

Why You Don't Want To Go To Purgatory



By Matthew Leonard

We've all heard it before. The universal call to holiness means we're supposed to get holy. Every one of us is called to sainthood. And really, what are the alternatives? Well, behind door number 1 is the eternal fire of hell. No thanks.

Slightly less warm is behind door number 2 – purgatory – the place scripture says our work on earth will be “tested” by fire (cf 1 Cor 3:13).

Interestingly, I don't think we take purgatory seriously enough. In fact, it seems that many of us are pretty resigned to that fact: that's where we're going to end up. How many times have you heard someone declare with a sigh, “As long as I make it to purgatory!” Really? That's what you want? Cuz it's not going to be cupcakes and brownies.

We may not know exactly what it is or how long it lasts, but we do know it's gonna hurt. Scripture says nothing unclean can enter heaven, and our impurities are going to be “revealed by fire.” So we're talking way hotter than James Brown's hot tub on SNL.*

St. John of the Cross said that purgatory is more terrible than a thousand deaths. Without God's grace, it's a purification we couldn't survive. Yikes!

The good news is, you don't have to go there. Our Lord provides door number 3 – it's called sainthood. Love God with everything you've got, and there'll be no reason for the eternal elevator to stop on the way up.

So make sure to set your sights as high as possible. Besides, it's not a good idea to aim for purgatory... You might miss.

Keep striving, my friends! God bless you.

Matt

Art: *An Angel Frees the Souls of Purgatory*, Ludovico Carracci, circa 1610, PD-US, Wikimedia Commons.

*SNL: *Saturday Night Live*—a comedy show.

Matthew Leonard is an internationally known speaker, author, podcaster, blogger, and Executive Director of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology (founded by Dr. Scott Hahn). A convert to Catholicism and former missionary to Latin America, Matthew is a frequent guest on radio and television programs across the country appearing on SiriusXM, EWTN, CBS, and the Magnificat. He formerly hosted his own program on Radio Maria titled “The Art of Catholic”, before migrating to iTunes. Matthew hosts the popular Journey Through Scripture video series and is a featured speaker by Lighthouse Catholic Media. He also holds a Masters in Theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville. In addition to numerous articles, he is the author of *Louder Than Words: The Art of Living as a Catholic and Prayer Works!*