

God purifies the souls of his people

To explain how God purifies souls, look at Moses. He was a holy man. He spent forty days with God on Mount Sinai. Even so, he had failings. He was supposed to call forth water from the rock. Instead, he began beating the rock in anger, cursing. The Book of Numbers concludes (20:12): “The Lord then said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe that I could assert my holiness in the eyes of the Israelites, you will not lead this assembly into the country which I am giving them.’”

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Moses died without entering the Promised Land. But God must have purified him later, because we see Moses appearing with Elijah, when Peter, James and John witness the glory of Jesus Christ.

When we die, are we going to enter into heaven with defects? Are we going to continue making life unpleasant for others, even in God's kingdom, with our bursts of anger, our flashes of lust, our streaks of vanity and the whole sorry load of evil inclinations that lurks within our hearts? Or will God be merciful and purify us as he did with Moses?

C.S. Lewis—an Anglican—explained: “Our souls *demand* purgatory, don't they? Would it not be sad if God said: ‘It's true my son, that your breath

smells and your rags drip with mud and slime, but we are charitable here and no one will draw away from you. Enter into the joy'? Wouldn't we reply, 'If there is no objection, I would *rather* be cleansed first.' 'It may hurt, you know.' 'Even so, sir.'"

This article by Fr. Joe Babendreier first appeared in the Sunday Nation in November 2020.

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