

Welcome to our November First Saturday, hosted by Holy Family Church, and sponsored by the World Apostolate of Fatima. I always like to thank Deacon Roger for the use of the facilities here, as well as my brother priests ...

Today is All Soul's Day. The Hispanic community is celebrating what they call "The Day of the Dead" ... and in the new Roman Missal, this day is called the "Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed."

It is a bit of a stretch to call today "The Day of the Dead," because it is not the "Commemoration of All the Departed." Rather, it is the commemoration of the "Faithful" departed ... those who are "of the Faith" ... those who are baptized ... whether through water, blood, or desire.

The Church offers a particular indulgence, applicable to the souls in Purgatory, where for the next 8 days, after confession sometime during the week, and a worthy reception of Holy Communion on the particular day - a plenary indulgence may be obtained ... applicable to the souls in Purgatory ... by visiting a church or a cemetery ... and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father. For the rest of the month, one can obtain a partial indulgence for the souls in Purgatory.

I encourage people to pray for those souls in Purgatory who have no one to pray for them. These days, when someone dies, in the popular consciousness ... they are immediately canonized a saint ... or else transformed into an angel ... or a spirit guide ... or some other hop haw. What that popular idea does, however, is leave a whole lotta people without anyone to pray for them. I make a point throughout November to pray for the "unremembered dead," and "those with no one to pray for them." You can gain a lot of friends that way ... friends you won't meet on this side of eternity.

For today's reflection, I would like to focus on the Four Last Things. We don't hear about the Four Last Things too often. They probably wouldn't win a popularity contest.

The Four Last Things are ... of course ... (1) Death, (2) Judgement, (3) Heaven, (4) Hell.

Our culture has two ways of looking at death - both of them unhealthy. One either ignores death all together, acting as though nothing awaits them in the afterlife ... and the other extreme is a morbid fascination with death - often seen in what is called “goth” culture, or the obsession with vampires or serial killers in movies, TV, and books.

A healthy view of death is to know that it is coming ... and we don't know when. But to make sure we are prepared spiritually for our own death. Confession, regular reception of the Sacraments, and an honest assessment of who we are and what we are doing. In other words, lead a good life, and keep out of mortal sin.

The second of the Four Last Things is judgement. And again, our society takes two extreme views of it. Judgement is either “fun” ... as in Judge Judy, Judge Joe Brown, and Judge Wapner on television. Or else judgement is “intolerant” as in the popular mantra “don't judge me!”

Judgement is certain.

The first, when you die, is the Particular Judgement. Often thought of as “having your life flash before your eyes.” In this judgement, we meet our merciful Savior and we see Him as He is ... and ourselves as we truly are. If we rejected Him, then we will meet him as our Judge.

In the Final Judgement, at the End of Time, we will see everyone as they truly are. There will be no question about who is going where ... and why they are going there. The blessed will go on to eternal life in glory, and the condemned will go to eternal punishment.

A common fallacy on judgement is that people often judge themselves on a flexible scale, and judge others on a more rigid scale. This is what Jesus meant when he said one would be judged as they judged others. When individuals are in serious sin, they often think that they get to judge themselves by some lower standard that they get to make up as they go along.

And of course, the radical left, led by Saul Alinsky's "Rules for Radicals" encourages community organizers to judge their opponents harshly by their own standards, and refuse to allow any standards to be applied to themselves.

The right way for one to judge oneself and one's neighbor ... is to judge others mercifully ... and to judge oneself honestly but also always with mercy.

Heaven and Hell, are the last two pieces of the Four Last Things. And it is quite simple.

Heaven is the eternal vision of the Most Holy Trinity. What that means ... we just don't know. At best we can say that it is infinite joy, peace, love ... and everything that is good, true, and beautiful.

Hell is the eternal absence of the Most Holy Trinity. Which means the absence of all that is good, true, and beautiful.

The visionaries of Fatima were shown Hell, and the souls falling into Hell ... and for the rest of their lives desired Heaven in a way beyond most regular people's understanding. While not being granted a vision of heaven, they see Our Blessed Lady in the successive visions ... and Our Lord and the saints in other aspects of the visions ... gave them a foretaste of glory. And they desired to get to Heaven - no matter what it took.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us pray for the graces to have a healthy image of death, judgement, Heaven, and Hell. Let us pray that we might desire Heaven above all things. Using this life for the greater glory of God ... so as to grow daily in holiness and virtue.

May the Triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart be realized in our hearts, in our lives, and in the world.