

DOGMA AND HYPOTHESIS

PURGATORY, LIMBO, AND CATHOLIC VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE

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I. FATHER/SON DISCUSSIONS

I grew up in a Roman Catholic family, and we fancied ourselves to be Catholics of an intellectual sort. The exception to this was my grandmother who was a Catholic of a more traditional kind and would often say the rosary by my bedside as I went to sleep.¹ Our family never fully integrated itself into the devotional rhythms that, in the 1960s and 1970s, still characterized what might be described as “ethnic Catholic life.” My father was a college art professor and a Catholic convert, and I never saw him reciting a rosary, though tears would often fill his eyes when he discussed the mosaics of the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna or baroque church altars of Bernini. Given our intellectual propensities—or pretensions—it was a fairly regular practice for my father and me to have after-dinner discussions about theological questions such as

the existence of God, the authenticity of papal authority, and the efficacy of Catholic sacraments.

During these father-and-son religious conversations, which, more often than not, would culminate in thinking through Catholic understandings of the afterlife, my father would often say to me, in a way both professorial and paternal, “You know, Mathew, your mother is a saint—she’s going straight to heaven. But me,” my dad would say, “I’m probably going to have to spend some time in purgatory”—referring to that intermediate place of “purgation” between earthly life and heavenly glory. The prospect of going there after death was a real possibility that evoked feelings of both fear and hope for life beyond the grave.

Our discussion of purgatory often would lead to considering another more theologically challenging aspect of the afterlife that had to do with the circumstances of my birth. I was an adopted child, so I spent the first four months of my life in an orphanage. I knew very little about my birth parents, but one thing I did know is that my birth mother had me baptized. My father, commenting again in a way both professorial and paternal, said, “Wasn’t it thoughtful that your birth mother had you baptized? What if you had died before we had adopted you? You might have gone to limbo.” Limbo was that place for infants who had never sinned but also never received the sacrament of baptism. I often imagined limbo as a warm, temperate place where it was always twilight: its inhabitants floated, surrounded by otherworldly ether.

Orthodox Christians do not accept the existence of purgatory, and limbo has also remained an exclusively Catholic concept. Taken together, however, purgatory and limbo often serve as evidence of the distinctiveness of Catholic doctrines concerning the afterlife: rigorously reasoned within a sophisticated and substantive tradition of theological inquiry in the view of some; idiosyncratic and unscriptural in the opinion of others.² For many non-Catholics, the most familiar representation of purgatory and limbo is that of Dante Alighieri’s, who envisioned the minute details and geography of both realms in his allegorical *Divine Comedy*.³ Dante positioned limbo at the uppermost level of hell; it is

where virtuous pagans and unbaptized infants go. Dante likened purgatory to a mountain that is climbed in the process of human spiritual growth: at its summit, the gates of paradise open.

In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante extrapolated his vision from Catholic doctrine. But it is important to remember that limbo and purgatory have never been formally considered to be places in time and space as conventionally understood. Purgatory is a foundational point of Catholic doctrine that speaks to salvation as process of purification. By contrast, limbo is a kind of intellectual placeholder, a hypothesis that emphasizes the importance of baptism as a prerequisite for the beatific vision of heaven.

In the following discussion, we will more deeply explore Catholic understandings of the afterlife as reflected in the dogma of purgatory and the hypothesis of limbo. It is important to make the distinction between “dogma” and “hypothesis” here at the outset: not all ideas within the Catholic tradition have equal weight or claim equal measures of obedience. A dogma, simply put, is a divinely revealed truth, and it can reasonably be argued—with due respect given to dissenting views—that purgatory has the status of a divinely revealed truth when considered in light of its place within the Catholic tradition.⁴ Limbo has another status entirely, and recently Pope Benedict XVI argued that limbo as a concept could be fruitfully discarded as a hypothesis that no longer aided Catholic considerations of the existence that follows death.⁵ In considering purgatory and limbo together, we can learn much about Catholic understandings of the afterlife, the nature and progression of Catholic doctrine as a whole, and how Catholic doctrine can have a flexibility and plasticity that runs counter to conventional perceptions of it as rigid, unchanging, and, perhaps, unforgiving.⁶

II. DOGMA AND HYPOTHESIS

Recognizing the different doctrinal valences of purgatory and limbo—one a dogma and the other a hypothesis—turns us first to the overall edifice, or framework, of Catholic teaching, which has quite extensive

and well-defined levels of authority. The sources of Catholic doctrine are scripture and tradition. Scripture as a source, in this case meaning the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible, should be clear enough and familiar to all Christians. But for Catholics, tradition stands alongside scripture as a basis for defining and developing doctrine. Tradition refers to the life and teaching of the Church and, together with scripture, constitutes an essential mode for transmitting revelation and the elements of faith.

It is the Magisterium—the “teaching authority”—of the Church that ensures the appropriate transmission and interpretation of elements of faith while articulating or prescribing their binding nature.⁷ This teaching authority is granted to bishops and to the Pope, as the successor of the apostle Peter. It is important to understand that the Catholic Church does not see its teaching authority as somehow adding something new to revelation or as existing as revelation in its own right. Instead the Church believes that, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, a compendium of Catholic doctrine, states, “The Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but its servant.”⁸ Accordingly, the Magisterium refers to an ability and authority to understand and teach the truths found explicitly and implicitly in tradition and scripture: an ability and authority that is understood as a “charism,” an extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit. Within the Catholic tradition, the Magisterium possesses what Avery Cardinal Dulles describes as a “threefold office” that involves not just teaching but sanctifying and ruling.⁹

The Magisterium as the teaching authority of the Church has two basic divisions: Sacred and Ordinary. The Sacred Magisterium teaches infallibly, either through specifically defined pronouncements of the pope or through a council approved by the pope. Doctrines proclaimed infallibly are called dogmas and require the assent of the faithful.¹⁰ A relatively new category of teaching is called “definitive,” which is of lesser authority but still requires obedient adherence.¹¹ The Ordinary Magisterium also contains teachings that are considered to be infallible if they are taught universally, but it contains nondefinitive and potentially

fallible teachings as well. The rubric of fallible teachings would most certainly contain various theological hypotheses. And so, the Ordinary Magisterium may contain various speculations, which are changed, discarded, or proven wrong over time.

If you speak to most Catholics, you will find that few are aware of these distinctions. It's also important to note that other Catholic scholars and theologians might present or delineate the levels of Catholic doctrine differently than I have.¹² But suffice it to say, there is a great deal of complexity and nuance to Catholic thinking about doctrine. Although I may have outlined what seems to be a clear enough taxonomy of doctrine, in practice there is general ignorance about these standards, and in scholarly discourse there is much debate about what particular doctrine goes where, not to mention about the degree of change or development permitted as a doctrine persists through time.

III. A PROCESS OF PURGATION

Within Catholic doctrine, the idea of hell—eternal punishment sometimes envisioned as terrible heat and thirst—has longed seemed to stand uncomfortably alongside the belief that God is both loving and merciful. Noted German theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote one of his most compact, and most discussed, books under the title *Dare We Hope That "All Men Be Saved."*¹³ Balthasar said yes, we must dare and hope that all are saved, although he was distinguishing that hope from a doctrinal surety that all will be saved. Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner articulated his theory of the "anonymous Christian" to explain how even non-Christians may still attain salvation. According to Rahner, the grace of God exists as a fundamental constituent of human nature, and even non-Christian individuals who radically obey the dictates of their own consciences pertain to the Church, and to Jesus, as anonymous Christians.¹⁴

Given Balthasar's and Rahner's guarded optimism about the possibility of salvation, purgatory exists as an important possibility when considering what awaits the individual soul after death. The Catechism

of the Catholic Church explains, “Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven—through a purification or immediately—or immediate and everlasting damnation.”¹⁵ Purgatory is that purification, which serves to make souls ready for heaven. At the last judgment, when the resurrection of the dead sees immortal soul joined with glorified body, purgatory is done away with: only heaven and hell will remain.

A reasonable, and commonsensical, theological question could be asked about Catholic understandings of the afterlife: why is an intermediate state before heaven necessary? After all, sins are either forgiven or they are not. But as simple as this query might seem, Catholic doctrine has maintained a complex economy of forgiveness, centering on the sacrament of penance. A sacrament, formally understood, is a rite that transmits grace, “an efficacious sign” that “dispenses divine life.”¹⁶ The sacrament of penance, now more commonly referred to as “the sacrament of reconciliation” or simply “confession,” refers to confession and absolution of sin through the mediation of a priest. But along with confession and absolution, penance is necessary—penance being understood as a kind of self-punishment, reflecting both an internal and external need and desire to express sorrow and fulfill to the demands of justice. Nowadays, penance comes in the form of prayers said immediately after confession. In times past, however, penance was quite elaborate and would include acts like walking to church on one’s knees or going on pilgrimage. And so, even though sins are forgiven, there is still a process of punishment or purification necessary for the vestiges of sin to be erased. For those who are insufficiently purified, purgatory is that place where they can be purged of the last remaining taint of sin. Then there are those who have committed lesser sins, called “venial sins,” that do not prevent them from obtaining heaven but nonetheless are blemishes on the soul, which need to be wiped away. Purgatory provides just such an intermediate state in which our souls can be cleansed.

In sum, the traditional Catholic view of purgatory rests upon the assumption that God created human beings so they may enter heaven and God's presence for eternity. Hell exists for those who persist in their opposition to God in and through death. But there are those who neither are totally reconciled with God nor totally opposed to him at the time when their earthly life ends. These souls must be purified before they can enter the divine presence. A scriptural corollary to this belief in the necessity of purification can be found in Revelation 21:27, which states that nothing "impure" can enter heaven. Given this understanding, purgatory then is not so much a place as it is a process.

The development of purgatory as a doctrine is historically quite complex. Most Catholic commentators would admit that there is nothing explicitly about purgatory in scripture. Instead, it would be better to say that the doctrine of purgatory is an extrapolation from revelation and practices of the earliest Christians. Early Christians did indeed pray for the dead and masses were said for them.¹⁷ Over time, theologians elaborated the implications of this belief. For example, Origen, a Christian philosopher writing in the third century AD, referred to 1 Corinthians chapter 3 when he envisioned a threefold trial by fire after death: the fire of judgment, through which the righteous pass before going straight-away heaven; the "fire of combustion," which those who have minor sins must endure; and an eternal period in cleansing flame, which inveterate sinners suffer.¹⁸ As Jacques Le Goff observes, the concept of purgatory is considered by most scholars to assume a definable shape in the writings of Cyprian in the third century AD, which make reference to the purification of sins through suffering in fire.¹⁹

When purgatory was explicitly addressed in the Council of Florence in 1439, the image of purifying fire was avoided in favor of the concept of purifying pains—a concept that drew heavily on the pronouncements of the Second Council of Lyons, which was held over 150 years earlier in 1274.²⁰ Purgatory, as a place of purifying punishment, or purgation, was explicitly affirmed by the Council of Trent in its "Decree on Purgatory," promulgated in 1547, which reads, in part, as follows:

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this oecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavour that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful of Christ.²¹

Given the phrasing and its declaration within an ecumenical council, I would argue that purgatory has the status of a dogma: a divinely revealed truth, and thus with a place within the Sacred Magisterium.

This penitential understanding of purgatory, and its seemingly uncompromising perfectionism, gave rise to real and deep-seated concerns throughout Catholic religious life. When my father said to me that he would go to purgatory, he was speaking as many Catholics of the time would: after all, who among us can say that she or he is pure enough to enter the kingdom of heaven?

But there is hope, for the time in purgatory can be relieved by what is called an “indulgence.” An indulgence, which can only be granted by the pope, is a full or partial release of punishment in purgatory for sins that have already been forgiven.²² A famous and controversial example of such an indulgence was called the Sabbatine privilege. The Sabbatine privilege is a promise given to people who faithfully wear the scapular, a piece of brown cloth with an image of the Virgin Mary on it that has been specially blessed. In addition to wearing the scapular, a person must observe and comply with the following requirements in order to receive remission from purgatorial purification:

Observe chastity according to their state of life
Recite daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or
Abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays, or
Accomplish faithfully some other similar sacrifice.²³

Even more famously, the buying and selling of indulgences was one of the precipitating causes of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century and was roundly condemned by Protestants such as Martin Luther and the authors of the Ten Conclusions of Berne. While indulgences can no longer be sold, the papal practice of giving indulgences does persist. For example, Pope Francis offered an indulgence for the Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy, which concluded on 20 November 2016, that would have been gained by performing works of mercy as well as by meeting the standard conditions for receiving an indulgence, which include confessing one's sins.²⁴ Indulgences can also be transferred from the living to those souls in purgatory, and there is long tradition of purgatory cults in which Catholics perform penances and such so that the deceased can be released from purgatorial pains.²⁵

Catholicism in the last half century has seen a number of substantial changes in its religious life and relationship to the world. The pivot for many of these changes was the Second Vatican Council, inaugurated by St. Pope John XXIII, in 1962. Purgatory was not given a great deal of attention in the Council's deliberations, and it has receded into the background of Catholic life: my father was educated as a kind of old-school Catholic and was very concerned about purgatory, but there is not the same level of focus or fear among Catholics nowadays.

But one does find renewed scholarly interest in purgatory under the rubric of what is called: *apokatastasis*. *Apokatastasis* is a Greek term that literally means "restitution" or "reconstitution" and refers to the universal salvific will of God and to the prospect that everyone, eventually, will be saved. The Catholic Church has always believed in hell. It also adheres to the proposition that outside of the Church there is no salvation: *Extra ecclesiam nullus salus*. But these propositions have been nuanced in countless ways, especially after the Second Vatican Council. For example, the Catholic Church most certainly teaches that non-Catholics and non-Christians can be saved. Within this framework, some theologians have speculated that essentially everyone will go through purgatory and thus have a chance of salvation. Some may indeed reject this opportunity,

but in accord with the universal salvific will of God, we all can experience an *apokatastasis*, a reconstitution that will allow us to share the beatific vision in heaven.

IV. THE STATE OF LIMBO

Catholic teaching about purgatory belongs to the Sacred Magisterium, even though many Catholics do not mention it anymore and some might find the whole idea of purgatory unscriptural and archaic. The concept of limbo, by contrast, is more of a hypothesis that has belonged to the Ordinary Magisterium in its noninfallible iterations, which has now—for all intents and purposes—been abandoned.

The idea of limbo is intimately connected with traditional Catholic beliefs in baptism, particularly infant baptism. The Catholic understanding is that all human beings are born with original sin, which refers to an original imperfection that stems from Adam and Eve. It is baptism that cleanses us from original sin and, for that reason, the sacrament of baptism should be performed soon after a child is born.

I saw an example of this emphasis on infant baptism as I did research at a Catholic mission station in North India. While there, I looked at the mission station's baptismal records from the 1960s and found a large number of infant baptisms recorded. What I discovered was that these children who were brought to the mission's medical dispensary were sick and on the brink of death, and they were baptized so they could go to heaven. While this practice would now be considered highly unethical, it did represent a deep and pervasive Catholic emphasis on the importance of baptism and the fear that unbaptized children would be in a state of limbo.

Dante Alighieri drew his vision of limbo on the outskirts of hell from a catechism written by Honorius of Autun called the *Elucidarium*, which was used throughout the Middle Ages.²⁶ Honorius argued that the Saints of the Old Testament, along with unbaptized infants, would exist in limbo, which was described as a “place of darkness.” Contemporaneously, the theologian Peter Abelard envisioned limbo as a place

of punishment insofar as that the souls of those unbaptized infants are aware that they lack the beatific vision of heaven.²⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologica*, describes “children’s limbo” as having “no pain of sense.”²⁸ The trajectory of limbo as a theological hypothesis owes much to far earlier disputes between St. Augustine of Hippo and Pelagius and his supporters. In arguing strongly for the necessity of baptism for salvation, Augustine opened up a theological space for limbo by maintaining that unbaptized infants, while surely damned, will nonetheless undergo the softest conceivable punishment.²⁹ Augustine’s position was described by George J. Dyer, in his survey *Limbo: Unsettled Question*, as marked by “vigor and vacillation.”³⁰

There was real tension between baptism being a necessary and indispensable ritual and the whole notion of God being merciful. After all, what sense can we make of a salvific economy that excludes infants who through no fault of their own were not baptized? So limbo remained a kind of hypothesis, a mediation between these two poles. It was mentioned in Catholic life and practice, but it was never defined doctrine and certainly never reached the level of a dogma.

In 2007, however, the International Theological Commission, which was begun by St. John Paul II, produced a statement that was approved by then Pope Benedict XVI: It reads as follows:

Our conclusion is that the many factors that we have considered above give serious theological and liturgical grounds for hope that unbaptized infants who die will be saved and enjoy the beatific vision. We emphasize that these are reasons for prayerful hope, rather than grounds for sure knowledge. There is much that simply has not been revealed to us. We live by faith and hope in the God of mercy and love who has been revealed to us in Christ, and the Spirit moves us to pray in constant thankfulness and joy. . . . What has been revealed to us is that the ordinary way of salvation is by the sacrament of baptism. None of the above considerations should be taken as qualifying the necessity of baptism or justifying delay in administering the sacrament. Rather, as we want to reaffirm in

conclusion, they provide strong grounds for hope that God will save infants when we have not been able to do for them what we would have wished to do, namely, to baptize them into the faith and life of the Church.³¹

What this statement reveals is an ongoing Catholic doctrinal development concerning the nature of baptism. I think it would be fair to say that baptism is still crucial, but the necessity of performing the ritual itself is superseded by a more expansive understanding of a baptism of the heart or even an unconscious baptism. As a result, limbo has fallen away from serious discussion in most Catholic intellectual life.

V. LATTER-DAY SAINT AND CATHOLIC DISCUSSIONS

What the discarding of limbo as a hypothesis also reveals is that Catholic doctrinal thinking is evolving, or continues to evolve. While Catholic doctrine is often presented and understood as timeless truths that are reaffirmed through time, the fact of the matter is that Catholic doctrine has changed in a number of specific ways—such as its opinion regarding slavery and usury, for example—and even while many of those changes reflect changes in continuity with the central tenets of the Catholic faith, they do respond to changes in the context in which Catholics and all human beings live their lives.

This is especially the case in how heaven is described. I have used the formulation “beatific vision,” which is the standard way of describing heaven in Catholic parlance. But the definition or understanding of what the beatific vision means has deepened. Classically, the beatific vision had been understood to mean the contemplation of God. More recently, however, some Catholic theologians have understood the beatific vision as a union with God—quite literally a *theosis*: not just becoming one with God but becoming God.

While this understanding of *theosis* is still different from what Latter-day Saints mean by exaltation, it does suggest that there is still much to

talk about between Catholics and Latter-day Saints—as well as other Christians—about the life that awaits us beyond the grave. The status of body and matter itself are particularly suggestive areas where Latter-day Saints and Catholics can engage each other in thinking about the afterlife. For example, Catholic theologian Stephen Webb wrote insightfully on these questions before his untimely death and also authored a volume with Latter-day Saint scholar and Brigham Young University professor Alonzo L. Gaskill that serves as an exemplary model for Latter-day Saint and Roman Catholic dialogue.³² But in addition to more abstract issues concerning the body and materiality, Christian discussions of the afterlife, across denominational boundaries, raise the most fundamental question: What do we have to do to enter into God’s presence after our earthly lives pass? What Latter-day Saints and Catholics do agree upon is that while the sacrificial death and atonement of Jesus Christ has opened up redemptive possibilities for all human beings, it is still necessary for all of us to exercise our own free will—our own agency—in order to draw near our Heavenly Father.

NOTES

1. For more on this practice and scene, see Mathew N. Schmalz, *Mercy Matters: Opening Yourself to the Life-Changing Gift* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2016).
2. For an example from the time of the Reformation that emphasizes how polemical these disputes can become, compare “The Ten Conclusions of Berne,” a creedal statement written under the direction of Huldreich Zwingli and promulgated in 1528, with the “Creed of the Council of Trent,” a key document of the Catholic “counter-reformation.” Both can be found in John Leith, ed., *Creeeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 129–30, 440–42.
3. Dante Alighieri, *Purgatory*, trans. Rev. H. F. Carey, Project Gutenberg, 2014, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/8795/8795-h/8795-h.htm#link1>.

4. For a pre-Vatican II survey of the development of purgatory and its status in Catholic doctrine, see “Purgatory,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, New Advent, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12575a.htm>.
5. Nick Pisa, “Pope Ends State of Limbo after 800 Years,” *The Telegraph*, 23 April 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1549439/The-Pope-ends-state-of-limbo-after-800-years.html>.
6. As indicated by the title, this article’s focus is on Catholic views of purgatory and limbo. The faith’s rich theology on the afterlife comprises other topics including, for example, the doctrine of the resurrection. While a detailed discussion of the resurrection is outside the scope of this article, for additional details the reader may wish to consult other sources, such as the following: *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), s.vv. “Resurrection of Jesus Christ” and “Resurrection of the Body”; Gerhard Lohfink, *Is This All There Is? On Resurrection and Eternal Life* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2018); PHEME PERKINS, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (New York: Doubleday, 1984); John R. Sachs, “Resurrection of the Body,” in *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Richard E. McBrien (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1995), 1110–11; PHEME PERKINS, “Resurrection of Christ,” in McBrien, *HarperCollins Encyclopedia*, 1108–10; Stephen Davis, Danile Kendall, and Gerald O’Collins, eds., *The Resurrection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
7. The formal way to refer to the Church, in Catholic parlance, is as “she” or “her.”
8. “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” La Santa Sede, 2003, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c2a2.htm.
9. Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Magisterium: Teacher and Guardian of the Faith* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 3.
10. Dulles, *Magisterium*, 77. See also “Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Instruction: Donam Veritatis: On the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian,” *La Santa Sede* (1990), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19900524_theologian-vocation_en.html.
11. For a helpful overview of the category “definitive teaching,” see Ladislas Orsy, *Receiving the Council: Theological and Canonical Insights and Debates* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 129–42.

12. For example, see Francis A. Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium* (Eugene, OR: WIPF and Stock Publishers, 1996).
13. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope That "All Men Be Saved?"* (San Francisco: Ignatius Books, 1988).
14. Karl Rahner, "Anonymous Christians," *Theological Investigations* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 6:390–91. See also Mathew N. Schmalz, "Transcendental Reduction: Karl Rahner's Theory of Anonymous Christianity. I," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 59 (October 1995): 680–92.
15. "Catechism of the Catholic Church," 1022.
16. "Catechism of the Catholic Church," 1131.
17. "Prayers for the Dead," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, New Advent, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04653a.htm>.
18. Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 56.
19. Le Goff, *Birth of Purgatory*, 57.
20. Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 120.
21. J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., "The Decree on Purgatory," *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), 232–33.
22. United States Council of Catholic Bishops, *Manual of Indulgences* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006), 13.
23. Remi Amelunxen, "The Sabbatine Privilege and the 30 Gregorian Masses," Tradition in Action, http://www.traditioninaction.org/religious/d026_Sabbatine.htm; see also Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., "An Explanation of the Sabbatine Privilege," Order of Carmelites, <http://www.ocarm.org/en/content/ocarm/explanation-sabbatine-privilege>.
24. Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus* (New York: Pauline Books & Media 2015).
25. For a discussion of purgatory cults that draws upon a psychoanalytic method, see Michael Carroll, *Veiled Threats: The Logic of Popular Catholicism in Italy* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
26. George J. Dyer, *Limbo: Unsettled Question* (New York: Shee'd & Ward, 1964), 5.

27. Peter Abelard, *Peter Abelard: Collationes*, ed. and trans. by John Marenbon and Giovanni Orlandi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 126. For a discussion more attuned to a broader audience, see Charles Penati, *Sacred Origins of Profound Things: The Stories Behind the Rites and Rituals of the World's Religions* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 490.
28. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, vol. 2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Notre Dame, IN: 1948), Q89, art. 6, parts i–ii.
29. Augustine of Hippo, *The Augustine Catechism: The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Charity*, trans. Bruce Harbart, ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2008), 20.
30. Dyer, *Limbo: Unsettled Question*, 15.
31. “International Theological Commission: The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die Without Being Baptised,” La Santa Sede, 2007, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070419_un-baptised-infants_en.html.
32. Stephen Webb, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Stephen H. Webb, *Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn from Latter-day Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Stephen H. Webb and Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Catholic and Mormon: A Theological Conversation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); see also Mathew N. Schmalz, “In Memoriam: Stephen Web,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 199–210.