

The Afterlife

Overview

It happens – eventually – to each and every one of us. As we go through life there are many optional events that we experience – such as doctor appointments, vacations and the like. However, our appointment with death is not optional – as it may occur at any time during our lives. The consolation that we have is that death is not the end – that there is an afterlife so let's look at it.

What is the afterlife?

Simply stated the afterlife is that existence we experience upon our death. That moment in your time will come when we experience death and pass on to that "other" side. Our bodies are mortal but our soul is immortal and cannot be destroyed.



When your soul leaves your body it heads to heaven, hell or purgatory. While you may question these states – they do indeed exist. Here and now while on earth you can choose your final destiny.

We are all sinners

Every human being is created with the effects of Original Sin – brought about by the deeds of our first parents. This is an inclination to sin and we all suffer – in varying degrees to it. Our sins consist of venial (minor) and mortal (serious) ones. They occur during our daily lives and what we do or say and what we do not do - makes us what we are and what we will be in the afterlife. That is, we make our own heaven or hell here on earth.

Jesus is the way

Everything that Jesus did while here on earth was done for us. He suffered, died, was buried and resurrected – all for us. As the Second Person of the Trinity – Jesus did this out of love of us – God's most precious of creations. The fancy theological expression for what Jesus did is called *Justification*.

The Catechism Para # 1993 states that justification establishes the cooperation between God's grace and each person's free will or freedom.

What is heaven?

Holy Scriptures in the Book of Revelation tries to use metaphors to describe the indescribable. The Catechism Para # 1024 describes heaven as that ultimate end and fulfillment – the state of supreme happiness.

Heaven will not be boring and we do not have to learn how to play the harp!

What is hell?

You will not be "sent" to hell – as this will have been your choice by your earthly actions. Man is called by God to respond to Him freely and we have that right to take or reject His love. We have an entire lifetime to make up our minds whether we "want" heaven or hell. Everything thing that we do or do not do leads us in our ultimate direction.

Purgatory is the good news

During our lives sin has damaged our souls. Even if we have confessed those sins and obtained absolution there may be some stain remaining – due to our sincerity or ability to reconcile the act. Since heaven is perfection and with full communion with God only the perfect may enter. Purgatory is that state that cleanses us of these imperfections.