The Saints' Map of Purgatory

Selected motifs from a 21-book catalogue — from the lowest regions to release, beneath the earth, on earth and at the altar

DEFINED DOGMA Those who die in God's grace but still need purification **are purified after death**; their pain is real; they are already saved; the purification **ends**; and the prayers of the living, above all the Mass, help them.

OPEN QUESTION **Where** it is, **how many levels**, **how long**, the nature of the fire. "The term does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence." — St John Paul II, 4 August 1999.

PRIVATE REVELATION Everything on this map. It lines up what the saints and mystics **report**; it is arranged, not endorsed, and no Catholic is obliged to accept it.



Beneath the earth · "in the centre of the earth near Hell" (UMP-R3) · a symbol, says the Portuguese visionary (VIS-06)

5 Release — INTO THE LIGHT

- The souls St Teresa frees rise *"from the bosom of the earth"* EMO-01; in Valencia a soul rises like a star EMO-07.
- At Mass, three white doves rise from the altar FAU-10; released souls enter *"a bright, green tract of country"* before Heaven EMM-27.
- Some ascend by stages, from outside the church to the altar MED-15; a sister seen several times, her sufferings diminishing, finally radiant FAU-08.
- **When:** most at **Christmas** SIM-R8 UMP-R9 · **Good Friday** EMM-25 · the **Assumption** EMM-26 UMP-04 · **2 November**, *"the greatest feast of purgatory"* VIS-20.

4 On earth — BY GOD'S PERMISSION

- **Where they sinned or lived:** at the baths MED-02, in a choir stall MED-60, in a house at Antwerp MOD-03, at the doors of their former homes VDL-08.
- **At the grave:** voices under the earth answer *"Amen"* EMO-93; holy water and candles bring relief SIM-R5.
- **At the altar** — the place the witnesses most agree on: adoring in a last hour of penance EMO-11, *"We are in the chapel"* FAU-10, near or beneath the altar VIS-07.
- St Thomas: some are purified elsewhere *"according to dispensation … that the living may learn, or that the dead may be succored."*

3 The highest level — NO FIRE

- *"The Purgatory of desire"*, or *"Threshold"*, which very few escape UMP-R2; the antechamber or summit, with only the pain of love VIS-04; a sphere *"between darkness and clarity"* VDL-R1.
- Glimpses of Heaven are *"almost a punishment"*; the souls are *"martyrs, consumed as it were by love"* UMP-R8.
- *"Here we are drunk with hope"* VIS-17. *"The angels come to see us"* with canticles VIS-18.
- **Who:** souls nearly ready — by the *Manuscript*'s account, almost every soul passes through it. Maria Simma says she sees only this level SIM-R2.

2 The middle levels — A ROARING FIRE

- *"The second Purgatory"* UMP-03; *"prisons"* sorted by sin EMO-10; *"a misty place full of fire"*, where the worst torment is longing for God FAU-01.
- A roaring fire, from a minute to centuries VIS-04. Pains fitted to the fault: the tongue EMO-51, the hand that would not bless SIM-09, the members that sinned VDL-04.
- **Our Lady comes** — the souls call her *"The Star of the Sea"* FAU-01; every Saturday except in Lent and Advent VIS-20; in Simma's account Mary comes to them, not Jesus SIM-R9.
- **What reaches them:** the Mass, the Rosary, the Stations VIS-R1; holy water as a light spring, the Way of the Cross as dew VIS-16; *"the smallest prayer is a glass of fresh water"* VIS-08.

1 The lowest level — A SILENT FIRE

- *"Bordering upon Hell"* (Lidwina) MED-78 · *"a temporary hell"* (the *Manuscript*) UMP-R2 · a burning sea (Frances of Rome) MED-77 · *"the Chamber of Suffering"* MSG-01.
- A silent, immobile fire, *"equal to hell except in the duration"* VIS-04; fire and Satan's attacks only here (Simma) SIM-R2.
- **Who:** those saved at the last moment; in the Visions, *"priests, popes and rulers"* VIS-04.
- **What reaches them:** suffrages they cannot perceive, which still shorten their time VIS-R1; prayers reach them only later — ask St Michael SIM-R2. Ten years of a light Purgatory are easier than two days of the deepest SIM-40.

× Why the lowest looks like Hell

- St Faustina: its torments are *"in no way different from the torments of hell; there is only this difference: that they will someday come to an end"* (§426) FAU-06. Emmerich: *"I thought myself in Hell … 'Hell cannot be where I am.'"* Simma, Holy Week 1954, almost convinced she was in Hell SIM-38.
- Every difference is **interior** — hope, love, the certainty of salvation. Demons are near but powerless VIS-04 FAU-05. A visitor who cannot hear the souls would call it Hell; the witnesses say it is **full of the saved**. The Church: Purgatory is *"entirely different from the punishment of the damned"* (CCC 1031).

BEFORE THE MAP

At the threshold: death and judgement

- DEFINED Judgement comes *"at the very moment of his death"* (CCC 1022).
- *"Suddenly I saw the complete condition of my soul as God sees it"* (Faustina §36) FAU-03; a light that pronounces the sentence UMP-R1.
- The soul goes of its own accord VIS-01, St Michael attending VIS-02; it *"plunges"* in CGE-R1.
- **Begun in this life:** *"I make of the body a purgatory for the soul"* CGE-01; *"The poor souls are always in the state in which thou now art"* EMM-07.

ON EVERY LEVEL ALIKE

What never changes

1. **Hope** — even "arid" hope at the bottom.
2. **No one there is lost** — confirmed in grace UMP-R8; no soul wishes to return SIM-R9.
3. **Prayer reaches every level**, at different speeds — *"our prayer is not lost"* FAU-09.
4. **Mary and the angels come** FAU-01 EMM-09 VIS-18.
5. **The worst pain is not the fire**, but not yet seeing God UMP-R7 FAU-01.

READ WITH CARE

How to read this map

- **The maps disagree**: three regions, prisons, three stages, a great, middle and summit, *"as many levels as souls"* SIM-R2. What matches is degree, not structure.
- The witnesses read one another — and Dante.
- St Catherine of Genoa drew no map CGE-R2: for her, said Benedict XVI, purgatory is *"not an exterior but rather an interior fire."*
- The Church warns against *"the application of spacio-temporal categories to the dead"* (*Directory* §258). Use the map to pray, not to place anyone.

Sources. Account codes (e.g. VIS-04) refer to the 375 accounts in the guide's catalogue, drawn from 21 books; their page references have not been independently verified against the books. Quotations from Faustina §§36 and 426, Emmerich (*Life* I, p. 395) and the Visions' "arid" hope are transmitted through the compiler's notes; their source status is explained in the guide. Church texts: CCC 1022, 1031; John Paul II, General Audience, 4 Aug 1999; Benedict XVI, General Audience, 12 Jan 2011; *Directory on Popular Piety* §258; St Thomas, *ST* Suppl., App. II, a. 2.

The Layman's Lantern · Purgatory guide
laymanslantern.org/purgatory/#/read/purgatory-map
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