

Homily: 33rd Sunday: Cycle C: 2022: Mal 3: 19-20; Ps. 98; 2 Thes 3: 7-12; Lk 21: 5-19

“Living each day as if it were our last day on Earth”

1. **If the Lord called us out of this earthly life today, would we be ready?** I think all of us initially shutter at the thought. But if we are honestly striving to grow in holiness, we are on the right path. This involves the normal daily events of the spiritual life: *a life of prayer, acts of penance, embracing our daily Cross with generosity and in a spirit of joy and peace with God’s help, carrying out our daily duties with love and patience, receiving the Sacraments of the Church with faith and devotion, and doing acts of mercy and love for our neighbor with our time, talent, and treasure.* The Catechism reminds us: *Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of Heaven (if we die a saint); or to Heaven through a purification, (i.e., **Purgatory** - if our souls are not perfectly purified of sin in this life or we haven’t made sufficient reparation for sin); or into immediate and everlasting damnation, **Hell** (if there is unrepented mortal sin on our souls at the time of death).* *In the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love or lack thereof* (all in paragraph 1022).
2. **It’s important to keep in mind that this life is a temporary pilgrimage - but with eternal consequences.** If we are not careful we can fall into the trap of the old true saying: *familiarity can breed contempt.* We all can forget our eternal destiny or even stop believing in it – if we are not careful. You saw that this past week as many politicians and many people in our culture literally cheered the “**woman’s right to choose**” leaving out the last word: **Death** – as the devils laugh and mock the spiritually blind humans promoting death rather than life. Satan, who Jesus calls the father of lies from the beginning, wants us all to believe there is nothing more - but that is his ULTIMATE LIE! Regular **Confession** counters this blindness – call or email me if you ever need to go outside the normal times.
3. **Heaven and Hell and Purgatory are real!** First the bad - **Hell**: many modern people do not want to believe Hell is real. But unfortunately it is! In fact if you

study the Gospels, Jesus mentions the reality of Hell more times than He mentions Heaven! Why? Is it because Jesus is “mean” or overly “negative” or wants to “scare” His listeners into being good? No, it is because He wants us to realize that our moral and spiritual choices in this life have eternal consequences. It’s a holy reality check. There are many testimonies throughout history to the reality of Hell: remember *about 15-20% of near death experiences talk about it (that is not fool-proof, but it is interesting); the story of St. Catherine of Siena and the soul in Hell that she takes up to Heaven and the soul begs to go back to Hell; two true stories about souls coming back from Hell to warn the living in the book on Purgatory: **Hungry Souls: Supernatural Visits, Messages, and Warnings from Purgatory**, pp. 24-25 & 26-27.).* If we die in unrepentant mortal sin, we will be separated from God forever. It serves us well to know what mortal sin is and what actions or inactions fall under its banner: which is why I always put out different exam of conscience cards in the Church. But you can also study this topic in more depth in the ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***; see esp. section 3 on morality.

Now onto the Good: **Heaven** on the other hand is best described by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, “*Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it dawned on the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him*” (1 Corth 2:9). Heaven is so awesome it is beyond our imagining. To see God in His entire splendor, in His goodness, love and truth will fill our soul with happiness and joy beyond any earthly happiness by an infinite degree. To see the angels and the saints, and our loved ones and friends who are saved and purified of all their earthly imperfections and sins, in all their beauty and goodness will also be amazing. Finally we will see people for who they really are - rather than the weakness and sin and misunderstanding that clouded over our true nature in this world. Finally as I spoke about in depth last weekend **Purgatory is the place where this process of holiness and learning true love is completed** - if we didn’t allow God to bring this full beauty of who we are without sin into reality on earth.

These things can sometimes seem too good to be true as we go through this earthly life which is often a vale of tears and can spiritually blind us. The narrow way of the Cross leads to joy everlasting! Never forget that truth! God bless you.