

Fr. Perozich comments —

On this feast of Christ the King, it is helpful to review how salvation works for man.

I hear from some Christians that they expect to be embraced by God when Jesus comes again and to enter with the Lord into heaven.

Among these are those who do not eat His flesh and drink His blood.

Others do not avail themselves of the Sacrament of Penance.

Some do not attend Holy Mass on Sundays.

A few have been misled by leaders in church to think that their behaviors do not matter, in particular when such behaviors are not in accord with Jesus' teaching as recorded in the Holy Bible.

St. Fulgentius was a bishop in what is now Tunisia in the city of Ruspe in the late 400's and early 500's.

Fulgentius was not affected by modernism, the 19th, 20th and 21st century heresy that the church needs to change to match the beliefs and morality of the people of the time.

He lays it out clearly. There is a transformation of a man for him to be able to enter heaven. He speaks of the two deaths and two resurrections affirmed by scripture and how to navigate toward the second resurrection to eternal life.

That transformation begins here with baptism, the initial justification and change, a first resurrection so to speak. It continues throughout life on earth with ongoing justification — that is sorrow, repentance and forgiveness of sins constantly throughout earthly life.

While some Christians declare, "I'm saved, I'm saved!", their understanding is impoverished in that they confuse the initial change of salvation offered by Jesus through ongoing justification and transformation in this earthly life with the final transformation at the end, almost as if one were entitled to heaven simply for declaring some degree of faith in Jesus.

Fulgentius shows that the evils must be purged from our life while on earth in order for that final transformation to change the earthly body into a glorified body capable of passing into heaven with God forever.

"Here on earth they are changed by the first resurrection, in which they are enlightened and converted, thus passing from death to life, sinfulness to holiness, unbelief to faith, and evil actions to holy life. For this reason the second death has no power over them . As the first resurrection consists of the conversion of the heart, the second death consists of unending torment."

“For if any during this life are changed out of fear of God and pass from an evil life to a good one, they pass from death to life and later they shall be transformed from a shameful state to a glorious one.”

From a treatise on Forgiveness by Fulgentius of Ruspe,
bishop

(Liber 2,11,2-12,1.3-4:CCL 91 A, 693-695)

He who overcomes shall not be harmed by the second death

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye as the final trumpet sounds, for the trumpet shall indeed sound, the dead shall rise incorruptible and we shall be changed. In saying “we” Paul is indicating that the gift of that future change will also be given to those who during their time on earth are united to him and his companions by upright lives within the communion of the Church. He hints at the nature of the change when he says: *This corruptible body must put on incorruptibility, this mortal body immortality.* In order, then, that men may obtain the transformation which is the reward of the just, they must first undergo here on earth a change which is God’s free gift. Those who in this life have been changed from evil to good are promised that future change as a reward.

Through justification and the spiritual resurrection, grace now effects in them an initial change that is God’s gift. Later on, through the bodily resurrection, the transformation of the just will be brought to completion, and they will experience a perfect, abiding, unchangeable glorification. The purpose of this change wrought in them by the gifts of both justification and glorification is that they may abide in an eternal, changeless state of joy.

Here on earth they are changed by the first resurrection, in which they are enlightened and converted, thus passing from death to life, sinfulness to holiness, unbelief to faith, and evil actions to holy life. For this reason the second death has no power over them. It is of such men that the Book of Revelation says: *Happy the man who shares in the first resurrection; over such as he the second death has no power.* Elsewhere the same book says: *He who overcomes shall not be harmed by the second death.* As the first resurrection consists of the conversion of the heart, the second death consists of unending torment.

Let everyone, therefore, who does not wish to be condemned to the endless punishment of the second death now hasten to share in the first resurrection. For if any during this life are changed out of fear of God and pass from an evil life to a good one, they pass from death to life and later they shall be transformed from a shameful state to a glorious one.