



THE “FOUR LAST THINGS” IN THREE DAYS

As the month of November draws near, so too does the opportunity to consider Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Consideration of these “four last things” is the invitation extended to us by the Liturgical Year’s second “triduum”: the *All Hallows’ Triduum*: Halloween, All Saints Day, All Souls Day (The Liturgical Year’s first triduum of course is the Sacred Triduum: Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday). To that end, it is appropriate with *A Message from the Pastor* to remind readers of what we are taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

“Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ. The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in His second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with His works and faith ... (CCC #1021)

“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 — through a purification or immediately — or immediate and everlasting damnation. At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love” (CCC #1022).



With that understanding of death and judgment, we can better prepare not only for death, but also for participation in the *All Hallows’ Triduum* because our participation will be fueled by a desire to be properly disposed for a death and judgment that will lead us not to Hell but to Heaven. Heaven is our goal! And the *All Hallows’ Triduum* should be celebrated in a way that helps us get there.

In the past, the goal of Heaven has motivated boys and girls to become Saints. In the past, parents named their children after Saints. On Halloween in particular, parents would read to their children the lives of the Saints and through that reading teach their children how to become Saints themselves. And if that reading (as it often did) helped to *lay their children down to sleep*, those boys and girls (aided by their Guardian Angels) would rise with a desire to imitate their Saints and to get to Heaven!

Even if in recent times, Halloween has devolved into a time of Satanic-temptation to commercialize, glamourize, and celebrate a spirit of superstitious practices, witchcraft, sorcery, divinations, magic, and the occult” (CCC #2116-2117), these temptations do not have to lead us to sin. Catholic parents, anointed by the Holy Spirit can (AND SHOULD) resist these temptations. They should deny themselves what “all the other parents are doing”, and spend time with their children on Halloween remembering the Saints. And if reading books has (sadly) fallen out of practice in many households, the proper use of the internet can take a family on a Halloween-trip to **www.FORMED.ORG** where our Parish Code (**4J2HGR**) can introduce visitors to the lives of the Saints who can still inspire (and are inspiring) people of all ages to become Saints!

After that encounter with the Saints we should lay ourselves down to sleep on Halloween and rise from our slumber on All Saints Day with prayers seeking their intercession. “Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in Heaven ... do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus ... So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped” (CCC #956).

The arrival of All Souls Day (2 November), the final day of the All Hallows’ Triduum, should again find families united in prayer. This time, not praying to the Saints, but praying for our loved ones who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. “In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honoured with great respect the memory of the dead; and 'because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' she offers her suffrages for them.” Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective (CCC #958).