

Journey OF Faith



What's Life After Death?

"What happens when we die?" Tanya asked. "Do we only get to go to heaven with other Catholics? What about people who don't believe in anything? Or people who do bad things?"

"Those are some serious questions," Mrs. Evans replied. "No one knows exactly what happens when we die. But the Church has information that can help us prepare and teaches us what eternal life will be like."





**What kind of place
do you think heaven is?**

What Happens When Someone Dies?

Death can be sad, even scary, but Jesus helps us face death with courage. Jesus overcame death when he rose from the dead on the first Easter. He wants us to trust in the gift of eternal life we receive at baptism.

After death comes our **particular judgment**. This is when God reviews our life. God judges if we accepted and shared his gifts of love and mercy. We receive God's love by believing in him, loving him, and caring for others.

After our particular judgment there are three things that might happen:

1. We get to go straight to heaven.
2. We go to purgatory to get ready for our entrance into heaven.
3. We reject God and go to hell.

What Is Heaven?

Heaven is total, complete, "ultimate...happiness" (CCC 1024). In heaven, we joyously celebrate being one with the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Mary, all the saints, and all of our family and friends.

Scripture and tradition use all kinds of images to describe heaven:

- a heavenly city (Revelation 21:2)
- a glorious wedding celebration (Matthew 22:1–14)
- a beautiful paradise (Luke 23:43)



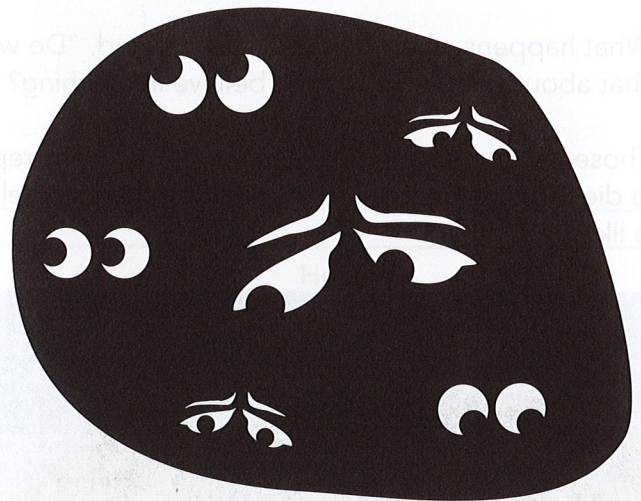
**How have you heard
heaven described?**

Q16

Even these beautiful images only hint at the amazing beauty and remarkable happiness of heaven. The true beauty of heaven is "beyond all understanding" (CCC 1027).

What Is Hell?

Heaven is a place where we are totally surrounded by God's love. **Hell** is a place where God's love is absent. Those who say no to God's love and refuse his mercy end up in hell. God doesn't want anyone to go to hell. But God won't force us to love him if we don't want to. The worst thing about hell is that we're separated from God, who loves us forever.



We can join in the prayer of the Church that "no one should be lost" in hell (CCC 1058).

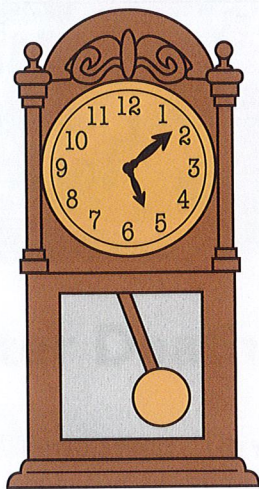


**Why is it bad to be separated
from God's love?**

What Is Purgatory?

Not everyone who dies loving God is ready to go to heaven. Some of us need more time to get ready. **Purgatory** is a place where we're purified, or prepared, for going to heaven. Time in purgatory makes us pure and holy so we can join God and the saints in heaven.

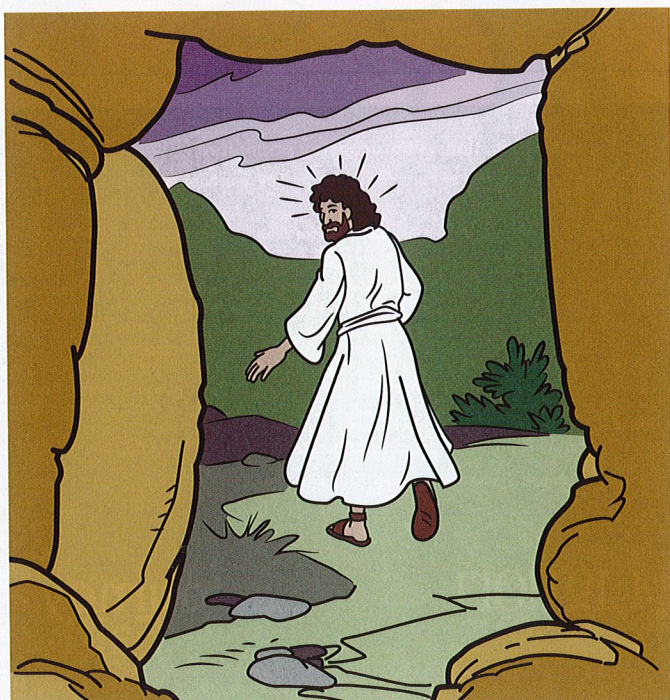
If we follow Jesus on earth, the Holy Spirit is purifying us from sin as we live. When someone dies before the Holy Spirit has finished, that person goes to purgatory. All souls in purgatory eventually go to heaven, but we can help them along the way by praying and sacrificing for them.



A PRAYER

Pray this prayer for someone you know and love who has died:

*Eternal rest grant unto [name], O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon
[him/her].
And may the souls of all the faithful
departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.*



What Happens When Jesus Comes Back?

This world isn't eternal like heaven. Eventually, the whole world will come to an end. When the world ends, Jesus will come again. The first time, Jesus came in humility as a baby. He lived a life of service and died for us on the cross. In his Second Coming, Jesus will come in great glory and power. He will be accompanied by angels and saints. Everyone will recognize Jesus as the Lord and king of the universe. We don't know when Jesus will return, but he promised us he would.

When Jesus comes again, our souls and our bodies will live forever with God. God will transform our physical bodies into beautiful new creations that will never get sick or die. Even the bodies of those who have already died will be resurrected as new.

After the resurrection of the dead comes the **Final Judgment**. Every person who has ever lived will be judged, and we will see the consequences for every good or bad action we've ever done. Jesus will judge every bad deed and reward every good deed.

ACTIVITY

Write down three kind deeds you can do for someone else this week.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Using what you learned today, draw a picture of what you think heaven, purgatory, and hell look like.

Heaven

Purgatory

Hell

In Short

- Being in heaven means being with God.
- Purgatory is a place where we're purified.
- There will be a particular judgment and Final Judgment.



Journey of Faith for Children, Inquiry, Q16 (826351)

The process by which adults are initiated into the Catholic faith throughout the United States is now called the OCIA—the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. "Order" is a clearer translation of the Latin term for the process formerly known as the RCIA—the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. People preparing for baptism and reception into the Church celebrate several rites as part of the order to which those rites belong—an order whose mission is to journey in the faith. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted the name change in 2021, with American dioceses introducing the name thereafter. For more information, please contact your local diocese.

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