

FORGETTING TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT

When we offend God by disobeying his commandments, we call it sinning. The problem with sinning is that it can affect the state of our spiritual souls so that they are no longer in favour with God, but what does this mean?

It's all about what happens to our spiritual soul for all ETERNITY after our mortal body dies. As Catholics, we believe that if our souls are in favour with God when our mortal bodies die, they will live with God in Heaven for all eternity. If they are not in favour with God, that is, we have sinned grievously against God, then our souls will perish in Hell for all eternity when we die.

This is what we are taught during our Catholic education. We are also taught something else, which many people tend to forget. When we offend God, our sins must go through two phases to gain His complete pardon. These are:

1. FORGIVENESS.
2. PUNISHMENT.

Only God can forgive offences against Him. When we go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God will only forgive us our sins if the priest absolves us from them. Many Catholics believe that this is the end of the matter, but they tend to forget that they must endure the punishment associated with their sins.

A great example of why there is PUNISHMENT and FORGIVENESS is what happened to King David in the Old Testament. He organized the death of one of his generals, URIAH, so that he could then have Uriah's wife, BETHSHEBA.

When this happened, the prophet Nathan told David about a wrong done by a rich man to a poor one. David said that the crime was punishable by death. Nathan then pointed out that David's crime against Uriah was the same.

David realised that what he had done was a great sin against God. He was truly repentant and begged God for forgiveness.

God saw that he was truly sorry and did FOREGIVE him, but David's sin was a very grave one, and the PUNISHMENT God gave was that David's first-born son of Bathsheba would die. This happened soon after the baby's birth.

We tend to forget the punishment due to our sins. If we die and our sins have been forgiven, then before our soul can get into Heaven, we must undergo the due punishment. If we have not endured the

necessary punishment, our soul will reside in the state of PURGATORY until it has been; only then can it be with God in Heaven.

If we die and have not endured our punishment, and our soul resides in Purgatory, then not being able to see God in Heaven is itself a punishment. Over time this will clear the punishment which is due. Only then will our soul leave Purgatory and enter Heaven to live with God.

The Catholic Church has created ways for us to reduce and even get rid of any due punishment. At the same time, we're alive, which logically means that it can eventually be got rid of and is why the church calls it TEMPORAL punishment. What the Catholic Church has created to allow us to do this has been organised into two types called:

PLENARY INDULGENCES

Gets rid of ALL the punishment.

PARTIAL INDULGENCES

Gets rid of SOME of the punishment.

The Catholic Church states that:

An indulgence is the remission in the sight of God of the Temporal Punishment due for sins, the guilt of which has already been forgiven.

There are many ways to gain Plenary and Partial Indulgences, too many to mention here, but they can be found on the Internet or in books.

Research INDULGENCES yourself and find out which ones you can use effectively so that your soul avoids staying in Purgatory for any length of time.