is incorruptible or the removal of the primary object, God, Who is always existing in the same way. Hence the vision never stops;
 - e. Further, it would be impossible for the soul to abandon the vision, since it is the supreme good, with no trace of evil or for a reason that there would be a better one because the vision of the Highest Truth excludes all falsity or evil and is infinitely superior to any other vision;
 - f. Also the Beatific Vision can never become weary or tiresome or boring to the soul and be for that reason abandoned, since God by perfecting the intellect enlightens it to see Him as an inexhaustible source of wonder, since no created intellect can comprehend Him. Thus infinite perfection of the Divine Essence is the cause of everlasting wonder, which constantly stimulate the desire of the soul to contemplate It with no possibility of fatigue or boredom;

- g. Finally the vision cannot be brought to an end by separating the union between God and the soul because the Divine Substance is immutable and the intellect is raised above this chance after it sees God's Essence and thus participates in His eternity.

Q.326 Is the Vision of God a dogma of faith?

- A. Yes, the Vision of God is the dogma of faith.

Q.327 How was the Vision of God defined as an article of faith?

- A. In 1336 Pope Benedict XII solemnly defined as a dogma of faith that the saints in Heaven see God:
- a. "We define that the souls of all saints **in Heaven** have seen and do **see** the Divine Essence by direct intuition and face to face in such wise that nothing created intervenes as an object of vision, but the Divine Essence presents itself to their immediate gaze, unveiled, clearly and openly; moreover, that in this vision they **enjoy** the Divine Essence and that by virtue of this vision and this enjoyment, they are truly blessed and **possess** eternal life and eternal rest."

Q.328 Is it of faith that the Beatific Vision is essentially supernatural?

- A. Yes, it is of faith that the Beatific Vision is essentially supernatural because it transcends the powers and claims of all created nature, whether of the angels or men.
- 1) THE OPPOSITE DOCTRINE OF THE BEGHARDS AND BEGUINES WAS CONDEMNED IN 1311 BY THE COUNCIL OF VIENNE AND LIKEWISE A SIMILAR ERROR OF BAIUS BY PIUS V.
 - 2) THE CHURCH ALSO CONDEMNED THE ONTOLOGISTS, WHO HELD THAT AN IMMEDIATE BUT INDETERMINATE PERCEPTION OF GOD IS ESSENTIAL TO THE HUMAN INTELLECT AND TO THE BEGINNING OF ALL HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

Q.329 Can any created being be of its nature supernatural and thus be entitled to the Beatific Vision?

- A. No, no created being can of its nature be supernatural and thus be entitled to the Beatific Vision.
- 1) NOT ONLY THE IMMEDIATE VISION OF GOD EXCEEDS THE NATURAL CLAIMS OR EXIGENCIES OF ALL EXISTING CREATURES BUT IT ALSO DOES OF ALL CREATABLE CREATURES.
 - 2) HENCE THERE CAN BE NO CREATURE POSSIBLE WHICH WOULD BY VIRTUE OF ITS NATURE BE ENTITLED TO THE INTUITIVE VISION OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE.

Q.330 Can it also be shown from the supernatural nature of grace that the Beatific Vision is supernatural?

- A. Yes, it can also be shown from the supernatural nature of grace that the Beatific Vision is supernatural, for if the preparation for this Vision is supernatural, then it clearly follows that the vision itself must be supernatural.

Q.331 Is the Vision of God comprehensive?

- A. This Vision, though intuitive and without a medium for the blessed in Heaven, is still not comprehensible. God alone can know Himself to the full extent of Who He really is, His Divine Essence.

Q.332 Why no created intelligence can fully comprehend God the way He comprehends Himself?

- A. Even though God is seen in His entirety, He is not totally seen in that entirety for the following reasons:
- a. God is infinite, therefore He can comprehend His infinite Divine Essence; but any created or creatable intelligence is by its nature finite and therefore it cannot, it does not have the capacity to comprehend the infinite, which is the Divine Essence.
 - b. The vision of the saints, called intensive comprehension, has not that infinite clearness with which God is knowable and by which He knows Himself.
 - c. Also the vision of the saints, called extensive comprehension, does not actually extend to everything that God sees in His Essence,
 - d. Therefore, we say that the Blessed in Heaven see God in His entirety because they see the Godhead in its entirety, that is, the Three Divine Persons and all their perfections, but not totally because they neither can see with that infinite clearness God sees Himself nor does their vision extend to all that actually is or still may or may even never become.

Q.333 Do all saints see God in Heaven to the same degree?

- A. No, saints do not see God to the same degree, but differently in proportion to their merits they earned on earth. Thus some may see God or comprehend Him more perfectly or with greater depth than others.
- 1) THE DIFFERENCE IN THE DEPTH OF THE VISION OF GOD DEPENDS ON (1)THE CHARITY, (2)THE ACCOMPANYING DESIRE TO SEE GOD THE SAINTS HAVE WHEN ENTERING HEAVEN AND (3)THE CONSEQUENT LIGHT OF GLORY.
 - 2) THE SAINT WHO HAD GREATER CHARITY AND THE DESIRE TO SEE GOD WILL RECEIVE MORE LIGHT OF GLORY, WHICH IS THE CONSUMMATION OF GRACE, AND THUS WILL SEE GOD MORE PERFECTLY AND BE MORE BEATIFIED.
 - 3) ST. PAUL STATES THE DIFFERENCES IN THE LIGHT OF GLORY IN HIS EPISTLE WHERE HE COMPARES THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN TO THE STARS: "*Star differs from star in glory*" (1 Cor.15:41).

Q.334 What did Our Lord Jesus Christ mean when He said: "In My Father's house there are many mansions"?

When Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke about many mansions in His Father's house, He meant, according to St. Thomas, that in Heaven the plurality of mansions correspond to the differences of beatitude among the blessed.

- 1) ST. AUGUSTINE SAYS THAT HEAVEN IS A VAST EMPYREAN AND HAS INNUMERABLE MANSIONS SUFFICIENT TO HOLD ALL MEN WHATSOEVER.
- 2) IN ADDITION, THE WORD "MANY" IMPLIES THAT THERE ARE IN HEAVEN VARIOUS DEGREES AND RANKS OF BLESSEDNESS AND GLORY. THUS TO EACH SAINT IN HEAVEN SHALL BE GIVEN HIS OWN PLACE, TO EACH HIS OWN BEATITUDE AND GLORY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MERIT OF EACH, AS OTHER FATHERS CONFIRM.

Q.335 Does the soul of Our Lord Jesus Christ comprehend the Divine Essence?

- A. No, the soul of Our Lord Jesus Christ does not comprehend the Divine Essence, since it does not see It as perfectly as It is knowable.
- 1) ST. THOMAS QUOTES ST. AUGUSTINE THAT WHATSOEVER COMPREHENDS ITSELF IS FINITE TO ITSELF AND ADDS TO IT: BUT THE DIVINE ESSENCE IS NOT FINITE WITH RESPECT TO THE SOUL OF JESUS CHRIST SINCE IT INFINITELY EXCEEDS IT.
 - 2) GOD IS ABSOLUTELY INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO EVERY CREATED INTELLECT AND HE CANNOT GRANT TO ANY CREATURE THE POWER OF COMPREHENDING HIM AS HE COMPREHENDS HIMSELF.
 - 3) AT THE FOURTH COUNCIL OF LATERAN AND THE VATICAN COUNCIL, INCOMPREHENSIBILITY WAS LISTED AMONG THE ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD AS A REVELED TRUTH.

Q.336 Should not the human nature of Our Lord Jesus Christ comprehend the Divine Essence by the reason of the Union to the Divine Person?

- A. Although the human nature was wholly united to the Divine Nature in the one Person of the Son, the whole power of the Godhead was not and could not be circumscribed by the human nature.
- 1) THE UNION OF THE TWO NATURES IN THE PERSON OF THE SON OF GOD TOOK PLACE IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE PROPERTIES OF BOTH NATURES REMAINED UNCONFUSED: THE UNCREATED NATURE REMAINED UNCREATED AND THE CREATED NATURE REMAINED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE CREATURE.
 - 2) THEREFORE, THE HUMAN NATURE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CANNOT COMPREHEND THE DIVINE NATURE.

Q.337 What does it mean to fully comprehend God?

- A. To fully comprehend God means:
- a. not only to know all that in any way whatsoever is, will be or was done, said or thought by whomsoever and at any time,
 - b. but also to know such things as are in potentiality and never have been nor ever will be reduced to act;
 - c. Hence, knowing all things in act and also in potentiality whether they ever be reduced to act or not, means to comprehend all that God could do, which would be to comprehend the Divine Power and consequently the Divine Essence

Q.338 Does the soul of Our Lord Jesus Christ see the Divine Essence more clearly than any other creature?

- A. Yes, Our Lord Jesus Christ sees the Divine Essence more clearly than any other creature. Reason being that since it is united to the Word in person, it is more closely united to God than any other creature. Consequently, it more fully receives the light in which God is seen than any other creature.

Q.339 Can the saints in Heaven see God by their natural powers?

- A. No, the saints in Heaven cannot see God by their natural powers, but, on the contrary, they need the light of glory, perfecting and strengthening the intellect, the light in which God is seen by His intellectual creatures.
- 1) SINCE THE BEATIFIC VISION IS ESSENTIALLY SUPERNATURAL AND THUS TRANSCENDS THE NATURAL POWERS OF THE CREATED INTELLECT, IT FOLLOWS THAT THE SAINTS NEED SOME SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH, NOT TRANSIENT, BUT PERMANENT, AS THE VISION ITSELF, AND CORRESPONDING TO IT TO SEE GOD.
 - 2) NO ONE EVER SAW OR WILL SEE GOD BY BODILY SENSE OR A CORPORAL VISION OR STILL IN A BODY OR BY THE CREATED INTELLECT BY MEANS OF ITS NATURAL POWER.
 - 3) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE FIRMLY ATTESTS TO THIS TRUTH: *“No man hath seen God at any time”* (John 1:18) and *“And again he (God) said: ‘Thou canst not see my face: for man shall not see me and live’”* (Exod. 33:20).

Q.340 What is the effect of the light of glory?

- A. The light of glory is a supernatural power that enables the souls of the saints in Heaven to see God with their intellect. That is to say, their intellect is supernaturally perfected or strengthened by the light of glory to know God by a direct vision, as He knows Himself.
- 1) THE EXISTENCE OF THE LIGHT OF GLORY WAS DEFINED IN THE YEAR OF 1311 AT THE COUNCIL OF VIENNE DURING WHICH WERE ALSO CONDEMNED THOSE WHO TAUGHT THAT THE HUMAN SOUL DOES NOT HAVE TO BE ELEVATED BY THE LIGHT OF GLORY IN ORDER TO SEE GOD.

Q.341 What is the nature of the light of glory?

- A. The light of glory is a quality divinely infused into the souls of the blessed in Heaven and it is comparable or similar to the nature of the sanctifying grace and other supernatural virtues in the soul of the just.
- 1) ST. THOMAS TEACHES THAT SINCE THE DIVINE ESSENCE IS PURE ACT, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR IT TO BE THE FORM WHEREBY THE CREATED INTELLECT UNDERSTANDS AND THIS WILL BE THE BEATIFIC VISION. NEVERTHELESS THE DIVINE ESSENCE AND THE CREATED INTELLECT DO NOT BECOME ONE IN BEING, BUT ONE IN THE ACT OF UNDERSTANDING.
 - 2) THUS THE VISION WHEREBY THE SAINTS SEE GOD IN HIS ESSENCE IS THE SAME WHEREBY GOD SEES HIMSELF, AND BECAUSE HE SEES HIMSELF IN HIS ESSENCE, SO DO THE SAINTS ALSO SEE HIM IN HIS ESSENCE, BUT IMMEASURABLY NOT AS CLEARLY AND FULLY AS HE DOES.
 - 3) ON THE NATURE OF THE LIGHT OF GLORY THE CHURCH HAS NOT OFFICIALLY DECIDED ON.

Q.342 What are the lights of the intellect by which God can be known by man?

- A. There are three lights by which God can be known by the intellect of man:
- a. **The light of reason** – a natural power by which man can reason and learn about God as his Creator from the nature He created;
 - b. **The light of grace** - by infusion of this supernatural light the reason’s natural light is strengthened to know God by faith as his Father through Divine Revelation;
 - c. **The light of glory** - this supernatural light is the consummation of the light of grace in Heaven, where by the means of this light the saints and angels can see God directly as He is.
 - 1) THE LIGHT OF GLORY ARISES IN HEAVEN FROM THE CONSUMMATION OF THE SANCTIFYING GRACE, WHICH IS RECEIVED INTO THE ESSENCE OF THE SOULS OF THE JUST ON EARTH AND WHICH IS ITS SO-CALLED “SEED.”
 - 2) THUS GRACE, BY MEANS OF WHICH MAN PARTICIPATES IN THE DIVINE NATURE, IS A RADICAL PRINCIPLE OF OPERATIONS ON EARTH, BUT ESPECIALLY A PRINCIPLE OF THE LIGHT OF GLORY, FOR WHEN FULLY DEVELOPED INTO, IT MAKES A MAN ABLE TO SEE GOD IN HEAVEN AS HE SEES HIMSELF.

Q.343 What are the objects of the Beatific Vision?

- A. There are two objects of the Beatific Vision:
- a. The primary object: God Himself;
 - b. The secondary object: The creatures known in God.

Q.344 What does the primary object of the Beatific Vision consist of?

- A. The primary object of the Beatific Vision consists of the vision of:
- a. God Himself as He is in His Essence:

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- b. all the Divine Persons;
- c. all of His perfections or attributes.
 - 1) THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE SAYS: "THEY (THE SAINTS) SEE CLEARLY GOD HIMSELF, ONE AND THREE, AS HE IS";
 - 2) THE SAINTS NECESSARILY SEE ALL IN GOD BECAUSE OF HIS ABSOLUTE SIMPLICITY.

Q.345 Give some examples of what the blessed in Heaven see in God as the primary object.

- A. As the primary object the blessed in Heaven see in God how:
 - a. all the multiple perfections are in fact only one in God Who is one,
 - b. the infinite fecundity of the Divine Nature takes place in three Divine Persons: the eternal generation of the Son by the Father and the eternal spiration of the Holy Ghost, Who is the terminus of the mutual love of the Father and the Son.
 - c. all the Divine perfections, even those widely different in the eyes of men on earth, are harmonized in God in the most eminent way.

Q.346 What does the secondary object of the Beatific Vision consist of?

- A. The secondary object of the Beatific Vision consists of actual as well as possible creatures which are external to God but still seen in Him:
 - a. The Holy Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ;
 - b. The dignity of His Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph, her husband and of the other saints;
 - c. All the mysteries the blessed believed.

Q.347 Give some examples of what the blessed in Heaven see in God as the secondary object.

- A. As the secondary object the blessed in Heaven see in God:
 - a. The Holy Humanity in the Word:
 - 1) The Hypostatic Union, the absolute plenitude of grace and of glory and of charity in the soul of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the whole human race;
 - 2) The infinite value of all His theandric (God-man) acts;
 - 3) The mysteries of the Incarnation, Redemption, Salvation, and His Church;
 - 4) His universal Kingship, eternal Priesthood, and His judging the living and the dead.
 - b. The dignity of the Mother of God, St. Joseph and other saints:
 - 1) The unsurpassing dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God, her plenitude of grace, glory, virtues, and gifts, her universal mediation as co-redemptrix of the human race and mediatrix of all graces, Mother of all men and the Queen of Heaven and earth.
 - 2) The glory and virtues of St. Joseph, the foster father of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and his important task in protecting and taking care of the Holy Family.
 - 3) All other saints, their glory and achievements, particularly those whom they knew and loved on earth.
 - 4) All mysteries the blessed may desire to know.

Q.348 What is the objective beatitude?

- A. The objective beatitude is **that good that we seek** and the possession of which makes us happy.
 - 1) ST. THOMAS SAYS: "IT IS THAT PERFECT GOOD WHICH COMPLETELY SATIATES THE DESIRE OF THE RATIONAL BEING." THEREFORE, HE CONTINUES THAT ONLY THE UNCREATED AND THE INFINITE GOOD CAN FULLY SATISFY ANY DESIRE WHATSOEVER WHICH AN INTELLIGENT CREATURE CONCEIVING UNIVERSAL GOOD MAY HAVE.

Q.349 What is the essence of the objective beatitude?

- A. The essence of the objective beatitude is God and only God.

Q.350 What is the subjective beatitude?

- A. The subjective beatitude is **the possession of that good** that makes us happy.

Q.351 What is that good that makes us happy?

A. The good that makes us happy is God and God only.

Q.352 What is the essence of the subjective beatitude and what does it consist in?

A. The essence of the subjective beatitude is the possession of God and it consists in the acts of vision, love, and joy; thus man possesses God by acts of perfect knowledge and love and joy.

- 1) SUBJECTIVE BEATITUDE CONSISTS IN A VITAL UNION WITH GOD THROUGH THE INTELLIGENCE AND THE WILL AND IS THE CONSUMMATION OF THE TRANSFORMING UNION WITH GOD WHICH STARTS ALREADY IN THIS LIFE.
- 2) THUS THE CONSUMMATION OF THAT UNION, WHEREIN THE JUST SOULS ARE DEIFIED IN THEIR VERY DEPTH, WILL TAKE PLACE IN HEAVEN BY IMMEDIATE VISION AND CONSEQUENT LOVE AND JOY.

Q.353 What does the essential beatitude formally consist in?

A. The essential beatitude consists formally in the possession of God and this possession is actually the Beatific Vision. Thus by Beatific Vision of God the soul possesses God and by beatific love, it enjoys and rests in Him.

Q.354 What does the metaphysical essence of subjective beatitude consist in?

A. The metaphysical essence of subjective beatitude consists in the vision alone, as the followers of St. Thomas maintain, since the acts of love and joy result directly from the vision and thus are a kind of merely its secondary attributes.

Q.355 What are other opinions of what the metaphysical essence of subjective beatitude consists in?

A. Other opinions are that the metaphysical essence of subjective beatitude consists in love and another that both vision and love are the metaphysical essence of it.

Q.356 How does St. Thomas justify his opinion that the vision only is the metaphysical essence of subjective beatitude?

A. The teaching of St. Thomas is justified by the fact that it is in conformity with many texts of the Holy Scripture and that it is also consistent with the relationship that St. Thomas established between the intelligence and the will.

- 1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE USES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE WORDS "*they shall see God*" AND "*they may know Thee*", WHEN REFERRING TO THE BEATITUDE.
- 2) ST. THOMAS TEACHES THAT THE INTELLECT AND THE WILL, AS TWO DISTINCT FACULTIES, ARE NOT EQUAL ONE TO ANOTHER, BUT THAT THE WILL IS SUBORDINATED TO THE INTELLECT, WHICH DIRECTS IT.
 - A) THE REASON WHY THE INTELLIGENCE IS HIGHER THAN THE WILL IS THAT ITS OBJECT —TRUTH— IS MORE ABSOLUTE AND UNIVERSAL THAN THE OBJECT OF THE WILL —THE GOOD— WHICH PRESUPPOSES REALITY AND TRUTH, WITHOUT WHICH THE WILL COULD NOT SEEK THE REAL GOOD, BUT THE ILLUSORY ONE.
 - B) THEREFORE, GOD BEING OUR ULTIMATE END BECOMES PRESENT TO US BY THE ACT OF INTELLECT, THAT IS, BY THE VISION WHEREBY WE POSSESS GOD. THEN THE WILL CARRIED BY LOVE FOLLOWS THIS POSSESSION, ENJOYS AND RESTS IN HIM, BUT IT COMES AFTER THE ACT OF THE INTELLECT.
 - C) BUT HERE ON EARTH IT IS INDEED MORE PERFECT TO LOVE GOD THAN TO KNOW HIM BECAUSE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM IS VERY LIMITED, WHEREAS OUR CHARITY CAN BE ALMOST UNBOUNDED.
 - D) NEVERTHELESS IN HEAVEN, HAVING CLEAR VISION OF GOD THE WAY HE IS, OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM WILL NO LONGER BE IMPERFECT, BUT BECOMES THE VISION ITSELF, FROM WHICH VISION THE BEATIFIC LOVE WILL CONSEQUENTLY FLOW AND THE WILL THEN RESTS WITH JOY IN THE END ALREADY ATTAINED.

Q.357 What acts does the physical essence of the subjective beatitude consist in?

A. The physical essence of the subjective beatitude consists in five acts:

- a. the vision;
- b. the twofold love;
- c. the twofold joy.

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Q.358 How do the saints in Heaven love and enjoy God in the twofold manner?

- A. The saints in Heaven love and enjoy God in the following twofold manner:
- a. They love Him:
 - 1) For His own sake, which is the pure and proper love and
 - 2) as the Source of their happiness, which is the love less properly so called.
 - b. They enjoy Him:
 - 1) By rejoicing over the infinite beatitude which they see in God, precisely because it is the happiness of God Whom they love and that is the pure joy of love and
 - 2) by rejoicing in God because He is the Source of their own supreme happiness.

Q.359 Is the Beatific Vision a gratuitous gift of God?

- A. Yes, the Beatific Vision is a gratuitous gift of God because man cannot see God with his natural powers, nor can he lay a claim for this Vision, and neither can he earn it, since it is essentially supernatural.

Q.360 Do the blessed upon their entry into Heaven also receive certain gifts for their adornment?

- A. Yes, upon their entry into Heaven the blessed also receive certain gifts for their adornment according to the prophet Isaias: "*He has clothed me with garments of salvation... as a bride adorned with her jewels*" (Isa. 61:10).

Q.361 What are these gifts called and what is their definition?

- A. These gifts are called dowries and are defined as the everlasting adornment of the soul and body, adequate to life, lasting forever in eternal bliss.

Q.362 What are the gifts of the soul in Heaven in respect to Beatific Vision of God?

- A. The gifts of the soul in respect to the essence of Beatific Vision of God are:
- a. the **Vision**,
 - b. the **Possession**, and
 - c. the **Enjoyment**.

Q.363 Why are these gifts of adornment called a dowry?

- A. These gifts of adornment are called dowry because as the same is given to a bride in a carnal marriage, to which the spiritual marriage is likened, so the gifts for the bride, the soul, in its spiritual marriage with Our Lord Jesus Christ, the bridegroom, in Heaven are also called a dowry.
- 1) ON EARTH THE ADORNMENT OF THE BRIDE, WHO IS BROUGHT TO THE HOUSE OF HER BRIDEGROOM, IS A PART OF HER DOWRY; SO SIMILARLY, THE SAINTS WHO ARE TAKEN TO THE ETERNAL DWELLING OF THEIR BRIDEGROOM, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, RECEIVE FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE WITH HIM THE GIFTS OF ADORNMENT ALSO CALLED A DOWRY.

Q.364 How many dowries or gifts of adornment, which the saints receive, are there in Heaven?

- A. There are in Heaven seven dowries or gifts of adornment, which the saints receive:
- a. **For the soul:**
 - 1) Vision;
 - 2) Possession or comprehension;
 - 3) Enjoyment or delight or fruition;
 - b. **For the body:**
 - 1) Impassibility;
 - 2) Agility;
 - 3) Subtility;
 - 4) Clarity.

Q.365 Are the dowry and the beatitude the same?

- A. No, the dowry and the beatitude are not the same because:
- The dowries are given without merit; whereas, the beatitude is awarded in return for merit.
 - The dowries are several; whereas, the beatitude is one only.
 - The dowries are appointed to both the soul and body; whereas the beatitude is in man according to the soul, which is principal in him.

Q.366 What are the differences between the dowries and the beatitude?

- A. The differences between the dowries and the beatitude is as follows:
- The beatitude is the perfect operation itself by which the soul is united to God.
 - The dowries, on the other hand, are habits or dispositions or any other qualities directed to this same perfect operation. Thus they are directed to the beatitude instead of being in it as parts thereof.
 - In other words, the beatitude is not directed to the union but is the union itself of the soul with Our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Also, the beatitude is the sum of all goods, including the dowries, not as though they were essential parts of beatitude, but as being directed to beatitude

Q.367 Describe how the dowries correspond to the three theological virtues and in what manner?

- A. Dowries correspond to the three theological virtues in the following way:
- Vision to faith;
 - Comprehension to hope;
 - Delight or fruition to charity.
- 1) EVEN THOUGH VISION REPLACES FAITH AND COMPREHENSION HOPE, THE DELIGHT IS THE RESULT OF CHARITY, WHICH NEVER FADES AWAY.

Q.368 Can the praise of God in Heaven be considered as one of the dowries?

- A. No, the praise of God in Heaven cannot be considered as one of the dowries because it is rather a sequel to beatitude, not a disposition to it, as the dowries are: it is after the union with God that the soul breaks forth into praise of Him.

Q.369 What are the five things that obtain in perfect beatitude what man seeks in temporal happiness?

- A. The five things which obtain in perfect beatitude what man seeks in temporal happiness are:
- Joy.....the suitable good to rejoice at;
 - Sufficiency...the perfect good;
 - Celebrity.....the good one performs and which makes him known to others;
 - Security.....immunity from evil;
 - Reverence....showing honor which bears witness to virtue.

Q.370 Does the happiness of saints in Heaven also contain some parts of the temporal happiness, which were sought after on earth?

- A. Yes, the happiness of saints in heaven also contains some parts of the temporal happiness, which was sought after on earth, but in an incomparably supreme, exalted and pure way.

Q.371 What are the parts of the temporary happiness, which are entirely fulfilled in Heaven?

- A. The parts of the temporary happiness, which are entirely fulfilled in Heaven are:
- the intellectual knowledge of truth;
 - to live one's life according to the reason, which is to live in accord with virtue;
 - a high position of honor;
 - a popular renown or to be a man of renown;
 - to possess wealth;

- f. to enjoy pleasure;
- g. to be preserved.

Q.372 How is the natural desire of man of the knowledge for truth fulfilled in Heaven?

- A. On earth the attempts to fulfill this natural desire for the knowledge of truth can, to some degree but imperfectly, be achieved by the contemplative life. In Heaven this desire is entirely and perfectly fulfilled in the Vision of God, the First Truth, whereby all that the intellect naturally desires to know becomes known to it.

Q.373 How is the desire to live in accord with reason and virtue fulfilled in Heaven?

- A. On earth the desire to live in accord with reason and virtue may be cooled off or lost by temptations and vicissitudes of life and thus becomes frustrated or unfulfilled; in Heaven, on the contrary, this desire will be completely fulfilled, since the reason will be at its peak strength, having been enlighten^{ed} by the Divine light, without any temptation and in peace, so that it cannot swerve away from what is right and virtuous.

Q.374 How is the desire for a high position of honor fulfilled in Heaven?

- A. On earth people seek a high position of honor with inordinate desire which makes them proud and ambitious. But in Heaven the blessed are raised through the Vision of God to the highest peak of honor because they are united to God, Who is the Supreme and the most perfect Being, the King of ages. For this reason, by being united to Him, they are also kings and *"They shalt reign with Christ"* (Apoc. 20:6).

Q.375 How is the desire for a popular renown fulfilled in heaven?

- A. On earth the desire for a popular renown is sought by the lovers of vainglory and is dependent on the opinion of the people. In Heaven the blessed are made renown by the Beatific Vision in accord with the truest knowledge of God and all He created and not according to the opinion of the people, who can deceive and be deceived. In fact, the renown in Heaven is called glory to which no renown whatsoever on earth can even be compared.

Q.376 How is the desire for wealth fulfilled in Heaven?

- A. On earth man seeks the material wealth by his uncontrolled and misguided desire, often by unjust and evil means, thus becoming a slave of his greed, to the detriment of his soul. In Heaven, on the contrary, the blessed in their beatitude obtain plenitude of all goods, which their heart may desire, inasmuch as they enjoy the Vision of God, Who contains the perfection of all good things.

1) IT IS SAID IN WISDOM: *"All good things came to me together with her"* (Wis. 7:11) AND IN THE PSALMS: *"Glory and wealth shall be in His house"* (Ps. 111:3).

Q.377 How is the desire for pleasure fulfilled in Heaven?

- A. The desire of man to enjoy pleasure is natural to him, but on earth he seeks it in excess and immoderation. Thus this allure makes him not only intemperate and incontinent but is also injurious both to his body and soul. But in Heaven the most perfect and delightful pleasure is found in the Beatific felicity:

- a. As much as is the intellect superior to the senses, so much, and in fact much more, is the delight of the intellect in the Vision of God than any conceivable delight of the senses in this life;
- b. Also as much as the object of the Vision, the infinite Good, is incomparably greater than any object on earth, so much greater and more intimate and more continually delightful is the joy of the blessed than any delight of the senses in the temporal good.
- c. In addition, the heavenly joy and pleasure is perfect because it is totally free from all and any possible sorrow, pain or concern about any troubles or apprehension of its end and truly everlasting; whereas, the earthly joy and pleasure is exactly beset by all or any of these disturbances and thus very imperfect and short lived.

1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURE IS ALREADY GIVING US A TASTE FOR THE BEATIFIC JOY: *"They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure"* (Ps.35:9).

Q.378 How is the desire for preservation fulfilled in Heaven?

A. Another most common and natural desire to all creatures is their own preservation. But since it is possible only to a limited extent, men become fearful and excessively worried about their preservation due to the immoderation of this desire. On the other hand in Heaven, this desire for one's preservation is brought to its completion, since the blessed attain perfect sempiternity and are safe from all possible harm.

Q.379 What is accidental beatitude?

A. Besides the essential beatitude the saints in Heaven enjoy many blessings which are called accidental beatitude. It is a joy in created goods outside of God.

Q.380 What is the difference between essential and accidental beatitude?

A. The difference between essential and accidental beatitude is as follows:

- a. **Essential beatitude** is the vision of God, as the primary object, and of the secondary objects directly in the Essence of God.
- b. **Accidental beatitude** is the vision of secondary objects, either actual or possible, by the senses or a new knowledge outside of God, but inferior to the Beatific Vision, by which is always meant the Vision of God.

Q.381 What is accidental beatitude found in?

A. Accidental beatitude is found in many other joys and perfections of multiple variety:

- a. Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother, St. Joseph, the society of friends, and other saints and angels;
- b. general joy of the good deeds done on earth;
- c. sanctifying grace consummated into glory, supernatural virtues and the sacramental characters;
- d. special rewards given to certain classes as, for example, the crown of the martyrs, doctors and virgins;
- e. resurrection of the glorified body and its reunion with the soul;
- f. the qualities of the glorified body;
- g. the sight of the new heaven and earth.
- h. the absence of sin, death, any kind of sorrow or the cause of trouble or affliction or of anything to mar the eternal bliss: In the Holy Scripture we read: *"They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them nor any heat... and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"* (Apoc.7:16,17).

Q.382 What is the special recompense given to the saints for their victories over the flesh, the world and the devil?

A. The special recompense is the aureole of:

- a. the martyrs for their victory over the trials and persecutions by keeping the faith, virtues and morals;
- b. the doctors for their victory over ignorance, errors, infidelity, heresy by instructing and teaching;
- c. the virgins for their victory over the concupiscence of the flesh.

Q.383 What is the meaning of "aurea" and "aureole" and what are their differences?

A. Man's essential reward is the Beatific Vision and the accidental beatitude:

- a. The reward of essential beatitude is called aurea or a crown, metaphorically, both in reference to merit, which is gained through the victorious conflict on earth, and the recompense whereby in a way man is a participator of the Godhead and consequently endowed with regal power, of which the crown is the sign.
- b. Similarly the accidental reward has a character of a crown, but a small crown, aureole, which is added to the essential reward, without changing it or increasing it.

Q.384 What accidental beatitude will the saints experience after the reunion of their soul to their body and after the renovation of the world?

A. After the reunion of their body and the soul and the renovation of the world, the saints will experience with their senses, as an accidental beatitude, a pure and ineffable joy in the humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the choir of the saints, the beauties of the renovated world and the chants of adoration and thanksgiving in Heaven.

Q.385 What are the qualities of the glorified body?

- A. The qualities of the glorified body (see Q.51-56 for more details) are:
- Impassibility - it preserves the body not only from death, but also from any pain;
 - Agility ----- it allows the body to go with a swiftness and ease any place where the soul pleases;
 - Subtility----- it renders the body capable of penetrating other bodies without difficulty;
 - Clarity----- it gives to the body the brightness and splendor which is the very essence of the beautiful.

Q.386 Can the beatific joy in Heaven ever fade away or be diminished in any way?

- A. No, the beatific joy in Heaven can never fade away or be diminished in any way. On the contrary, it is continually renewed and thus cannot pass away or be diminished.

Q.387 Why cannot the heavenly joy pass away?

- A. The heavenly joy cannot pass away because the first instant of the Beatific Vision lasts forever, like eternal morning, eternal spring, eternal youth. It resembles the eternal Beatitude of God, Whose life is one unique instant of immutable eternity. He cannot grow old, nor is He past or future but eternally present. Since the Beatific Vision of the saints is measured by the same unique instant of immovable eternity, the joy of that instant will likewise never pass away and its newness will be eternally present. In fact the vision will be always new, so likewise the joy which flows from the vision.

Q.388 Is the beatific joy in Heaven everlasting or can it be lost?

- A. Yes, the beatific joy in Heaven is everlasting and therefore it cannot be lost.

Q.389 Is it the dogma of the Church that the beatific joy in Heaven is everlasting?

- A. Yes, it is the dogma of the Church that the beatific joy in Heaven is everlasting:
- This truth is clearly stated in the Holy Scripture a number of times;
 - It is daily professed by the Church in the Apostles' Creed;
 - It has been repeatedly defined by the Church, especially by Benedict XII.

Q.390 How can reason demonstrate the permanency of the beatific joy?

- A. Even by reason it can be demonstrated that permanency of the beatific joy clearly follows the essence of the Beatific Vision, which is, that it must satisfy perfectly all possible aspirations of the soul. Hence if the blessed in Heaven knew or even only suspected that their happiness would come to an end, it would no longer be perfect, which is contrary to the essence of the Beatific Vision.
- 1) THE KNOWLEDGE OR EVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CESSATION OF THE BEATITUDE OF THE SAINTS, AFTER IT HAS BEEN POSSESSED AND FULLY LOVED AND ENJOYED, WOULD IN FACT TURN INTO THE GREATEST SUFFERING AND BE TOTALLY UNDESERVED.
 - 2) HENCE, NOTHING CAN BRING THE BEATIFIC VISION TO AN END: NEITHER GOD WHO HAS PROMISED IT AS A REWARD, NOR THE SOUL WHICH HAS REACHED IT.

Q.391 Are all things, which are seen in God, seen successively?

- A. All what is seen in God is not seen successively but at the same time, at one eternal instant, since the Beatific Vision, measured by participated eternity does not admit any succession.
- 1) THE BLESSED SOULS LIVE ABOVE THE REACH OF HOURS, DAYS, AND YEARS, ABOVE TIME ALTOGETHER.
 - 2) THE MOMENT THEY ENTER HEAVEN, THEY ENTER ETERNITY: THEY RECEIVE THE LIGHT OF GLORY AND BEGIN TO SEE GOD. THE ETERNAL INSTANT BEGINS AND IT NEVER CHANGES.

Q.392 Are all things, which are seen outside of God, seen successively?

- A. Yes, all what can be seen outside of God is seen successively because the souls know each other and other things not by the Divine light in the Essence of God, but by the created light.

Q.393 Why are things seen in God not seen successively whereas those seen outside of God are?

A. The things seen in God are seen in His Essence as one idea and hence they are seen all at once; whereas, the things outside of God are seen and understood by many ideas, since they are not seen in one essence, and therefore, they are not seen simultaneously, but in succession.

Q.394 Is the love of saints in Heaven beyond liberty?

A. The love of saints in Heaven is an act of charity so perfect and complete that they cannot but love God and thus it is higher than or beyond liberty.

- 1) ON EARTH OUR LOVE OF GOD IS FREE AND MERITORIOUS AND BECAUSE WE DO NOT SEE GOD THE WAY HE IS AND HIS INFINITE GOODNESS, WE MAY, WHEN FOLLOWING OUR MISLEAD FREE WILL, LOVE THE CREATURES MORE THAN GOD.
- 2) BUT IN HEAVEN THERE IS A HAPPY NECESSITY OF LOVE OF GOD, WHO FILLS SO PERFECTLY OUR MEASURELESS CAPACITY FOR SPIRITUAL LOVE, THAT IT ATTRACTS THE SOUL IRRESISTIBLY AND INFINITELY MORE THAN THE HIGHEST JOY POSSIBLE ON EARTH, WHERE LOVE IS FREE AND MERITORIOUS. BUT NOT PERFECT.
- 3) NEVERTHELESS THIS LOVE IN HEAVEN, THOUGH NOT FREE, IS NOT FORCED OR COMPELLED BUT SO EXALTED THAT IT IS REACHING BEYOND LIBERTY AND MERIT TO ITS HIGHEST SUMMIT IN THE SOUL'S ETERNAL HAPPINESS.
- 4) ALSO, THIS PERFECT LOVE OF THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN FOR GOD IS LIKE THE LOVE HE HAS FOR HIMSELF: AS GOD NECESSARILY LOVES HIMSELF AND ALL HIS INFINITE PERFECTIONS, SO DO THE SAINTS NECESSARILY LOVE GOD WHEN SEEING IN HIM ALL HIS PERFECTIONS AND REJOICING WITH HIM IN HIS ETERNAL BEATITUDE.

Q.395 Can the saints in Heaven sin or commit any imperfections?

A. No, the saints in Heaven cannot sin or commit any imperfection^s or anything whatever which would displease God in the slightest way, nor can they be tempted in any way to turn away from Him because they are confirmed in good. They are in the permanent state of sinlessness.

- 1) THIS IMPOSSIBILITY TO SIN OR ^{BE}IN ANY WAY DISPLEASING GOD IS ALSO PHYSICAL, SINCE THEY HAVE NO POWER TO DO ANY EVIL ACTIONS.

Q.396 What is the cause of the sinlessness of the saints in Heaven?

A. The causes of the sinlessness of the saints in Heaven are:

- a. the state of being confirmed in grace when passing at the moment of death into the final state of unchangeable attitude of the intellect and will in Heaven.
- b. but primarily and especially the Beatific Vision, which of its very nature directly excludes the possibility of sin.

Q.397 How does the Beatific Vision cause the impeccability of the saints in Heaven?

A. The Beatific Vision causes the impeccability of the saints in Heaven for the simple reason that no intelligent creature whatever can have a clear, direct and intuitive view of the infinitely supreme Good without being by that very fact alone irresistibly drawn to love It efficaciously, ever turn away from It by sin or ever feel the least pretext to love God less for a single moment.

Q.398 Could the inequality in the degree of glory in Heaven give rise to envy among the saints there?

A. No, it is impossible that there could be envy among the saints in Heaven due to the inequality in the degree of glory or in the perfection of the vision of God, since the unity of love in God reigns supremely in all the saints and angels.

- 1) EACH OF THE SAINTS HAS HIS OWN PERSONAL DISTINCTION: EACH IS IN HIMSELF FULFILLED WITH ALL NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL GIFTS OF GOD AND ALL OF THEM ARE PERFECTLY DEVELOPED AND SATISFIED WITH THE MEASURE OF GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN THEM. THUS EACH OF THEM IS PARTICIPATING IN ONE AND THE SAME LOVE OF GOD TO THE FULL CAPACITY OF HIS OWN BEING, AND CONSEQUENTLY BARRING ANY INCLINATION WHATSOEVER TO ENVY.
- 2) IN ADDITION, SEEING ONE ANOTHER IN GOD, THE SAINTS LOVE ONE ANOTHER. IN FACT, EACH REJOICES AT THE DEGREE OF BEATITUDE WHICH OTHERS HAVE RECEIVED AS A LOVING GIFT OF GOD. AND WHOM GOD LOVES, THEY ALSO DO, AND THUS THERE CAN BE NO PLACE IN THEIR HEARTS FOR ANY ENVY WHATSOEVER.

Q.399 Do the blessed in Heaven see the sufferings of the damned?

- A. Just as God sees the sufferings of the damned in hell, so are the blessed in Heaven allowed to see their suffering^s also.
- 1) IT SAYS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE: "*They shall go out and see the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched and they shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh*" (Isa.66:24).
 - 2) AND THE GLOSS SAYS: THE ELECT WILL GO OUT BY UNDERSTANDING OR SEEING MANIFESTLY, SO THAT THEY MAY BE URGED THE MORE TO PRAISE GOD.

Q.400 Why are the saints in Heaven allowed to see the sufferings of the damned in hell?

- A. The saints in Heaven are allowed to see the sufferings of the damned in hell in order:
- a. that their happiness may be more delightful by comparing it with their sufferings, and
 - b. that they may give more profuse thanks to God for having escaped with His help the same fate.
 - 1) NOTHING SHOULD BE DENIED THE BLESSED IN HEAVEN THAT BELONGS TO THE PERFECTION OF THEIR BEATITUDE.
 - 2) HENCE, SINCE EVERYTHING IS BETTER KNOWN WHEN BEING COMPARED WITH ITS CONTRARY, BECAUSE CONTRARIES PLACED NEXT TO EACH OTHER BECOME MORE CONSPICUOUS, THEN BY SEEING THE SUFFERING OF THE DAMNED IN CONTRAST WITH THEIR HAPPINESS, THEY REJOICE IN IT AND GIVE MORE THANKS TO GOD FOR IT.

Q.401 Do the blessed in Heaven pity the unhappiness of the damned?

- A. No, the blessed do not pity the unhappiness of the damned because:
- a. whoever pities another shares somewhat in his unhappiness; but the blessed cannot share in any unhappiness, since they are supremely happy;
 - b. Also, they cannot desire the cessation of the unhappiness of the damned because it would be contrary to Divine Justice not to be punished for what they had done on the earth and have not repented for.
 - 1) IN THE APOCALYPSE WE READ OF THE SOULS WHO "*were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held, saying*": *How long O Lord (holy and true) does thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*" (Apocalypse 6:10).
 - 2) THE BLESSED DO NOT CALL FOR THE REVENGE OF THEIR BLOOD OUT OF HATRED, WHICH THEY POSSIBLY IN HEAVEN CANNOT HAVE, BUT OUT OF THE ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD, WHICH IS ALSO GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS JUSTICE.

Q.402 Do the blessed rejoice in the punishment of the wicked?

- A. The blessed do not rejoice directly in the punishment of the wicked as such, but they rejoice indirectly by considering therein the order of Divine Justice and their own deliverance.

Q.403 Could the soul of a mother be happy in Heaven if she saw her child suffer on earth or even in hell?

- A. Yes, the soul of a mother could be happy in Heaven if she saw her child suffer on earth or even hell because the souls in Heaven think and love no longer in the same way as on earth and cannot be sad in any shape or form.
- 1) IN HEAVEN THE SOULS ARE ABSORBED IN THE LOVE OF GOD, WHICH NOT ONLY RENDERS THEM PERFECTLY HAPPY, BUT ALSO GREATLY SURPASSES ANY NATURAL LOVE THEY HAD ON EARTH.
 - 2) THE PRIMARY OBJECT OF THEIR BEATITUDE IS THE VISION, POSSESSION AND THE SUPREME ENJOYMENT OF GOD, WHO CREATED THEM FOR HIMSELF TO SHARE IN HIS HAPPINESS, AND THUS EVERYTHING ELSE IS SECONDARY.
 - 3) CONSEQUENTLY THEY LOVE WHAT HE LOVES AND WILL WHAT HE WILLS: IF HE WILLS TO PERMIT SUFFERING ON EARTH TO DRAW OUT OF IT THE BENEFIT OF ETERNAL GOOD IN HEAVEN, THEY WILL IT ALSO; IF HE WILLS THE DESERVED PUNISHMENT IN HELL TO SATISFY HIS DIVINE JUSTICE, THEY WILL IT TOO.

Q.404 Will the marriages be recognized in Heaven?

- A. Marriage is a contract, which starts on earth and ends on earth until death separates the husband and the wife. In Heaven there will be no continuation of or new matrimonial bonds any more. If the husband and wife meet in Heaven, they will love each other only spiritually and that according to their union with and in God.

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- 1) WHEN THE SADDUCEES TRIED TO DISPROVE THE RESURRECTION ON THE SCORE OF WHO WOULD BE IN THE RESURRECTION THE HUSBAND OF A WIFE WHO HAD SEVERAL HUSBANDS ON EARTH, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST EXPLAINED TO THEM: *“In the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in Heaven”* (Matt.22:30).

Q.405 What are some of the common objections against the future life in Heaven?

- A. Some of the common objections against the future life in Heaven are:
- a. I cannot conceive a future state altogether satisfying;
 - b. Will not Heaven be monotonous – always existing with no hope of change?
 - c. Does not the idea of contemplating God year after year and century after century suggest frightful monotony?
 - d. The eternally fixed state of Heaven would be unbearable to mankind;
 - e. Bodies are subject to constant evolution and fluctuations. It is impossible to imagine a body in an eternally fixed condition. Will it be mummified?
 - f. Men must have some form of employment to develop further their personality and gain rich experience;
 - g. Don't you think it absurd to say that God will be our reward, exceedingly great? At best a purely spiritual God could be apprehended only by the mind, and our complex human nature demands more than that.
 - h. To my mind the whole notion of seeking eternal happiness is based on selfishness.
 - i. What is the sense and need of material body in Heaven?
 - 1) NOTE THAT IN GENERAL THESE OBJECTIONS ARE GROUNDLESS AND EASILY EXPLAINABLE, AS IT WILL BE SHOWN BELOW, BUT, SIGNIFICANTLY, THEY ONLY INDICATE A DEEP IGNORANCE OF THE TEACHING OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. IF PEOPLE WHO MAKE THESE OBJECTIONS WERE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF AT LEAST THE BASIC CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THEY WOULD NEVER MAKE THESE OBJECTIONS.

Q.406 Can we say that we cannot imagine the future state, the Heaven, altogether satisfying?

- A. Heaven is so much beyond our conception that no one on earth can indeed imagine what it is like there, as St. Paul clearly stated: *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him”* (1Cor.2:9). And yet although we cannot imagine what the next life will be like, we certainly can conceive the reality of it from our faith and the promise of God, Who cannot deceive us, that it will not only be satisfying but in fact supremely satisfying.

Q.407 Can Heaven suggest a monotonous life due to contemplating God, century after century, without any hope of change?

- A. No, in Heaven there cannot be monotonous life due to contemplating God even for centuries nor is there any need for change for the following reasons:
- a. When a soul enters Heaven, it enters eternity. And eternity is not time and cannot even be described in terms of time.
 - b. Thus the life in Heaven is analogous to eternal presence in which the contemplation of God continuously brings about new aspects and freshness, all of which is void of any monotony.
 - c. Hence what the soul in Heaven experiences is the highest joy, as the highest and complete achievement and is the final terminus of what the perfect activity can be. The soul is no longer in an imperfect phase of motion or change man experiences on earth but in the changeless state, which resembles that of God.

Q.408 Would or could the eternally fixed state of Heaven be unbearable to mankind?

- A. The eternally fixed state of Heaven would not or could not be unbearable to mankind, but rather is the most enjoyable.
- 1) IF THE PERMANENCY OF THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF HEAVEN IS JUDGED BY EARTHLY STANDARDS, WHICH ARE MATERIAL, TEMPORARY AND NEVER FULLY SATISFYING, THE CONCEPT OF THE CONDITIONS IN HEAVEN BECOMES DISTORTED AND THUS MISLEADING.
 - 2) ON EARTH PEOPLE SEEK CHANGE AND ARE USED TO IT, SINCE THEY LIVE IN A TEMPORARY AND CHANGEABLE ENVIRONMENT OF MATERIAL THINGS, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY CANNOT FIND THEIR FINAL HAPPINESS, WHICH THEY EVENTUALLY IDENTIFY WITH CONSTANT CHANGES.

- 3) IN HEAVEN, HOWEVER, THE SOULS LIVE IN AN SPIRITUAL AND PERMANENT STATE, WHICH IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE REACHING OF THEIR FINAL DESTINATION, GOD, AND THE UNCHANGEABLE REPOSE IN HIM WITH UNENDING JOY THAT CAN BE PROVIDED BY GOD ONLY, THE INFINITE GOOD.

Q.409 Can men in Heaven continue developing further their personality and gain richer experience?

- A. No, in Heaven men do not continue further developing their personality or gaining richer experience, since in Heaven their personality arrives at its fullest development and perfection, which includes the richness of their experience.
- 1) EVEN ON EARTH PEOPLE SEEK TO REACH THEIR DESIRED DESTINATIONS OR GOALS AND GENERALLY DO NOT INTEND TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY IN THE BECOMING PROCESS WITHOUT EVER REACHING THEIR GOAL. CONSEQUENTLY THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS, DURING WHICH THEY GAIN SOME EXPERIENCE, ARE NOT ENDS IN THEMSELVES, BUT ARE ONLY THE MEANS FOR A BETTER FULFILLMENT OF THEIR CAPABILITIES.
 - 2) IN HEAVEN, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FINAL GOAL IS REACHED AND POSSESSED, WHICH IS GOD. HE HIMSELF IS THE OBJECT OF OUR EXPERIENCE, THOUGH NOT IN THE MANNER OF ANY LIMITED AND FINITE CREATED THING, BUT IN THE INFINITE WAY OF AN INEXHAUSTIBLE TRUTH, GOODNESS AND BEAUTY, ALL OF WHICH AND INFINITELY MORE GOD IS.
 - 3) THUS HE IS AN UNLIMITED OBJECT OF THE SAINTS' CONTEMPLATION, WHICH IS THE HIGHEST ACT POSSIBLE OF MAN'S INTELLECT, AND THUS THE RESULTING EXPERIENCE IS SO RICH AND PROFOUND THAT NO RICHER CAN BE POSSIBLE.

Q.410 Can we think that the bodies of the blessed in Heaven will be mummified, since it is impossible to imagine a body in an eternally fixed condition inasmuch as they are subject to constant evolution and fluctuations?

- A. No, we cannot think that way. The bodies in Heaven will not be mummified, nor will they be in an eternally fixed condition, nor will they be subject to constant evolution or fluctuations.
- 1) ON EARTH BODIES OF MEN DO EVOLVE AS THEY GROW AND EVENTUALLY AGE AND LOSE THEIR VITALITY, POWER AND BEAUTY BECAUSE SUCH IS THE LIFE IN THIS MATERIAL WORLD IN ITS PERPETUAL STRUGGLE AGAINST DECAY AND DEATH.
 - 2) BUT IN HEAVEN THERE ARE ENTIRELY NEW AND RADICALLY DIFFERENT CONDITIONS, SINCE THERE IS NO SUFFERING, NO DECAY, NO NEED OF FOOD AND SLEEP AND NO DEATH.
 - 3) IN FACT, THE BODIES OF THE BLESSED DURING THE RESURRECTION ARE GLORIFIED AFTER THE MANNER OF THEIR SOULS AND FURTHER ENJOYING THE SUPERNATURAL GIFTS OF CLARITY, THE ESSENCE OF BEAUTY, IMPASSIBILITY, AGILITY AND SUBTILITY AND THUS GLORIOUSLY LIVING IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD.

Q.411 Can we think it absurd that God will be our reward, exceedingly great, and that our complex nature can demand more than just apprehending a purely spiritual God by the mind?

- A. It is not absurd to think that God will be our reward, exceedingly great, but it is definitely absurd to think that our nature, no matter how "complex" it may be, could demand more than just apprehending a purely spiritual God by the mind for the following reasons:
- a. An understanding of Who God is, as the absolutely perfect and infinite eternal Being, is necessary towards believing that He can and will be our exceedingly great reward in Heaven, where He is all to us, and more than what we can ever desire.
 - b. And further understanding that we were created from nothing and were given everything from God as the Cause of all creatures and that the effect can never be greater than its cause is also necessary in order to believe that the demands of our complex, but definitely finite, human nature can be satisfied by the vision or apprehension of God to the utmost measure of its capacity and yet it will never fully comprehend Him, Who is infinite.

Q.412 Could possibly the whole notion of seeking happiness in Heaven be based on selfishness?

- A. No, it is not possible that the notion of seeking happiness in Heaven could be based on selfishness for:
- a. it is obvious that man's basic desire is to attain happiness. Hence, it would be against sound reason and the human nature to desire misery or even consider it as an alternative.
 - b. But a temporary happiness is not sufficient because it does not answer to the notion of the real and perfect happiness, if it is not everlasting as it is in Heaven.

- c. It is God only Who offers man everlasting happiness, but which he reaches only in Heaven by knowing and loving Him and by working for His glory on earth. And thus even in this life some may already love God more than themselves, unselfishly.
- d. Then so much more it is true in Heaven where God is seen by the souls so perfect and good that they all cannot but love Him; in fact, they love Him more than their own self or they first love God in Himself and then self in God and thus the selfishness is ruled out.

Q.413 Is there a sense in the Catholic doctrine that our bodies will rise from the dead and that there is the need for a material body in Heaven?

- A. Yes, there is a sense in the resurrection of the bodies according to the Catholic Doctrine and that there is the need for them to join their souls in Heaven, inasmuch as it follows from the necessity of perfect happiness man should have with his complete nature.
- 1) MAN IS NOT JUST HIS SOUL, BUT HE IS A COMPLETE BEING ONLY WITH HIS BODY UNITED TO HIS SOUL.
 - 2) ALL HIS MERIT AND DEMERITS WERE PERFORMED IN HIS COMPLETE NATURE ON THE EARTH; HENCE, ALL HIS REWARDS OR PUNISHMENTS SHOULD ALSO BE ASSIGNED TO HIS COMPLETE NATURE, WHETHER IN HEAVEN OR HELL, AND THAT REQUIRES THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODIES.
 - 3) EVEN THOUGH THE SOUL IN HEAVEN CAN ATTAIN HAPPINESS BEFORE ITS REUNION WITH THE BODY, IT, NEVERTHELESS, IS AN UNNATURAL STATE, SINCE IT LACKS ITS FULL POWERS FOR ITS OPERATIONS, AS GOD INTENDED IT.

Q.414 Are there in Heaven land, rivers, mountains, and the utilities of life, such as are on earth?

- A. What Heaven is like we cannot describe in human language, for our concepts are all derived only from the visible world and thus cannot convey adequate and correct views of it. But the opinions vary:
- a. Since St. Paul wrote that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God prepared for those who love Him, it seems that the things we now can see on earth, may not be constitutive elements in Heaven;
 - b. On the other hand, some saints, like SS Augustine and Anselm, and the private revelations of some of the saints, talk about the real trees, fruit, flowers, etc. being present in Heaven, but of exquisite beauty and indescribably attractive to the senses.
 - c. Also from the description of the new Heaven in the Apocalypse we can form some idea of the beauty of the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven, with its gates, walls, foundations, and streets made of precious pearls, stones and gold, and with a river of water of life and the tree of life with its fruits.
 - d. Nevertheless, all the things described above would render only accidental joy to the saints, their chief and primary joy and happiness being the eternal union with God and the immediate Vision of Him.

Q.415 Can man in this life know with certainty that he will enter Heaven?

- A. No, without a special revelation no man in this life can know with certainty that he will go to Heaven: the Council of Trent has declared that we cannot have on earth certitude of our predestination without a special revelation.

Q.416 Are there special signs which can give a kind of moral certitude that we will persevere in the state of grace to the point of death

- A. Yes, following the direction in the Holy Scripture, some of the Fathers have enumerated certain of these signs, which have been summarized into eight of them by the theologians.

Q.417 What are the eight signs of predestination?

- A. The eight signs of predestination are:
- a. a good life;
 - b. the testimony of a good conscience;
 - c. patience in adversities for love of God;
 - d. relish for the light and word of God;
 - e. mercy towards those who suffer;

- f. love of the enemies;
- g. humility;
- h. special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.
 - 1) TO BEAR PATIENTLY AND PERSEVERINGLY A HEAVY CROSS IS A GREAT SIGN OF PREDESTINATION.
 - 2) HE WHO FOLLOWS OR PRACTICES THE EIGHT BEATITUDES IS ALSO PROMISED TO POSSESS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Q.418 What are the special signs the theologians add to the eight signs of predestination?

- A. The special signs the theologians add to the eight signs of predestination are:
- a. a great intimacy with God in prayer;
 - b. perfect mortification of the passions;
 - c. the ardent desire to suffer much for the glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ;
 - d. an indefatigable zeal for the souls.

Q.419 Has there been any promise made for a safe entrance into Heaven when certain conditions are met?

- A. Yes, there have been two promises made:
- a. By Our Lord Jesus Christ for the First Friday devotion to His Most Sacred Heart;
 - b. By the Blessed Virgin Mary for the First Saturday devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

Q.420 What did Our Lord Jesus Christ say about the last of His twelve promises of the First Friday devotion to His Most Sacred Heart?

- A. In His twelfth promise of the First Friday devotion to His Most Sacred Heart, Our Lord Jesus Christ said for those who communicate on the first Fridays in nine consecutive months that:
- a. the grace of final penitence will be granted to them;
 - b. they will not die in His disgrace nor without receiving their Sacraments;
 - a. His Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

Q.421 What did the Blessed Virgin Mary promise to those who honor her in five consecutive First Saturdays?

- A. To those who honor her on First Saturdays in five consecutive months, The Blessed Virgin Mary promised to help them at the hour of death with the grace needed for salvation.

Q.422 Is the number of the elect in Heaven great?

- A. Yes, according to the Holy Scripture the number of the elect in Heaven is great: *"I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne"* (Apoc.7:9).

Q.423 Is the number of the elect in Heaven greater than the number of the damned in hell?

- A. If we count both angels and men, the number of elect in Heaven seems to be higher than that of the damned in hell.
- 1) ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION, ST. THOMAS SAYS THAT MOST OF THE ANGELS REMAINED FAITHFUL TO GOD. HENCE SINCE THEY ARE INNUMERABLE, AND BEING THE GREATER PART OF ALL ANGELS, THEY, APPARENTLY, WITH ALL SAVED MEN WOULD OUTNUMBER THE DAMNED.

Q.424 In regard to men only, is the number of the elect in Heaven also greater than that of the reprobate?

- A. Many Fathers and theologians incline to the smaller number of the elect in Heaven than the reprobate in hell because it is said in the Holy Scripture: *"Many are called, but few are chosen"* (Matt.20:16 & 22:14); and: *"Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it"* (Matt.7:13-14).

Q.425 Do the texts in the Holy Scripture in regard to the number of elect in Heaven refer to all places and all times?

- A. It is not certain whether the texts in the Holy Scripture in regard to the elect in Heaven refer to all places and to all times or only to the time of Our Savior's own preaching, when He made these statements.
- 1) IT SEEMS THAT IF THEY WERE MEANT FOR ALL PLACES AND TIMES, THAT THE OPINION OF THE SMALLER NUMBER OF ELECT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TRUE.
 - 2) BUT IF THEY WERE MEANT ONLY FOR THE TIME OF OUR SAVIOR'S OWN PREACHING, IT SEEMS THAT THE GREATER NUMBER OF THE ELECT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TRUE.

Q.426 When Our Lord Jesus Christ was directly asked whether there were few who were saved, did He specify a definite number?

- A. No, when Our Lord Jesus Christ was directly asked whether there were few who were saved, He did not specify a definite number of those who were saved, but only said: "*Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able*" (Luke 13:24).

Q.427 Since Our Lord Jesus Christ would not reveal a definite number of the saved, what mystery may it involve and why?

- A. Since Our Lord Jesus Christ would not reveal a definite number of the saved, it may involve the mystery:
- a. of His Justice in order not to frighten or discourage the timorous souls; or
 - b. of His Mercy that we may avoid presumption.

Q.428 What is the common opinion of the Fathers and ancient theologians regarding the number of saved and damned?

- A. The opinion of the Fathers and ancient theologians is without doubt that those who are saved do not represent the greater number.
- 1) ON THE OTHER HAND, IN THE LAST CENTURIES, THE CONTRARY OPINION, OF THE GREATER NUMBER OF ELECT, WAS DEFENDED BY SOME OF THE BETTER KNOWN PRIESTS.
 - 2) NEVERTHELESS, AS SOME INSIST ON THE MERCY OF GOD, AND THUS THE GREATER NUMBER OF THE ELECT, AND OTHERS ON THE JUSTICE OF GOD, THUS THE SMALLER NUMBER OF THE ELECT, NEITHER ONE SIDE NOR THE OTHER GIVES US CERTITUDE OF THE TRUE NUMBER OF THE ELECT.

Q.429 Of the entire human race, are only the Catholics saved or are also other Christians, non-Christians and pagans saved?

- A. Of the human race not only the Catholics but also other Christians, non-Christians and pagans are saved.
- 1) CONSIDERING THE MEANS OF SALVATION GIVEN TO THE CATHOLICS AS BEING THE MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE LACK OF THESE MEANS FOR ALL THOSE WHO ARE NOT THE MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THERE IS A GREATER PROBABILITY FOR THE CATHOLICS TO BE SAVED THAN FOR THE NON-CATHOLICS.

Q.430 Is it a dogma of the Catholic Church that there is no salvation outside of the Church?

- A. Yes, it is a dogma of the Catholic Church that outside of it there is no salvation.

Q.431 How was the dogma of the Catholic Church that there is no salvation outside of it proclaimed?

- A. The necessity of the membership of the Church for all men in order to be saved has always been the teaching of the Church and has been supported by the unanimous teachings of the Fathers that salvation cannot be achieved outside of the Church. The necessity of the membership has been declared on many occasions:
- a. The Fourth Lateral Council (1215) declared: "The universal Church of the faithful is one outside of which none is saved".
 - b. The same was taught by the Union Council of Florence, and also by the Popes Innocent III, Boniface VIII, Clement VI, Benedict XIV, Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius XII in the Encyclical "Mystici Corporis".
 - c. Many Fathers, namely, SS Cyprian, Irenaeus, Jerome, Augustine, Fulgentius, etc, also taught that outside of the Church there was no salvation.

Q.432 If there is no salvation outside of the Catholic Church how can other Christians, non-Christians and pagans be saved if they are not the members of the Church?

A. Pope Pius IX declared: "By faith it is to be firmly held that outside the Apostolic Roman Church none can achieve salvation. This is the only ark of salvation. He, who does not enter into it, will perish in the flood. Nevertheless equally certain it is to be held that those who suffer from invincible ignorance of the true religion are not for this reason guilty in the eyes of the Lord". Therefore, due to the invincible ignorance of the true religion, there is a possibility that people who in point of fact do not belong to the Church can achieve salvation.

Q.433 Is the invincible ignorance of the true religion a guarantee of the salvation?

A. No, the invincible ignorance of the true religion is not a guarantee of the salvation, unless it includes the moral readiness to fulfill the will of God, as it is manifested by God through and according to the circumstances of one's life.

Q.434 How can a pagan who lives in invincible ignorance of the true religion be saved?

A. A pagan who lives in invincible ignorance of the true religion can be saved if he attempts to observe natural law, then the supernatural help and grace are offered by means known to God. God never commands impossible. To him, who does what is in his power, God does not refuse supernatural help.

Q.435 How do we know that those who are invincibly ignorant of the Catholic Church, but have a desire to do the will of God and keep the natural law, can be saved outside of the Church?

A. We know that those who cooperate with God's help and do His will can be the members of the Catholic Church by desire, since they cannot be the visible members through no fault of their own. Thus if they persevere, they are actually saved through the Catholic Church. And we know that on the basis of the Divine Justice and from the doctrine of God's general will of salvation, which is clearly proved in the Holy Scripture.

1) ST. THOMAS ALSO TEACHES THE GENERAL NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH FOR SALVATION. NEVERTHELESS, HE CONCEDES THAT A PERSON MAY BE SAVED EXTRA SACRAMENTALLY BY BAPTISM OF DESIRE, AND OF BLOOD, AND THEREFORE ADMITS THE POSSIBILITY OF SALVATION WITHOUT ACTUAL, VISIBLE, MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH BY REASON OF A DESIRE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH.

Q.436 If we cannot arrive at certitude in the question of who and how many people are saved, what is the best thing to do?

A. If we cannot arrive at certitude in the question of who and how many people are saved, the best thing to do is to admit our ignorance than to discourage or mislead the faithful by opinions which are either too rigid or too superficial and follow Our Lord as He taught us: to take up our cross daily, abandon ourselves perfectly and trustfully to His guidance and goodness, to work under His inspiration with our whole heart for our salvation and to give ourselves entirely to Him for His glory and salvation of the souls.

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