

**Holy Trinity Catholic Church**  
**RCIA Class Transcript**  
**The Last Four Things**  
**Lecturer: Father Francis Peffley**  
**Date: February 8, 2005**

Tonight's topic is called the Last Four Things, which are Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Underneath this topic we will also deal with Purgatory, and the Resurrection of the Body, and a few other things.

Let me mention a few things about Ash Wednesday, because that is tomorrow. On Ash Wednesday, we begin the 40 Days of Lent, which go from Ash Wednesday to Easter. During this time of Lent, it's a time of prayer, a time of making some sacrifices, doing some penance. Lent should be like a retreat for us. It should be a time where we deepen our prayer life, and come to know and love the Lord all the more. It's a time to grow in our love of God and love of neighbor.

What we should do during Lent are:

- Extra acts of charity and kindness, toward your spouse; toward your children
- Pray more, perhaps say the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary every day
- Read Scripture, maybe ten minutes a day of the Bible
- Come to the Stations of the Cross on Friday nights here in the chapel

Lent is a time of *prayer* and *penance*. Traditionally, the three things that we should do during Lent are: *alms giving*, which is being generous to the poor; *prayer*; and *fasting*. Those are the three traditional activities during Lent that the Bible talks about.

Hopefully, you'll come to one of these Masses tomorrow: 9 o'clock in the morning here, and then 6 o'clock or 7:30 in the evening at the high school. Even if you're not Catholic at this time, you can still receive the ashes. What happens is after the homily, then everybody comes up as if they were going to Communion. You just line up, and then you come up and the priest or Eucharistic Minister dips his thumb in the ashes, which are blessed. The ashes are made from the burnt palms from Palm Sunday of the previous year. The palm branches are burned; the ashes are blessed; and then the Eucharistic Minister or the priest places his finger in the ashes, and makes a little Sign of the Cross on your forehead. He says, "Remember man that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return." It's a reminder of our mortality, our reminder of death.

It's a very powerful sacramental in the Church. Or, he could say, "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel." There are choices on which prayer the person could say. The main thing is just don't come up to stick out your tongue, as if

you're going to Communion; the ashes are given on the forehead. Don't confuse the Eucharistic Minister by thinking that you're going to receive Communion.

Even though you might not be able to receive Communion at this time until Easter, you can receive the ashes. Again, we do encourage you to come up and do that.

Also, Ash Wednesday is a day of *fasting*. There are only two days of fasting that are required of Catholics. One is Ash Wednesday; the other is Good Friday. On Ash Wednesday, a day of fast means you only eat one full meal. You are allowed to eat two other, smaller meals to help you maintain strength. Those two smaller meals should not be equal or be larger than the one full meal. What most people do is eat their main meal at lunch; maybe have a little something in the morning to give them nourishment, and then a small meal in the evening. Or, some people eat something very minor for breakfast and lunch, and have their full meal in the evening. That's called a day of fasting, which of course is very mild compared to the earlier days of fasting, on bread and water, or on other things that in the past people did.

It's also called a day of *abstinence*. We abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent; you give up meat on those days. Meat is sort of a luxury, something very good. You give it up, and make a sacrifice; and eat something else instead of that.

(A question). Yes, chicken counts as meat. Fish does not count as meat, so you're okay if you have fish. Or, eggs - that's fine, too. The idea is to make a sacrifice. Usually, for most people, meat is something that they like, and so, by giving that up, by having fish, or having an omelet or eggs instead, is a good sacrifice.

Again, there are two days of fasting – Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Please come to Mass tomorrow if you can.

Let's get into what are called the Last Four Things: *Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell*. We'll start with Death. There's quite a bit to cover tonight, so I'll try to get everything in, because we want to have enough time to discuss Purgatory, Heaven, and Hell, as well as the *Individual Judgment*, and the *General Judgment*.

What is *Death*? Death is the separation of our body from our soul. Nobody ever dies. The body dies, but the soul lives forever. Every one of us is immortal. Every one of us will live forever, ultimately in Heaven or in Hell. The body is the gift that God has given us. We live in this body. We die when our soul leaves the body.

Scripture says that, "All men must die, because death is a consequence of Original Sin." That's one of the effects of Original Sin. If Adam and Eve had not

sinned, we would not experience death, this separation of body from soul. Most likely, we would have just fallen into a peaceful slumber or peaceful sleep; God would have taken our soul to Heaven at that time.

The Book of Romans says, “Therefore, as through one man, sin entered into this world, and through sin, death, and thus, death is passed unto all men.” That’s where the Bible talks about death as a consequence of sin. God did not create death, did not create disease; it was because of the sin of our first parents. Adam, head of the human race, chose to disobey God. Therefore, sin and death entered into the world.

The Book of Genesis says in Chapter 3, “You are dust and unto dust you shall return.” God created us out of the dust of the Earth. When we die, our bodies go back to the dust of the Earth.

No one knows where or when or how they will die, but we all know that we will die. I think God sort of mercifully hides the hour of our death from us. For example, if we knew that we were going to live to be 58-years old, and die on February 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 o’clock in the morning, just knowing that would probably scare us to death, so we’d probably die anyway as we approach that date. God does not tell us when we’re going to die.

Plus, another reason maybe He keeps that from people is because if they knew that they would live to 60, 75, or 80, maybe they would figure, “Well, I can just live an immoral life, break all the Ten Commandments; then, the day before, either get baptized or go to Confession.” Probably those are some of the reasons why God doesn’t reveal to us the hour or the day of our death. Maybe He keeps this because we should always be ready to meet the Lord, no matter when He calls us. As you know, some people die very young, little babies or children; teenagers, through car accidents; young people; soldiers in war; people in nursing homes. People are dying every day – about 300,000 people die each day. It’s something to pray for. Pray for all those who will die this day, that they’ll have a happy death.

A *happy death* is what we call a well-prepared death. If somebody is ready to meet the Lord, then death is a wonderful blessing. St. Paul often said, “I enjoy being alive and working for the Lord, but I also want to go to Heaven.” So, Paul was torn. He wanted to go to Heaven and be with God, but he also wanted to keep doing the Lord’s works. He said, “Lord, take me when it’s Your time, whenever You think I’m ready.”

The Catechism says, “We must always be ready for whenever death comes.” The Bible says, “For death will come like a thief in the night, since we do not know the day or the hour.” We should prepare for death by leading a good and holy life, avoiding sin, and doing good works to give praise to the Heavenly Father.

The good should not fear death. We should not fear death. We should look forward to it, because it's a time when we will be with the Lord. St. Augustine wrote 1,600 years ago, "Oh, how sweet it is to die, if one's life has been a good one." You want to pray every day for a good, holy, and happy death, because the just man knows that death is only a means to obtain a better life to be with God for all eternity.

Scripture says, "We should often recall the thought of death and eternity so that we will avoid sin. In the Bible it says, "In all thy works, remember your last end, and you will never sin." If a person remembered that death will come, then they will avoid sin, because you always want to be ready to meet the Lord.

The Catechism says that before we die we should put our temporal affairs in order. Adults should have a will and all the other things that are necessary. The person's temporal house would be in order. But if your *temporal house* is going to be in order, you always have to have your *spiritual house* in order as well.

The Catechism then talks about cemeteries, and what cemeteries are. Cemetery actually comes from a Greek word which means "a sleeping place," because that's where our bodies will sleep until Jesus resurrects them on the Last Day. Everyone will get their glorified bodies back at the end of time, at the Second Coming. On many of the tombs, you'll see R.I.P. which in English is "Rest in Peace," but in Latin it's "Requiescat in Pace; May he or she rest in peace." That's often found on the headstones.

When the Lord talked about death, He always talked about it as a falling asleep. Remember when He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead? Jesus said to the Apostles, "She is not dead. She is sleeping," even though she had died. God always looks upon death as a kind of sleep, because He will resurrect and awaken our bodies on the Last Day.

A cemetery should be properly kept, out of respect for the dead. Catholics should be buried in a Catholic cemetery, or at least have the grave blessed, which is what we do whenever we do a graveside service. Usually we have a wake the night before, have the funeral Mass, take the body or the cremated remains to the cemetery, and then the grave is blessed.

We come now to the *Particular Judgment*, which is also called the *Individual Judgment*. The Individual Judgment is when we come before God at the hour of our death. There are two judgments. One is called the *General Judgment*; one is called the *Individual or Particular Judgment*. These are not two different sentences or two different determinations. We were judged once individually, but in the General Judgment, our judgment is made public to everyone in the world.

Let's talk for a minute about the Particular Judgment. This is a judgment that will be passed on to each one of us immediately after death. The Bible says, "We must all be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ." In the Book of Hebrews it says, "It is appointed unto men to die once, and after death, be judged." Thus, reincarnation is not true. Reincarnation is a false philosophy. It's a heresy. Reincarnation is when people think that their soul will come back to life in a different form, maybe as an animal, or as a cow in India; maybe as a different kind of human being. We know that's not the case. Christianity has always condemned reincarnation as a heresy and as a false teaching. The Book of Romans says, "Every one of us will have to render an account of himself before God" - all of our thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions. Christ is the one who judges us. We stand before Christ, our loving Judge, our merciful Judge; and we give an account of our whole life.

How this will play out, we don't know. Some people speculate that in a sense, it's almost like seeing an entire movie of your life, from the moment of your conception, the moment of your birth all the way through your entire life. In a sense, you watch your whole life with the Lord. At that moment, the person either goes directly into Heaven; they go directly into Hell; or they go directly into Purgatory. Those are the three places that a person goes after they come before the judgment seat of Christ. Their whole life will be placed before them.

Those who die in holiness, in their baptismal innocence, just like a newly baptized baby, go directly into Heaven. The souls that die in the state of grace, in the state of friendship with God, but perhaps have:

- Smaller sins, venial sins still on their soul
- The residue of sin that's still there, the wounded nature of their soul from sins that were committed before
- Attachments to smaller sins

They may have to go to Purgatory for a period of purification, and cleansing.

If the person dies in the state of mortal sin, unrepentant mortal sin (the person has committed that sin, and not repented and not been sorry, not asked God's forgiveness), then they have separated themselves and go directly into Hell. Notice, the soul will either go to Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory at the moment of death without their bodies. Their bodies are still in the Earth; they're still either cremated or buried. The person will go to one of these three places until the *General Resurrection*. At the General Resurrection, God will resurrect their bodies, and the souls in Heaven will get their glorified bodies back. The souls in Purgatory will all enter Heaven by that point, if they've not already entered before; they'll get their glorified body. The souls in Hell will also get their bodies back as well. We'll talk about that when we get to the topic on Hell.

How should we prepare for the Judgment? Obviously, to always be in the state of grace; always be in God's friendship; always following His Ten Commandments,

and until you can have a chance to go to Confession or get baptized, just pray. God will take care of you. If you have a desire for Baptism, should something happen to you, you'd be saved, because you have that desire. You're sorry for your sins, and if you want God to forgive you and have a desire for Baptism; that'll happen.

The same thing if you haven't gone to Confession. Just say the *Act of Contrition*, which is that prayer that we pray often, "Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee. I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell. But most of all, because I have offended Thee, who art all Good and deserving of my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen." Until you have the great privilege of going to individual Confession, say that prayer every night before you go to bed. Should something happen to you, you'd be saved, because you're sorry for your sins; you're getting ready to make your Confession at Easter, and you'd be taken care of. Just keep that in mind.

During this short time that we have on Earth, whether God has blessed us with 20, 50, 80, or 100 years we should do all the good that we can. We should follow God's Commandments and the teachings of Christ and His Church; participate in the prayer life; give alms to the poor; and practice charity towards one another. Again, before you go to sleep at night, say your Act of Contrition.

Have you ever seen a potter making a vase on the potter's wheel? While the person is still alive, they can still be shaped and molded. Once a person dies, they can no longer repent of their sins. We can only repent while we're still alive. In a sense, once we die, that clay is placed into the furnace, and it's hardened, so that cannot be changed. Where we go is determined by the state of our soul at the moment of our death. That's the most important thing to remember about the Particular Judgment, that somebody could have lived a very sinful life, a very wicked life; but if at the end of their life, they repent and tell God they're sorry, and receive God's forgiveness, then they'd be saved. What a wonderful thing that is. Where we go, Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory is determined by the state of our soul at the moment of our death. If a person has lived a good, holy life during their lifetime, then the chances are that they would die in God's friendship and the state of grace.

This is where that video would be of interest - Father Scheier's near death experience. He tells about what happened to him at his near death experience.

(A question). When we refer to death, we refer to it as the physical death. That's when our body dies. Now sometimes the Bible refers to what's called a *second* death; that's referring to Hell, as in the Book of Revelation, where it refers the lake of fire and those who experience the second death. When it's referring to physical death, it's referring to the moment our soul leaves the body.

If we did not have Original Sin, the separation of body from soul would have been very peaceful, and it would not have caused any difficulty. Whereas, because of Original Sin, the separation of body from soul is not as, I guess you could say, easy as it would have been before. One thing to do is always pray for a good and happy death. Always prepare for a well prepared death. You don't want to be like people who say, "I hope I go quick; I hope I go in my sleep." You shouldn't pray that prayer, because you wouldn't want to go in your sleep. You want a chance to prepare to say goodbye to the family, say goodbye to those you love. You want a chance to make your heart and soul ready to meet the Lord. It's much better to have a slower death, where you have a chance to put your spiritual and temporal affairs in order: to say goodbye to those you love, to go to Confession and receive Communion, to be anointed, and to get your soul ready to meet God.

Sometimes, people say, "I just hope that I go quick, like in a car accident, or something like that." That's not what you should pray for. You should pray for an opportunity to prepare your soul for death. It's always better that way. Even though the world thinks, "I'd rather go in my sleep," but that's probably not the best way when you're looking at it from eternity. You want time to prepare your soul for death, and that's always better. Plus, for those who die of cancer, that gives the person taking care of their loved one another opportunity to say goodbye, tell them how much they love the person, to be around the person, and to take care of them during the dying process. Even though it's often a very painful and difficult way to die, they're hidden blessings in that, because you do get a chance to show love to those that you're caring for, to those that are dying. You get a chance to tell the person how much you love them, and that you want to have a chance to say goodbye.

Now we come to the *General Judgment*. This is the judgment which will be passed on everyone immediately after the *General Resurrection*. What happens is that for most of us, when we die, the world will go on; people will continue to be born and continue to die, until the Second Coming of Christ. At the Second Coming of Christ, we will have what's called the General Resurrection. At that moment, everybody will be judged in a general way. All the souls in Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell, and the people still alive on Earth will all experience the General Judgment. This will take place at the end of the world. We don't know when that will be. Even the Lord says, "On that day, no one knows the day or the hour – only the Father in Heaven." In the Acts of the Apostles, Christ said He will come again to judge the living and the dead. It says, "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into Heaven will come in the same way," (namely, on the clouds of Heaven) "as you have seen Him going up to Heaven."

There are certain things that will happen before the end of the world, before the Last Judgment. Some of these things are:

- First of all, the Gospel will have to be preached to all the world. This is found in Matthew, Chapter 24, "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be

preached in the whole world, for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.” (The end of the world will come).

- Second, we know before Christ comes again, before the General Judgment, (before the end of the world, before the Second Coming of Christ - all the same thing), there will be a great apostasy from the Faith. People will lose themselves in evil. We have this found in Luke, when he says, “Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find any Faith on the Earth?” In Luke, Chapter 17, “And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. There will be eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, until the day Noah entered the Ark. The Flood came and destroyed them all. In the same way will it be on the last day when the Son of Man is revealed.”
- Third, before the Second Coming of Christ, the Anti-Christ will appear and work false miracles. This is found in Second Thessalonians. St. Paul says, “There is a man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshiped. He sits in the temple of God and gives himself out as if he were God.” It’s called the Anti-Christ.

We know that when the Lord comes again, these are the signs that will accompany the Lord:

- First of all, the Earth and the heavens will show many signs: stars will fall from the heavens. And in the heavens, the sign of the Son of Man will appear. Most scholars believe it will be the Sign of the Cross, that there will be a Sign of the Cross somewhere in the heavens. This is found in Matthew, Chapter 24, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened; the moon will not give her light; stars will fall from the heavens; and then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven.”
- The second sign is that Jesus Christ, in great power and majesty, will come on the clouds of Heaven accompanied by the Angels. This is found in Matthew, Chapter 24, “For as the lightning comes forth from the east and shines even to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. And they will see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of Heaven with a great power and majesty.”
- We also know, third, that the trumpet will sound and all the dead will rise to life, namely all those who had already died, and all the souls, all the people that died; their bodies will be raised up. They will be reunited to their souls, and come to the General Judgment. Matthew, Chapter 24, says, “He will send forth His Angels with a trumpet sound, a great sound, and they will gather His elect from the four winds.” The Book of Revelation says, “Behold, I come quickly to render to each one according to His works.”

Everybody is judged individually after death, but there’s also a General Judgment. What happens here is that you get to see how your life affected the lives of other people, for good or for bad. It says, “It is fitting that there be a General Judgment, in order that the justice, wisdom, and mercy of God may be

glorified and manifested to everyone. The General Judgment will be a public repetition of the Particular Judgment. It's not going to be a different judgment; it's just a repetition of the previous judgment. It says in the Book of Revelation, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of those things that were written on the scrolls."

Every person and all Angels, good and bad, will be present to hear the judgment on each person. Luke, Chapter 8 says, "For there is nothing hidden that will not be made manifest, and nothing concealed that will not be known." Then it says, "The Lord will place the good on His right and the wicked on His left." This is found in Matthew Chapter 25, "Then Christ will say, 'Come, blessed of My Father. Take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' And to the wicked, He will say, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into everlasting fire.'" In the Book of Revelation, it says, "A great fear in instant realization of the sentence will fall upon the wicked, and they will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.'" That's in Revelation Chapter 6.

Immediately the good will go body and soul into Heaven, and the wicked will fall body and soul into Hell. Matthew Chapter 25 says, "And these will go into everlasting punishment, and the just will go into everlasting life."

Why does God have a General Judgment if He's already had the Individual Judgment? The reason is because man is a social being. Yes, we're individuals, but we're also social beings. We also see how our life affects the life of others. Think of what, let's say, Hitler did, or Mussolini, or Stalin for evil, and what Mother Teresa or Pope John Paul II would do for good. You get to see how the ripples of your life affected other people for good or for bad. It says here, an interesting point, that at the Last Judgment, all of our thoughts, words, deeds, public and secret, will be made known to all Creation. This fact should urge us to avoid everything of which we would then be ashamed would be made public. When we are tempted, let us remember that the hidden things of darkness will be revealed on the Last Day.

The great thing about getting baptized or going to Confession is that these sins will be forgiven, and that they will not be to a person's shame, but rather, they'll be covered by the Blood of Christ, by the mercy of Christ. That's one of the benefits of becoming a Catholic, and being able to go to Confession, is that once the sin is confessed, it's forgiven; it's washed away; it's absolved. Those sins will not be to a person's shame, when they're forgiven; they'll be an example of the mercy and forgiveness of God. What a wonderful thought that is. Keep that in mind.

It won't be until the General Judgment that we have the resurrection of the body. Let us talk for a few moments about the resurrection of the body. This means that

at the end of the world, the bodies of everyone will arise from the Earth and be reunited again to their souls, nevermore to be separated. This is found in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise." The Gospel of John, Chapter 5, says, "For the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, but they who have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment. Again, the Bible is very clear about the General Resurrection, and when we get our bodies back. In John, Chapter 6, Jesus says, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My Blood has life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the Last Day."

It's important that we get our bodies back, because it's through our body that we lived our life here on Earth, either for good or for bad. The body will either be glorified and rewarded in Heaven, or punished in Hell. We're not fully human unless we have both body and soul together. Sometimes people ask, "Will it be the exact same body that I have now?" The answer is yes, it will be the exact same body.

Our bodies will rise again, even though they have been reduced to dust, or ashes. Everything is possible with God. He, who created the Angels and men, and the whole universe out of nothing, will certainly not find any difficulty in gathering together the elements of the body, even if they were scattered throughout the world. Even if somebody was cremated, God will still resurrect their glorified body. Even if somebody died in a fire, or somebody was killed during the dropping of an atomic bomb, God will still resurrect that person's body.

The risen bodies for the souls in Heaven will have four qualities. The first quality of the risen body is called *impassibility*. The risen body will be radiant and beautiful if it is of a holy person, of a person who died in the state of grace. The qualities of the risen body will be the same as the Lord's risen Body after He rose from the Dead.

The great thing about the glorified body for each one of us is that we'll be the perfect height, the perfect weight; we won't need glasses or hearing aids; we'll be perfect in every way. We'll all look like Hollywood stars. We'll all look like models, because every one of us will be perfected. It's still our body, but it'll be absolutely perfect.

St. Thomas Aquinas speculates that everybody will receive their body at the age of 33. That's not a defined teaching of the Church. He just speculates it that Christ died at age 33, which would be the perfect age. He says most people are at their peak physically at that age. There are some exceptions for that. We don't know, that's just a speculation. It's something to look forward to, to have a glorified body.

First, impassibility; number one. By this quality the risen body will no longer be subject to pain, disease, death, hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleep, hot, or cold. Impassibility means the inability to suffer. "Passio" in Latin is to suffer, like the Passion of Christ, the suffering of Christ. Impassibility means we will never suffer; our bodies will never suffer again. We'll never be hungry in Heaven, never be thirsty, never have any diseases, no illnesses, no pain. We'll never be too hot, never be too cold.

The second quality that we'll enjoy is *brightness*, also called *clarity*. Brightness means that the risen body will shine with great radiance and glory. This is found in Matthew Chapter 13, "And the just will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of the Father." Everybody will be radiant and beautiful like Angels. You'll see the person, and they'll be filled with God's light. They'll be radiant like the stars of the heavens. What's interesting is that the holier the person is, the more radiant and beautiful they'll be in Heaven. The Blessed Mother, the Apostles, and the great saints, will be like 10,000 watt bulbs. We might be like 50 watt bulbs, or 100 watt bulbs, and that's still great; we're still lit up. We're still shining forth with God's light. The more you love God in this world, and the more you love your neighbor, and the more good that you do in this world; the greater your beauty will be in Heaven. It's almost like a thermometer. The more you can have the mercury go up for your love of God in this world, the greater your joy, happiness, glory, and beauty will be in the next world.

That's why the Lord is probably saying in the Scripture, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." You think of all these great sports stars who have the most perfect bodies. You have these Hollywood actors and actresses and models. If they go to Hell, then their bodies are going to be deformed and corrupted. But, little Mother Teresa, who is not considered a very attractive person physically, would be the most beautiful person, perhaps, one of the most beautiful souls in Heaven, far more beautiful than any of the great Hollywood stars, models, or sports stars. Keep that in mind, that the holier a person is, the more beautiful, more radiant they'll be in Heaven for all eternity.

The third quality of a glorified body is called *agility*. Agility is the quality which will enable the risen body to pass with the quickness of thought to all parts of the universe. If a person wanted to, let's say, once the General Resurrection takes place, and God purifies the world, and glorifies the world, once we have our glorified bodies, we'll be able to travel to any parts of the universe that we want. Once we have a glorified body we can move with the speed of thought. We'll be like the Angels. We don't become Angels when we die; we become like the Angels. If I was in New York and I wanted to go to L.A., immediately my mind could take me there, and I would be there, because you can move at the speed of thought.

Fourth, we have *spirituality*, also called *subtility*. This quality will enable the risen body to penetrate material substances, even as our Lord, who rose from the

Tomb and entered the Cenacle (the Upper Room) while the doors and windows were locked. The Lord could pass through locked doors. That's what this quality, spirituality or subtility, means that even though the doors would be locked, you're not limited by that. You could just walk through those locked doors. The Lord had these qualities in His glorified Body. He could no longer suffer. His Body was filled with light. He could travel anywhere he wanted. He was in Galilee; then He showed up in Jerusalem; then He was up in Nazareth. He could travel on the way to Emmaus. He could be wherever He wanted to be at the speed of thought, and then He walked through the locked doors.

The only other person who has their body in Heaven right now (Christ has His Body in Heaven right now), is the Blessed Mother. She's the only other one who has a glorified, resurrected body in Heaven right now. Everybody else is going to have to wait until the end of the world, until the Second Coming of Christ, to get their glorified bodies. Right now, if your mother, father, or grandparents died, they're either in Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory. Their bodies are in Quantico cemetery, or Arlington cemetery, or some other cemetery, where their remains are buried. Their body and soul are separated right now, but at the Resurrection of the Dead, the General Judgment, God will resurrect their body. Then, everybody comes together again for the General Judgment. They get their glorified body, and go to Heaven. Or, they get their deformed body and go to Hell. It says, "The bodies of the damned will also rise to share in the eternal punishment of their soul. The risen body of the wicked will be hideous and repulsive, a horror to behold."

I'm not sure which one I'll start with: Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory. Maybe I'll start with Hell, so we won't end there, how's that? I think we'll end with Heaven, and then before that, we'll do Purgatory. We'll start with the souls in Hell.

There is a good article that you should have gotten in your handouts called "Purgatory: Why Believe It?" It explains what we believe about Purgatory.

The topic on *Hell* is not an easy topic; it's a very difficult one. We don't believe in Hell because we like the idea; we believe in Hell because Jesus taught us that Hell exists, that Hell is real. We know that those who go to Hell are those who die in unrepentant mortal sin. In a lot of ways, we can say that it's not God who sends a person there; the person sends themselves there; the person chooses to go there by the kind of life they've led.

Those who go to Hell are deprived of the vision of God. They suffer the pains of Hell, what Christ called the eternal fires of Hell. They suffer these for all eternity. In the New Testament, Christ spoke about the reality of Hell on at least 15 different occasions. He referred to it as:

- The punishment of Hell
- The abode of the wicked
- A place of torment

- Unquenchable fire
- Everlasting fire
- Everlasting punishment
- Outer darkness
- The bottomless pit

All of those are descriptions of Hell that are given right from the Bible.

God does not want or wish to send anyone to Hell. God desires everyone to be saved. That's God's will; He wants everyone to be saved. He gives everybody freewill, so people can choose to turn away from God. He's not going to force their will. God respects the great gift of the free will that He's given us. People can defy God. People can refuse to recognize God's authority. It says, "Not a single sinner is sent to Hell, except by his own fault. No one is sent to Hell unless he has willfully, deliberately, and knowingly refused to obey the commands of God."

Those who go to Hell suffer the *pain of loss* and the *pain of sense*. The first is the pain of loss. The worst pain in Hell is the loss of God, the loss of the vision of God for all eternity. Those who go to Hell feel total despair, and envy of those that are saved; hopelessness, because they know they can never obtain the one thing needed for happiness, they can never see God. Instead of being with God, the Angels, and the saints for all eternity, the sinners in Hell have the demons, the devils, and loathsome criminals for their eternal companions. There is no love in Hell. The damned hate God. They hate each other. They hate themselves.

The second kind of pain is the pain of sense; the pain of the senses. The wicked will suffer from fire, the eternal fires of Hell, and the torments inflicted on all the senses: the sight, the hearing, the taste, the smell, and the touch. After the resurrection of the body, they will receive their physical bodies back in Hell as well.

Christ calls Hell the "unquenchable fire." He talks about Hell as a place where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth; where the worm never dies. The worm being the worm of guilt, or the worm of despair.

Remember that the punishment in Hell is not the same for every person. Some will have far more suffering than others. The Bible says that, "The pains of Hell will last for all eternity."

The fear of Hell should urge us to lead a good life. Nothing on earth, no sin, no pleasure is worth one moment in Hell. This is why Christ says in Matthew, Chapter 18, "If your hand or your foot is an occasion of sin to you, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for thee to enter life maimed or lame than having two hands or two feet or two eyes to be cast into everlasting fire."

Again, we don't believe in Hell because we like the idea; we believe in it because Christ taught it. Christ is God. He can neither deceive nor be deceived. It exists. It's a place. Realize it's not God who sends a person to Hell, it's a person who chooses to go there because of the way they lived their life.

*Purgatory* is from a Latin word which means "a place of purification or cleansing." Even C.S. Lewis, who is not a Catholic, wrote about Purgatory and believed in Purgatory. This is probably the topic that is most unfamiliar for many of you as Christians. All of you believe in Heaven. All of you believe in Hell. For most of you, Purgatory is a "Catholic" thing that you might not be as familiar with.

Purgatory, first of all, is not a second chance. It's not like somebody dies, and they get a second chance in Purgatory; it's not. Purgatory is for the saved. Anybody who goes to Purgatory is on their way to Heaven. When you die, you're either saved or you're damned. The difference, though, is that those who are saved may have to be still purified before they enter Heaven, and that's what Purgatory is. Purgatory is like the vestibule into Heaven, the narthex, the entranceway into Heaven. It's a place of purification, a place of cleansing. The definition is "a place of temporary purgation, temporary cleansing, for those who have died in the state of grace," (so it's for the saved) "but who have not yet fully satisfied God's justice for the punishment due to their sins, or for the wounded soul that has been caused by their sins." Maybe they're still attached to venial sin. Maybe they still have some smaller sins on their soul.

We know that the souls in Purgatory cannot help themselves. They are completely dependent upon our prayers and other good works and Masses that we have said for them. An analogy would be, it's almost like being stuck in traffic. You're sitting there. You can't go. You can't advance because something is stopping you; it's out of your hands. You're stuck. You have cars completely around you. The only thing that's going to make it better is when the traffic ahead, when they finally clear off that accident, and they move ahead. That way, you can move ahead. You're on the road to Heaven. You're saved. You're not going to Hell. You're not going to be lost, but a person might still need some purification.

If there were no Purgatory, it would be useless to pray for the dead; because, if you're in Heaven, you don't need prayers. If you're in Hell, you can't use prayers. Nobody in Hell will ever get out; that's eternal. Every one of us knows innately that we can pray, and should pray for the dead; because our prayers can help a person in case they're in Purgatory.

Purgatory is temporary. It will end at the Second Coming of Christ. At the General Judgment, Purgatory will cease to exist. If there are any souls still left in Purgatory at the Second Coming of Christ, they all enter Heaven at that time. It's temporary, for those who have died with venial sins on their souls, or who have not been cleansed of the residue of their sins. An example would be a man

that commits a cruel murder, which of course is a mortal sin, but let's say he repents. If he did not repent and confess that sin, he would go to Hell if he was not sorry for it. Let's say he did repent and go to Confession. He obtains absolution for his sin; therefore, the guilt of that sin is removed. Still, basic justice requires that he make up for the evil he has done. This atonement takes place in Purgatory, where he makes satisfaction he was unable to make during his lifetime.

Purgatory is a wonderful place. It's a place where, they say, the people that are in Purgatory, their joy, their happiness is far greater than their happiness on Earth, because they are saved, and they know they're saved. Also, it's certainly more painful; it's a cleansing. They say that the pain of Purgatory is greater than any pain we could imagine on Earth; but your joy is greater than any joy you could have on Earth.

An analogy would be a steam bath, or sauna, where let's say, you want to lose some weight. Let's say you had to get ready for a big athletic event or something where you had to lose a certain amount of weight. You go sit in the sauna until some of those pounds come off. You do diet and exercise; and you work to get ready for that event. Purgatory is, in a sense, God's steam bath, God's sauna, where you get rid of the dross of the effects of sin and become purified.

There's an example that the Bible uses about how, "gold that's refined in the fire." When an artist wants to make a beautiful chalice, a beautiful cup, or bowl, he puts the gold in, and the fire burns off the impurities because it burns off the dross. Then you're left with the pure gold. Finally, when the craftsman can see his own image in that gold, then he knows it's ready. That's how it is in Purgatory. It's like we're the gold; we're being purified so that God can see His image in us perfectly. Once Christ sees His image in us, then we're able to enter into Heaven.

Purgatory allows us to have charity for those who died, our loved ones. Maybe somebody wasn't as good to their dad, to their mom, or to their grandparents as they could have been in this world. Purgatory gives us a chance to pray for them. We can still help them. In a sense, it gives us an opportunity to be charitable to those who have died. You can have Masses said for them, and we could remember them in our prayers. We're consoled by the knowledge that we can still help them through our prayers, people who have helped us so much in our life.

The teaching of this state of Purgatory is taught in the Old Testament. It was believed by the Jews in the Old Testament, a place of purification. This is found in Second Maccabees, Chapter 12, where it says in the Bible, "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." It's not talking about mortal sins, because once somebody dies in

unrepentant mortal sin, they cannot be helped. It has to do with the venial sin; they can still be loosed from their venial sins.

In Matthew, Chapter 12, "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him either in this world or in the world to come." That would indicate that some sins can be forgiven in the world to come, namely, venial sins, or small sins.

One of the best passages in the Bible that talks about a need for Purgatory is the Book of Revelation, Chapter 21, Verse 27. It says, "Nothing defiled can enter Heaven." That's basically the teaching. Nothing defiled can enter Heaven. If there was no Purgatory, there would be very few souls in Heaven. Imagine if somebody died with even the slightest stain of sin on their soul, they couldn't get to Heaven. They couldn't enter into the all-holy, all-pure vision of God, if you had the smallest sin on your soul. Would that be fair, for God to allow that person to go to Hell for all eternity for one little imperfection or sin? No, of course not. So God has Purgatory, where God's justice meets His mercy.

That's what Purgatory is. It's like giving our soul a shower. Imagine you were going to a gala, dance, or a ball. You wouldn't go dressed up in jeans; you wouldn't go if you're just working out in the yard, or you're playing football. You wouldn't want to even go to that place if you weren't presentable. What you want to do is go home, take a shower, fix your hair, put on your best clothes, and then you're ready. That's how it will be for the souls in Purgatory. They are being cleansed of their sins, so that they'll be able to enter Heaven. They don't want to enter Heaven until they're ready to meet God. That's what Purgatory is like: giving our soul a shower, making our souls presentable to God.

We don't even want to meet people unless we're presentable. If somebody comes to your door and knocks on your door, if you still have curlers in your hair and you have a towel wrapped around you, you don't want to see the person until you get ready to see the person. Imagine if the President or the Pope walked up to your home and wanted to chat with you, but you had just been working out in the yard and are covered in mud. What do we say, "Give me about ten minutes; let me get ready." If we want to be presentable to the Pope or the President, how much more so do we want our souls presentable to meet God face-to-face? Again, the Bible says, "Nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of Heaven."

The belief in the existence of Purgatory has been a continuous teaching, a solemn teaching of the Catholic Church for 2,000 years. Even in the catacombs, there were prayers written on the walls of the catacombs that said, "Pray for such and such; pray for a particular person who died." The early Christians prayed for those who died. If there are only Heaven and Hell, there's no need to pray for anybody. The Council of Trent says, "There is a Purgatory, and we should pray for the souls there, especially by offering the Holy Mass for them."

The souls in Purgatory do suffer from a great longing to be united to God, and from a pain of purification. The greatest pain in Purgatory is the temporary deprivation of the Beatific Vision, the vision of God. The souls in Purgatory already have knowledge of what they're waiting for, of what they're missing. It's almost like a burning love. If you're so in love with a person, your spouse, and you're dating, or just about to get married, you can't wait to be with that person, to see that person. Let's say you have to go overseas to go fight in the war. There's that burning longing to be with that person. That's what Purgatory is: the fires of Purgatory, or the burning love of God in Purgatory; the refiner's fire is this burning love of God that we have, to want to see God and be with God.

How long do we spend in Purgatory? We don't know. There's no time in Heaven or Hell, because when you're out of this world, you're in eternity; everything is an eternal "now." There's no past, no future. Everything is the eternal present. In Purgatory, there is some duration, some sort of periods of time perhaps. Some people might go to Purgatory for a split second. They just might sail through. Others might need to be there for a much longer duration. We just don't know. It depends on the gravity of their sins, and how much purifying they still need.

The souls in Purgatory are happy; they're not perfectly happy because they don't see God. They're happy because they're certain of their salvation. They love God. They're no longer tempted to commit sin. They can't commit sin. They're not even impatient. They have no worries, no anxieties, no distress, for they're sure they're saved. They're comforted by the prayers of the Angels and the saints, and from the souls on Earth. They all will go to Heaven one day. We do know that they can't do anything for themselves; they're completely dependent on our prayers for them. They can pray for us. Keep that in mind, that the souls in Purgatory can pray for us.

And now, the good news. Purgatory is good news as well. Thank God for Purgatory, because Purgatory is where God's love meets His justice. It's a great place. I'm not saying it's an easy place, but it is a great place.

*Heaven* is everlasting life with God, where we're with God, and we'll be perfectly happy for all eternity. It's perfect, everlasting happiness. Heaven is both a place and a state of existence. The Lord Jesus Christ came down from Heaven. He ascended into Heaven, so it is a state of existence, but it's also a place. We know it's a place, because there are at least two bodies there: Mary's body and Jesus' Body are there. You need a location to have a body. It's not just a state of mind, it's a place. In the Old Testament, Enoch and Elijah, their bodies might be there as well. It's very possible. It's good speculation.

Those who are rewarded in Heaven are those who die in the state of grace, and who have been purified in Purgatory if necessary from all venial sin, and have been cleansed of all temporal punishment due to sin. They see God face-to-

face, and share forever in God's glory and happiness. That's eternal happiness. In Heaven, you get to see all the Angels and the saints. You get to see your parents, grandparents, God-willing, if they're there. The greatest joy of Heaven is the Beatific Vision. Beatific, from the Latin word "beatus," which means "blessed"-the vision that makes you perfectly happy. This is seeing God face-to-face. It completely fills all your joys. You'll be completely possessed by this infinite joy. You will know and love God to your utmost capacity. You'll be known and loved by God in return. All your desires will be completely and supremely satisfied.

In Heaven there will be no sin, no death, no sorrow, no cause for any trouble, no afflictions, nothing to mar the eternal bliss. The Book of Revelation says, Chapter 7, "There shall neither be hunger, nor thirst anymore. Neither shall the sun strike them from any heat, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." In Heaven our companions will be the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Angels, and the saints. We'll be reunited with all those who we've loved on Earth. We shall see them and actually love them with greater intensity. There will be no more separation. Whatever we've desired to learn on Earth, we'll know in Heaven. We'll know all the mysteries of Faith; all the mysteries of science will be revealed to us.

After the bodily resurrection on the Second Coming of Christ, we will have our physical body, our glorified body, to enjoy in Heaven. The Bible says, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the good things God has prepared for those who love Him." You can't even imagine the joy of Heaven.

Paul to the Romans, Chapter 8 says, "The sufferings of this present world are as nothing compared to the glory to be revealed on us." This bliss, this ecstasy will last for all eternity. It will never be taken away from you. The joys of Heaven will be an unending delight; and you'll never have a fear that they'll end, for Heaven is everlasting.

There have been all sorts of analogies to try to help us understand what eternity is like. For example, if a bird were to carry away from the ocean one drop of water every thousand years, and took that drop of water from the Atlantic Ocean and put it into the Pacific Ocean, and then flew back, took a thousand years, picked up another drop, went back, took a thousand years to fly, by the time he has moved all the water from the Atlantic Ocean into the Pacific Ocean, then the first instance of eternity would not have even started. If you subtracted all that amount of time from eternity, it wouldn't even take a dent out of eternity. That would be less than the shortest moment compared to eternity.

The reward and happiness of Heaven will not be the same for all. Some people will be more glorified. They'll be filled with more light and brightness. The rewards will not be the same for everyone. People like Our Lady, the Apostles, the great martyrs, and the saints will have a greater heavenly reward. Each one of us will

get a reward according to the good that we've done during our time on Earth, and also how much we've loved God and our neighbor.

A good analogy of this is if you filled a small glass with water, and then filled a large glass with water; both are full - yet one contains more. The martyrs, the great Doctors of the Church, the great saints will have a much larger capacity. Some of us will get to Heaven with a little thimble full of water. We'll still be happy with our thimble, but some people like the Blessed Mother will have a swimming pool filled with water. Others will have a large barrel filled with happiness. We'll all be perfectly happy. In some ways, let's say, going to a concert, you're in the concert; you're enjoying it, even if you're way up in the 400 section in the bleachers. You're still enjoying it, and you're happy up there; but sitting in the front row, in a sense, there's more enjoyment there. Even though both people are happy because they're in, they got to the concert; but the greater we love God, the more enjoyment we'll have for all eternity. In the same way our bodies, after joining our souls at the Resurrection, will differ in brilliance and beauty, as again, what we've done in our time on Earth.

I'll just end with a couple of little analogies to try to give you some glimpse of the beauty of Heaven. Imagine if you took, the moment you heard the most beautiful music, and it sent you into great tears of emotion because of how beautiful it was. Take that one moment of experiencing that beautiful music and magnify that a thousand times, or ten thousand times, or a million times. That would not even be as beautiful as one note of heavenly music.

Then take the most beautiful thing you've ever seen in this world; the most beautiful sunset: the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the most beautiful vista you've ever seen. Take that moment of beauty and magnify that ten thousand or a million times. That would not even be as beautiful as seeing God face-to-face.

Take a moment of love you've experienced with a person. Take that moment of love and magnify that a million times. You wouldn't even come close to the amount of love that God has for you and that you'll have for God in Heaven.

Think of that moment of joy when you were a little kid, and you woke up and you ran down, and there were all your presents under the Christmas tree. Take that moment and magnify that a million times. It won't even equal the joy of heavenly joy that you can imagine.

Think of when you learned something that was true, that you knew, "Yes, that's true." Take that moment of truth and magnify that. Whatever good you can experience in this world of beauty, emotion, pleasure, joy, or happiness, and take those moments of whether it be music, or the best food you've ever tasted in the world, or being with your best friends, and magnify that a million times. It wouldn't even equal heavenly joy.

Try to meditate upon that this coming week. Think about that. Think about these things, the joy of Heaven, and the joys of eternity. Bishop Sheen says that, "When you get to Heaven, there will be three surprises. The first surprise is that some people that you never expected to see there will be there. Second, some people that you thought were going to be there won't be there. And third, the big surprise is you'll be there." Those are the three surprises of Heaven. You'll be there.

(A question). Paul does talk about being taken up to the Third Level of Heaven, and sometimes the Seventh Heaven; you've heard that expression. It's hard to say what he's referring to there. There are different Choirs of Angels, as you know, Nine Choirs of Angels. It could have something to do with that. Or, it could be different Realms of Purgatory. The Church hasn't said anything about different levels of Heaven. However, some of the saints have probably written about that. I would probably point you to St. Thomas Aquinas and some of the other writers that have written. There are so many wonderful books about Heaven, you could probably find the answer to that in some of those books. Off the top of my head, I just don't know what he means, from let's say, the Third Level of Heaven, or the Seventh Level.