

# Connecting New

June, 2022

Some Christian traditions include the concept of purgatory, a place/process between death and entry into heaven. Purgatory is an experience of purification, where the truth of how we lived our lives confronts us in love, and in freedom we are offered the opportunity to consent to growing closer to God. Sometimes we are blessed with these kinds of growth opportunities while on this side of the grave.

## Purgatory

Waking up in a state of grace,  
I think I know what purgatory is like.  
For the first time, after sixty years have passed,  
it occurred to me how terribly difficult, painful and  
life-altering it must have been for my cousin  
to witness his father's slow and painful death –  
no six year old should face this.  
For the first time, I feel compassion for the cousin  
I disrespected and ignored – his only purpose  
to help me feel superior in every possible way.  
Yet it was he of all my many cousins who showed  
the greatest kindness and affection for my aging parents –  
perhaps they showed kindness to him that I never knew,  
such are the secrets and obscurities of life,  
what we hide or refuse to see.

I think I know what purgatory is like.  
It's waking up to our own judgment, selfishness and cruelty,  
and feeling deeply remorseful and grateful at the same time.

May we be ever attentive and responsive to the presence of grace in our lives.

Peace and Blessings,  
Clarence

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