

There are just two possibilities with no middle state of an alleged purgatory in view. Simple confession of Christ leads to heaven.

The same contrast occurs repeatedly in John's Gospel. A plain verse is 3:36 "He who believeth the Son hath everlasting life; he who is unbelieving towards the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him." (Confrat. ed.) Again, John 5:24 "he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me has life everlasting, and does not come to judgment, but has passed from death unto life" (Confrat ed.). Numerous other verses equally positive could be cited appearing in the Roman Catholic Fouay and Confraternity edition without note or comment and teaching that heaven is assured for all Christians with eternal life beginning now when we are saved and never ending. These verses emphasize the truth that our destiny is heaven or hell-- and that we can be assured of heaven by simply trusting in Jesus Christ as Saviour.

The Apostles in the rest of the New Testament likewise make absolutely no mention of purgatory or of prayers for the dead. On the contrary they teach us that the believers in Jesus may face death confidently for it will only mean immediate glory through the grace of Christ.

Stephen, the first martyr, had a vision of heaven itself in his dying moments (Acts 7:56). Paul urged the Corinthian Christians to a steadfast life in order to obtain an incorruptible crown (1 Corin. 9:25). This crown of righteousness Paul expected but declared it was not ~~xxxxxx~~ only for himself but also for those other Christians who love Him appearing (2 Tim 4:8). James 1:12 also speaks of this "crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

Now the condition of the departed Christian, Paul says, is "far better" than when he was alive: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Phil. 1:21-24. He himself in the last epistle he wrote declares his faith that "the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (2Tim. 4:18). Paul was looking for heaven. This is the meaning of Hebrews 12:14 "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come," which only echoes