

Topic: Human Destiny—
Last Things & Communion of Saints

IHM

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and
the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

“Bless us, O Lord, and these thy
gifts, which we are about to
receive. From thy bounty, through
Christ our Lord, Amen.”



Our Ultimate Destination: Bound for Glory

- We are human persons destined to share in the eternal glory of the One who created us in perfect goodness and redeemed us in perfect love.
- We are from love, of love, and for love.
- The love that brought us into creation continues to love us and redeem us with love, in order to one day unite fully and completely with us in love.
- We are created & destined for union with God, and even our sin does not separate us from the love with which God pursues us.
- God has placed within us a desire for happiness, and as our ultimate destination, fulfills that desire.

Death & Judgment: Created with a Soul & Bound for Resurrection

- As the culmination of creation, humans are uniquely created with an immortal (forever) soul.
- Our bodies come from our parents, but God alone provides the immortal soul; we are flesh *and* spirit united until our death.
- At our death, our souls are separated from our bodies, but will one day be reunited with a glorified/resurrected body. (Like Jesus)
- At our death, each of us undergoes our own “Particular Judgment,” but at Christ’s Second Coming (Parousia), there will be the Final/Last Judgment.



C.S. Lewis on Purgatory

"Our souls demand Purgatory, don't they? Would it not break the heart if God said to us, 'It is true, my son, that your breath smells and your rags drip with mud and slime, but we are charitable here and no one will upbraid you with these things, nor draw away from you. Enter into the joy'? Should we not reply, 'With submission, sir, and if there is no objection, I'd rather be cleaned first.' 'It may hurt, you know' - 'Even so, sir.'"

*See Letters To Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer,
chapter 20, paragraphs 7-10, pages 108-109*



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Purgatory

- A state of final purification or cleansing, which one may need to enter following death and before entering heaven.
- It is not a “place” of punishment or torture, but a purification and cleansing of our sin to prepare us for the purity and grace of Heaven. Only those redeemed and destined for Heaven go through Purgatory.
- Because we are all one in Christ, we offer prayers not only for the living, but also the dead—including those undergoing purification in Purgatory.

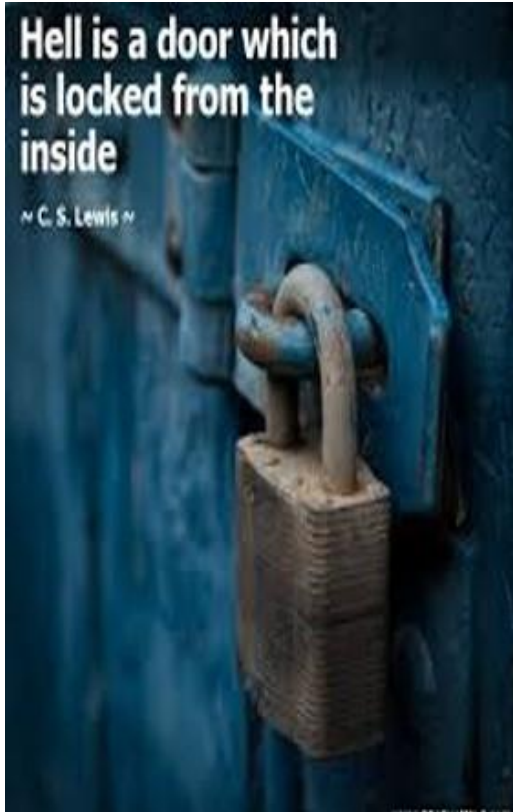
Heaven

- The state of eternal life and union with God.
- Those who die and are perfectly purified enter immediately into Heaven and experience complete happiness and joy as they are united fully to God in the Beatific Vision, seeing God face to face.
- All those united with God in Heaven are called “saints.”
- The “Communion of Saints” is the union of all God’s holy ones on earth, in Purgatory, and in Heaven.



Hell is a door which
is locked from the
inside

~ C. S. Lewis ~



Hell

- “The state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed.”(CCC 1033)
- Hell is a final, complete, knowing and absolute rejection of God and others; God doesn’t “send us there,” we separate ourselves.
- “I willingly believe that the damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside.” –C.S. Lewis
- Hell is a belief in our free will, and God’s respecting of it; God cannot force us to love (or it ceases to be love).
- Though the Church has proclaimed many people to be in Heaven (Saints), it has never proclaimed an individual to be in Hell. We always pray and hope that while Hell is a real possibility, that no one will ever choose it.

Communion of Saints

- All members of Christ's body are considered "saints," and are called to be saints; not just those "Saints" canonized and recognized by the Church as models of holiness and declared to be with God in Heaven.
- We pray *with* the Saints; not *to* them.
- Saints are friends and models of faith and love; not objects of worship (though we properly honor them).
- The "Communion of Saints" recognizes that death has no meaning for those connected to the living God!
- Nov. 1—All Saints (Those in Heaven w/God.)
- Nov. 2—All Souls (Those undergoing Purgatory, bound for Heaven.)



Discussion Questions

- Please share:

- What struck you from today's Mass readings?
- What feelings do “death” and “judgment” bring to mind? In light of God's love and mercy, how might that change the way we view those two realities?
- How might viewing Heaven as a state of being that starts now impact the way we view and live our lives in this moment?
- What has been your experience with the “Communion of Saints?” Who has been a “saint” in your own life, and/or which canonized saints are you drawn to, and why?
- What questions did this topic and readings raise in your heart or mind?

Closing Prayer:

Prayer for Our Dead from the Sacramentary

God, our creator and redeemer,
By your power Christ conquered death
And returned to you in glory.
May all your people
Who have gone before us in faith
Share his victory and enjoy the

Vision of your glory for ever.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son, who lives and reigns with you
And the Holy Spirit, one God,
For ever and ever.
Amen.