



**III. Eschatology**

- A. Eschatology: the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind
- B. Interconnection of Catholic practices and eschatology (e.g., Masses said for the dead, petitions for loved ones)
- C. Our journey towards eternal life starts now—how can we live today in light of what the Church teaches?

**IV. Death and the Hope of Heaven**

- A. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (1.1.1): “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”
- B. We need to re-orient ourselves to the love of God and the hope that this brings
  - 1. Our relationship with God (growing in our interior life with God)
  - 2. Helping others in their relationship with God (the hard work of accompaniment)
- C. Most important work we have is to foster the hope of heaven—living lives now, not with fear, but with hopeful expectation
- D. Death was not the initial plan, but God, in his infinite love and power, has allowed death to be transformed into a pathway to him

**V. “Behold, I Make All Things New”**

- A. We can foster the hope for heaven by recognizing all the moments that are foretastes of heaven
- B. Difficulties and suffering can be transformed by recognizing the temporary nature of this earth and the eternal hope of heaven: “Behold, I make all things new.” (Revelation 21:5)
- C. Uniting our sufferings to the death and Resurrection of Christ; meditate on the Tenth Station, “Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments”



F. Necropolis, i.e. city of the dead

- 1. *Non fui, fui, non sum, non curo* (Latin): ancient epitaph written on Roman graves (“I was not; I was; I am not; I care not”)

G. Christians called burial places “ceteries” (from Greek, *koimeterion*: sleeping place)

H. CCC 1022: “At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love” (St. John of the Cross)

### III. Physical Death vs. Spiritual Death

A. Deuteronomy 30:19: “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live”

B. Luke 15:32: “For this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.”

C. Jesus leads us out of the slavery of sin to the Promised Land (heaven); a new Exodus

D. Watch and be vigilant—don’t fall into the sin of presumption

E. Called to also entrust ourselves to the mercy of God, who desires our salvation

### IV. Sacraments at the End of Life

A. Confession: think in terms of the last things and how we can love God and our neighbor better now

- 1. Sacrament helps us re-orient our lives
- 2. Proverbs 24:16 “For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.”
- 3. Called to also be missionaries of confession to others to guide them to the sacrament

B. Anointing of the sick: A sacrament of healing (CCC 1084)

- 1. Prepares us for the final journey (if we are being called to God in that moment)
- 2. Strengthens our union with Christ so we can offer our suffering more efficaciously





**I. Hell**

- A. Peter Kreeft, *Three Philosophies of Life*: Suffering is not what typifies hell; what typifies hell is vanity
- B. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*: Italian Renaissance poet who wrote about how punishments in hell directly relate to sins committed
- C. Our free will can be used to choose God or to reject God, who respects our freedom

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**II. Hell in Scripture and Tradition**

- A. *Hades* (Greek): shadowy realm where the souls of the dead reside
- B. *Sheol* (Hebrew): place where both righteous and unrighteous souls go to await judgment
- C. *Gehenna* (Greek; *Gehinnom*, Hebrew): Valley of Hinnom in ancient Jerusalem, southwest of the city

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**D. Mark 9:43–47:** “And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell.”

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**E.** Hell can be thought of as the coldest place where we close ourselves off to God’s love

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**F.** No matter what we have done in this life, it is never too late to return to the merciful and loving arms of God

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### III. The Rich Man and Lazarus

**A. Luke 16:19–22:** “There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.”

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**B.** Parable warns of indirect harm done to others through neglect

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**C. Matthew 25:31–46:** The Judgment of the Nations

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**D.** Invitation is for us to examine our priorities now and identify the needs of others that can be met

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### IV. Questions and Answers About Hell

**A.** Because hell is eternal, those in hell cannot benefit from our prayers here on earth

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**B.** We cannot know the eternal destiny of any specific individual

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**C. CCC 391–393:** Church’s teaching on demons/the devil

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**D.** Culpability: personal responsibility for wrongdoing or failure

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**E.** Three Criteria for Mortal Sin

**1.** Grave matter

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**2.** Full knowledge

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**3.** Deliberate consent

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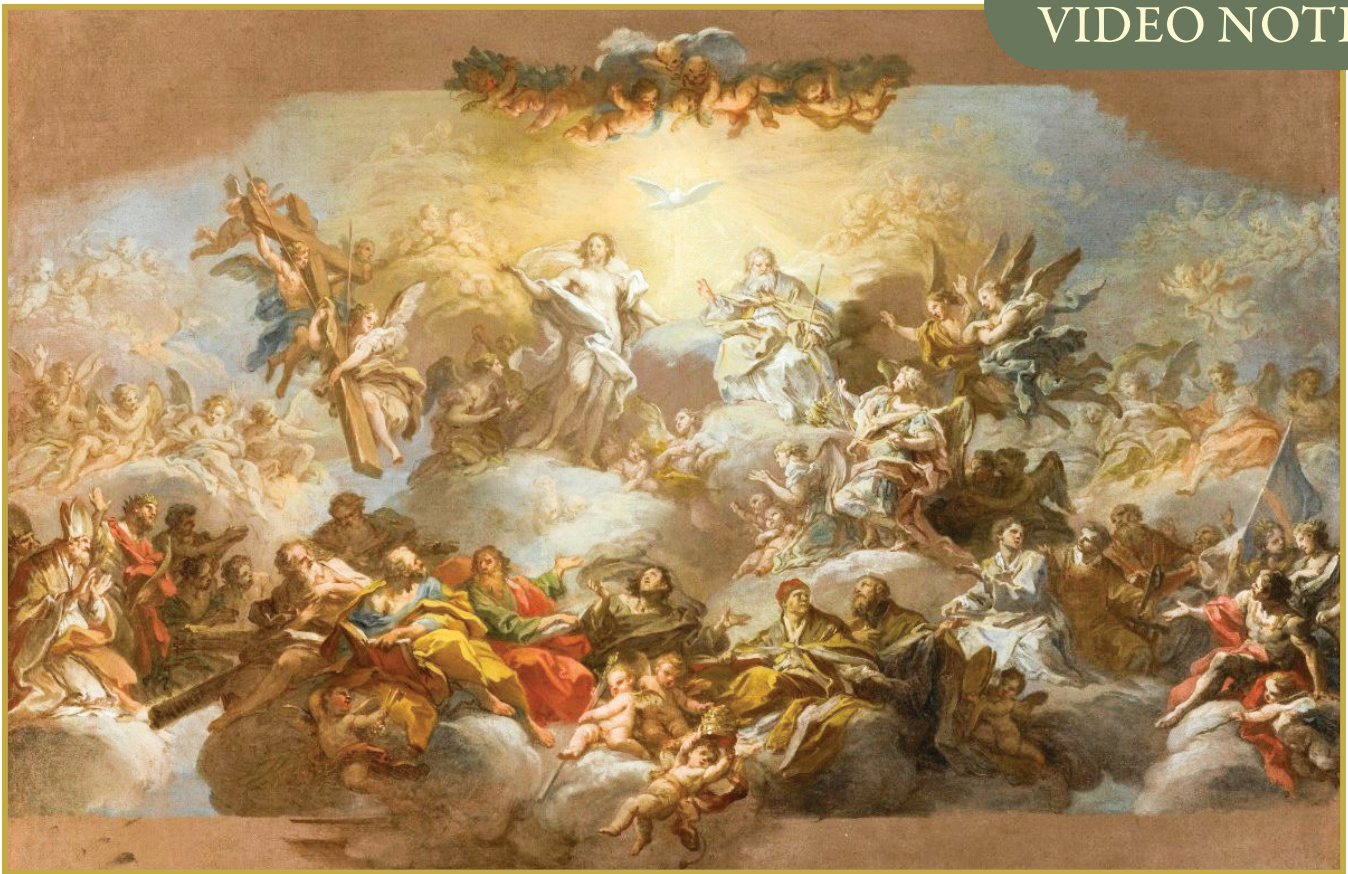
**F. CCC 1037:** “God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a willful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end.”

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**I. Purgatory and Heaven**

- A. Heaven is the fulfillment of our heart's deepest longings; God will make everything new
- B. Our lives are filled with multiple occasions and opportunities to prepare us for heaven
- C. Purgatory can be seen as a school in love, preparing us for heaven

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**II. Purgatory in Scripture and Tradition**

- A. Exodus 3:2: Burning Bush
- B. Exodus 13:21: Pillar of Fire
- C. Acts 2:3: Tongues of Fire
- D. Hebrews 12:29: God is an all-consuming fire
- E. CCC 1031: Fire of purgatory is a purifying fire; God's love burns away anything that keeps us from fully conforming to him

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- F. **Matthew 12:32:** Some will be saved, not now, but in the age to come
- G. **1 Corinthians 3:15:** St. Paul describes someone who will be saved after he passes through fire
- H. St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, Book II Chapter 10: analogy of our souls being transformed like a log that is put into the fire of God's love

### III. The Damages of Sin and the Treasury of Merit

- A. Indulgence (CCC 1471): "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven."
- B. CCC 1472: the eternal and temporal consequences of sin
- C. Treasury of Merit (CCC 1476): "The 'treasury of the Church' is the infinite value, which can never be exhausted, which Christ's merits have before God. They were offered so that the whole of mankind could be set free from sin and attain communion with the Father."
- D. Conditions for obtaining an indulgence
  1. Praying for the intentions of the Holy Father
  2. Receiving sacramental confession
  3. Worthily receiving the Eucharist
  4. Performing the action of the indulgence
  5. Detaching ourselves from mortal and venial sins

### IV. Heaven, Our Final Destination

- A. Theosis: our participation in the divine nature of God
- B. Sanctifying Grace (CCC 2000): Sanctifying grace is a "habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love."
- C. CCC 1024: "This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity—this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed—is called 'heaven.' Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness."





