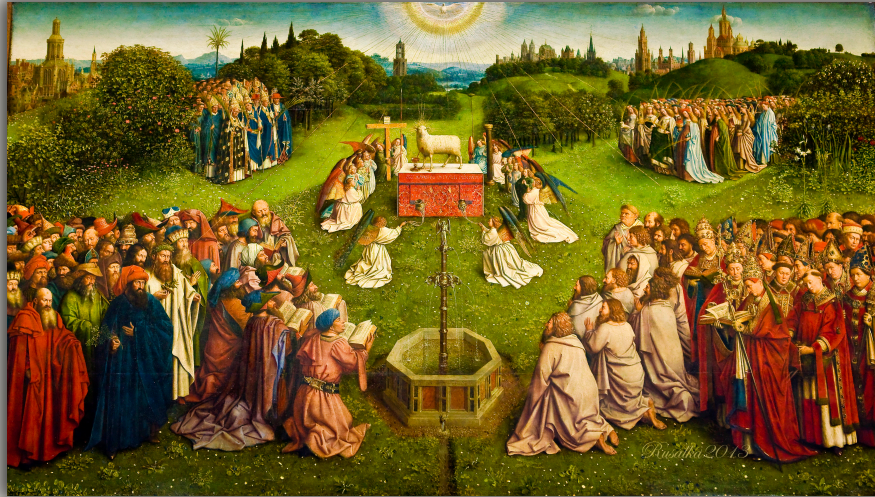


HEAVEN



Ghent Altarpiece
~ Hubert and Jan van Eyck (1432)

1

HEAVEN

1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, **for they "see him as he is," face to face.**"

I JOHN 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

I CORINTHIANS 13:12

At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.

REVELATION 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of life-giving water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its street. On either side of the river grew the tree of life that produces fruit twelve times a year, once each month; the leaves of the trees serve as medicine for the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will look upon his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more, nor will they need light from lamp or sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever and ever.

2

HEAVEN

POPE BENEDICT XII, BENEDICTUS DEUS (1336)

Since the passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, these souls [those in heaven] have seen and see the divine essence with an intuitive vision and even face-to-face, without the mediation of any creature by way of object of vision; rather the divine essence immediately manifests itself to them, plainly, clearly and openly, and in this vision they enjoy the divine essence. Moreover, by this vision and enjoyment the souls of those who have already died are truly blessed and have eternal life and rest.

Such a vision and enjoyment of the divine essence do away with the acts of faith and hope in these souls, inasmuch as faith and hope are properly theological virtues. And after such intuitive and face-to-face vision and enjoyment has or will have begun for these souls, the same vision and enjoyment has continued and will continue without any interruption and without end until the last Judgment and from then on forever.

3

HEAVEN

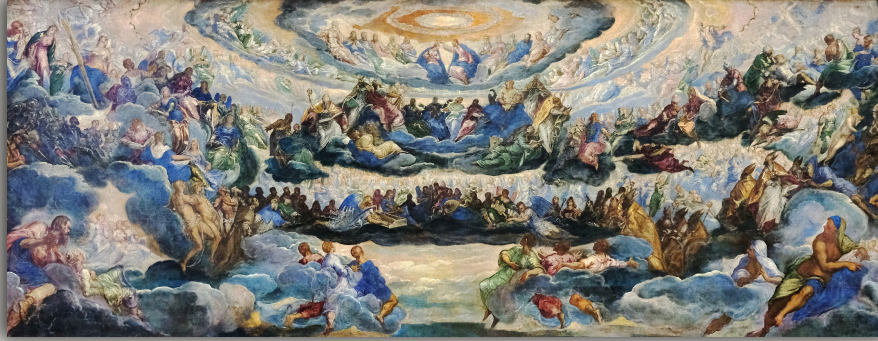


Coronation of the Virgin
~ Diego Velázquez (c. 1635)

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.

4

HEAVEN



The Coronation of the Virgin
~ Tintoretto (1580)

Perfect Life with the Most Holy Trinity

Communion with the Trinity, Mary, the Angels, and the Saints

Full, Complete | Not Equal

5

HEAVEN



Paradiso
~ Gustave Doré (1868)

A learned expositor of Holy Scripture considers it probable that by the wondrous skill and wisdom of the great Creator, these fair palaces and dwellings are of varied form and size, some being lower, others higher, some more richly adorned than others. Towering above all, and surpassing all in grandeur and magnificence, the palace of the great King Jesus Christ stands pre-eminent; and next in splendor and dignity ranks the abode of our Sovereign Lady, the Queen of Heaven. Then come the twelve palaces of the twelve apostles, which are so rich and beautiful that heaven itself marvels at their magnificence. Besides these are mansions and dwellings innumerable which render the heavenly Jerusalem indescribably imposing and attractive.

~ Father Martin von Cochem,
The Four Last Things

6

HEAVEN



Christ the Redeemer in Glory with the Heavenly Host
~ Niccolò Circignani II Pomarancio (1588)

7

HEAVEN

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.**

ULTIMATE END AND FULFILLMENT OF DEEPEST HUMAN LONGINGS

God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life.

STATE OF SUPREME, DEFINITIVE HAPPINESS

I shall know the fullness of joy, when I see your face, O Lord.

– I shall know the fullness of joy, when I see your face, O Lord.

Fulfillment and endless peace in your presence,

– when I see your face, O Lord.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

– I shall know the fullness of joy, when I see your face, O Lord.

~ Responsory: Evening Prayer, Tuesday, Week IV (cf. Psalm 16:11)

8

HEAVEN

The essential object of beatitude is God alone. For the possession of God assures us also the possession of every other good we may desire; moreover, everything else is so immeasurably inferior to God that its possession can only be looked upon as something accidental to beatitude.

The souls in heaven also enjoy many blessings accidental to beatitude.

- No pain or sadness.
- Delight in the company of Christ, the angels, and the saints, and in the reunion with so many who were dear to them on earth.
- After the resurrection, the union of the soul with the glorified body will be a special source of joy for the blessed.
- Pleasure from the contemplation of all those things, both created and possible, which, as we have shown, they see in God, at least indirectly as in the cause.
- Rejoicing over sanctifying grace and the supernatural virtues that adorn their soul; and any sacramental character they may have also adds to their bliss.
- Special joys are granted to the martyrs, doctors, and virgins, a special proof of victories won in time of trial

9

HEAVEN

HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN AFTER THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

Saint Thomas Aquinas writes, "It is manifest that the happiness of the saints will increase in extent after the resurrection, because their happiness will then be not only in the soul but also in the body. Moreover, the soul's happiness also will increase in extent, seeing that the soul will rejoice not only in its own good, but also in that of the body."

10

HEAVEN

1025 To live in heaven is “to be with Christ.” The elect live “in Christ,” but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name.

PHILIPPIANS 1:21-24

For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. ... I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, [for] that is far better. Yet that I remain [in] the flesh is more necessary for your benefit.

JOHN 14:1-3

“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17

For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

SAINT AMBROSE

For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom.

11

HEAVEN

MYSTERY BEYOND WORDS

1027 This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light, peace, wedding feast, wine of the kingdom, the Father’s house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

12

HEAVEN

BEATIFIC VISION

1028 Because of his transcendence, God cannot be seen as he is, unless he himself opens up his mystery to man's immediate contemplation and gives him the capacity for it. The Church calls this contemplation of God in his heavenly glory "the beatific vision."

PRIMARY OBJECT OF THE BEATIFIC VISION

The primary object is God Himself as He is. The blessed see the Divine Essence by direct intuition, and, because of the absolute simplicity of God, they necessarily see all His perfections and all the persons of the Trinity.

SECONDARY OBJECT OF THE BEATIFIC VISION

The secondary object of the beatific vision comprises everything the blessed may have a reasonable interest in knowing. It includes, in the first place, all the mysteries which the soul believed while on earth. Moreover, the blessed see each other and rejoice in the company of those whom death separated from them. The veneration paid them on earth and the prayers addressed to them are also known to the blessed.

13

HEAVEN

EVERLASTING JOY

1029 In the glory of heaven the blessed continue joyfully to fulfill God's will in relation to other men and to all creation. Already they reign with Christ; with him "they shall reign for ever and ever."

SUNDAY NIGHT PRAYER II

They shall see the Lord face to face and bear his name on their foreheads. The night shall be no more. They will need no light from lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever (Revelation 4-5).

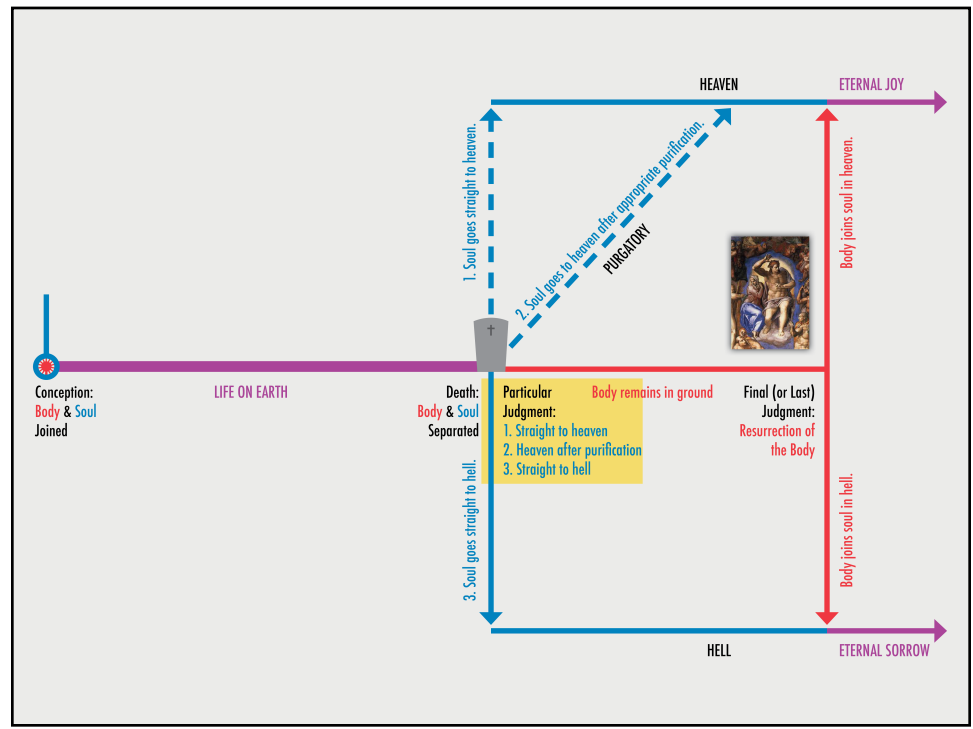
14

PREPARING FOR A HAPPY DEATH



The Death of Saint Joseph
~ Luca Giordano (1650)

15



16

PREPARING FOR A HAPPY DEATH

PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1021 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 affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith.

HEAVEN: FRIENDSHIP (SANCTIFYING GRACE) & PERFECTLY PURIFIED

1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face.

PURGATORY: FRIENDSHIP (SANCTIFYING GRACE) BUT IMPERFECTLY PURIFIED

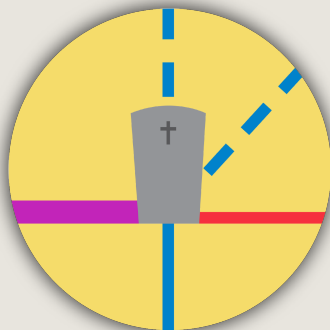
1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

HELL: NOT IN FRIENDSHIP (MORTAL SIN)

1035 Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, "eternal fire." The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.

17

PREPARING FOR A HAPPY DEATH



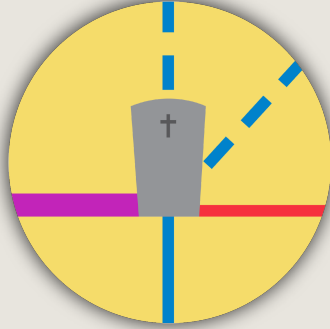
THIS IS THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS!

Those who die in God's friendship (who have sanctifying grace) will enter heaven. Those who die without sanctifying grace will not.

1022 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.

18

PREPARING FOR A HAPPY DEATH



THIS IS THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS

This shows the importance of doing everything we can to open ourselves to sanctifying grace, allowing the Lord to restore us to a state of grace when we have killed the divine life within us (mortal sin).

This is not a matter of “more good than bad” through life, as if we’re stacking weights on a scale. This is a matter of our state when we die.

19

PREPARING FOR A HAPPY DEATH

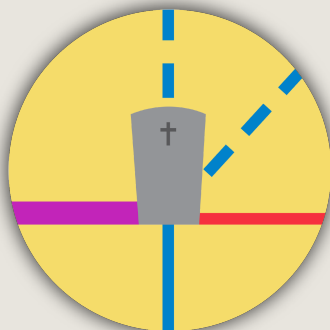


Praised are you, my Lord,
for our sister bodily Death,
from whom no living man can escape.
Woe on those who will die in mortal sin!
Blessed are they who will be found
in your most holy will,
for the second death will not harm them.
~ Saint Francis of Assisi

Saint Francis Contemplating a Skull
~ Francisco de Zurbarán (1635)

20

PREPARING FOR A HAPPY DEATH



**THIS IS THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS!
AND WE DON'T KNOW WHEN IT WILL HAPPEN (FOR THE MOST PART)**

So ... What can we do about it?

1. Keep our death always before us
2. Have frequent recourse to the sacraments
3. Pray for a happy death

21

PREPARING FOR A HAPPY DEATH

KEEP OUR DEATH ALWAYS BEFORE US

Every action of yours, every thought, should be those of one who expects to die before the day is out. Death would have no great terrors for you if you had a quiet conscience. ... Then why not keep clear of sin instead of running away from death? If you aren't fit to face death today, it's very unlikely you will be tomorrow. *~The Imitation of Christ*

HAVE FREQUENT RECOURSE TO THE SACRAMENTS

The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions. *~Catechism, 1131*

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

Almighty and merciful God, you have given to the human race the medicine of salvation and the gift of everlasting life. Look with mercy on us your servants and restore the souls which you have created, that in the hour of their passing they may deserve to be cleansed from all sin and set before you, their Creator, by the hands of your holy Angels.

~ Prayer to the Father for a Happy Death

22

KEEP YOUR DEATH BEFORE YOU



THE ART OF DYING WELL
by Saint Robert Cardinal Bellarmine

EXERCISE ON PREPARATION FOR DEATH
by Saint John Eudes

23

KEEP YOUR DEATH BEFORE YOU

THE ART OF DYING WELL: SAINT ROBERT BELLARMINE

Now every one will admit, that the "Art of dying Well" is the most important of all sciences; at least every one who seriously reflects, how after death we shall have to give an account to God of everything we did, spoke, or thought of, during our whole life, even of every idle word; and that the devil being our accuser, our conscience a witness, and God the Judge, a sentence of happiness or misery everlasting awaits us. We daily see, how when judgment is expected to be given, even on affairs of the slightest consequence, the interested party enjoy no rest, but consult at one time the lawyers, at another the solicitors, now the judges, and then their friends or relations. But in death when a "Cause" is pending before the Supreme Judge, connected with life or death eternal, often is the sinner compelled, when unprepared, oppressed by disease, and scarcely possessed of reason, to give an account of those things on which when in health, he had perhaps never once reflected. This is the reason why miserable mortals rush in crowds to hell; and as Saint Peter saith, "If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18)

24

KEEP YOUR DEATH BEFORE YOU

THE ART OF DYING WELL: SAINT ROBERT BELLARMINÉ

RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN THE ART OF DYING WELL

PRECEPTS / MEDITATIONS ON VIRTUES & SACRAMENTS

1. He Who Desires To Die Well, Must Live Well
2. To Die To the World
3. The Three Theological Virtues (faith, hope, love)
4. Three Evangelical Counsels (poverty, chastity, obedience)
5. The Deceitful Error of the Rich of This World Is Exposed (relationship with money)
6. Three Moral Virtues Are Explained (piety, justice, sobriety)
7. Prayer
8. Fasting
9. Almsgiving
10. Baptism
11. Confirmation
12. The Holy Eucharist
13. The Sacrament of Penance
14. The Sacrament of Holy Orders
15. Matrimony
16. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction

25

KEEP YOUR DEATH BEFORE YOU

EXERCISE ON PREPARATION FOR DEATH: SAINT JOHN EUDES

Death is usually preceded by such violent throes or intense weakness that the dying person is unable to direct his thoughts to God and cannot pay Him the homage owed to His divine majesty at that crucial time. Therefore, it is extremely advisable to anticipate this disability by setting aside a few days each year to carry out now what one ought rightfully to render to God at the hour of death. Saint Gertrude tells us that when she had once performed this exercise, Our Lord revealed that it was most pleasing to Him, and He promised to set aside her preparation and keep it for the day of her death. You should be confident that in His goodness He will give this grace to you also, if you make use of the same exercise. For this purpose it would be well to devote ten days to a series of ten meditations and spiritual exercises in preparation for a Christian and holy death. I now present them in due order, showing how they are to be carried out.

26

KEEP YOUR DEATH BEFORE YOU

EXERCISE ON PREPRATION FOR DEATH: SAINT JOHN EUDES MEDITATIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT EACH YEAR

First Day: Meditation on Submission to the Divine Will

Second Day: Thanksgiving for all the Benefits of Your Whole Life

Third Day: Confession and Satisfaction

Fourth Day: Holy Communion

Fifth Day: Extreme Unction

Sixth Day: Christ's Last Will And Testament, and the Will You Should Make In Its Honor

Seventh Day: The Agony And Moment of Death

Eighth Day: The Particular Judgment

Ninth Day: Death And Burial

Tenth Day: Entrance of the Soul Into Heaven And Undying Life

27

KEEP YOUR DEATH BEFORE YOU

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Plan your funeral

Buy your cemetery plots

Go to funerals, even if you don't know the deceased

Daily Examination of Conscience / Examen Prayer with Gratitude & Repentance
"Not ready to die, not ready for sleep!"

28

SACRAMENTAL HELP

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (CONFESSION, RECONCILIATION)

Recipient: Faithful with contrition for sin and firm purpose of amendment

Effects: Reconciliation with God (grace and friendship), peace, reconciliation with the Church, readmission to the sacramental life

Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion.

~ *Lumen Gentium*, 11

29

SACRAMENTAL HELP

HOLY COMMUNION

Recipient: Faithful free from grave sin who has observed the fast and who possesses a right disposition

Effects: Augments union with Christ, increases and renews the life of grace received at baptism, separates us from sin, strengthens our charity, preserves us from future mortal sins, builds up the Church, commits us to the poor

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

~ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47

30

SACRAMENTAL HELP

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Recipient: Faithful in danger of death from sickness or old age who is disposed to receive the sacrament; repeatable

Effects: Grace of strengthening, peace, and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age; closer union to Christ's Passion; sanctification of the Church; preparation for the journey through death; and forgiveness of sin (if unable to confess)

By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them. And indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the Passion and death of Christ.

~ *Lumen Gentium*, 11

31

SACRAMENTAL HELP

HOLY COMMUNION AS VIATICUM

Recipient: The dying Christian; all baptized Christians who are able to receive

Effects: "May the Lord Jesus Christ protect you and lead you to eternal life."

Via tecum (with you on the way)

Viaticum (provision for a journey)

The celebration of the eucharist as viaticum, food for the passage through death to eternal life, is the sacrament proper to the dying Christian. It is the completion and crown of the Christian life on this earth, signifying that the Christian follows the Lord to eternal glory and the banquet of the heavenly kingdom. The sacrament of anointing of the sick should be celebrated at the beginning of a serious illness. Viaticum, celebrated when death is close, will then be better understood as the last sacrament of Christian life.

~ *Pastoral Care for the Sick*, 175

32

SACRAMENTAL HELP

THE APOSTOLIC PARDON

Recipient: The dying Christian

Effects: Release of the temporal punishment due to sin

Through the holy mysteries of our redemption,
may almighty God release you from all punishments
in this life and in the life to come.

May he open to you the gates of paradise
and welcome you to everlasting joy.

Or:

By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me,
I grant you a full pardon and the remission of all your sins
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit.

33

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

PETITIONS IN THESE PRAYERS

- No sudden death
- No death without Sacraments
- Heavenly intercession
- Perseverance
- True contrition
- Forgiveness
- Responsiveness to his call
- Deliverance from the enemy
- Protection from despair
- Steadfastness in faith
- Reparation while living



The Descent from the Cross, Peter Paul Rubens

Prayers for a Happy Death

34

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

PRAYER OF CARDINAL NEWMAN

Oh, my Lord and Savior,
 support me in that hour
 in the strong arms of your Sacraments,
 and by the fresh fragrance of your consolations.
 Let the absolving words be said over me,
 and the holy oil sign and seal me,
 and your own Body be my food,
 and your Blood my sprinkling;
 and let my sweet Mother, Mary, breathe on me,
 and my Angel whisper peace to me,
 and my glorious Saints (NN.) smile upon me;
 that in them all, and through them all,
 I may receive the gift of perseverance,
 and die, as I desire to live,
 in your faith, in your Church, in your service,
 and in your love.
 Amen.

35

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

ANOTHER PRAYER TO THE FATHER

O God, great and omnipotent judge of the living and the dead,
 we are to appear before you after this short life
 to render an account of our works.
 Give us the grace to prepare for our last hour
 by a devout and holy life,
 and protect us against a sudden and unprovided death.
 Let us remember our frailty and mortality,
 that we may always live in the ways of your commandments.
 Teach us to be watchful in prayer,
 that when your summons come
 for our departure from this world,
 we may go forth to meet you,
 experience a merciful judgment,
 and rejoice in everlasting happiness.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

36

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

PRAYER TO CHRIST FOR MERCY

O my Lord and Savior,
 be merciful to me
 now that my life is approaching its end,
 and the evening awaits me.
 My sins are so many.
 Heal me while I am still on earth,
 and I shall truly be healthy.
 In your mercy, move me to repent
 so that I shall not be ashamed
 when I encounter you in heaven.
 Amen.

37

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

PRAYER TO THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST

O Jesus, while I remember your dying breath,
 I beg you to receive mine.
 Since I do not know
 whether I shall have command of my senses
 when I depart from this world,
 I offer you now my last sufferings
 and all the sorrows of my passing.
 I give my soul into your hands
 for you are the Lover of Humanity
 my Lord and my Savior.
 Grant that the last beat of my heart
 may be an act of perfect love for you.
 Amen.

38

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

ANOTHER PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

O holy Saint Joseph,
 who died in the arms of the Son of God
 and in the presence of his holy Mother,
 I beseech you at my last hour
 to stand by me, with your immaculate Spouse,
 that assisted by both your prayers,
 I may repent of my sins,
 and breathe my last breath
 in an act of perfect love and confidence in my Savior,
 repeating his blessed Name, exalted above every name,
 and proclaiming joyfully
 "Lord, into your hands, I commend my spirit."
 Amen.

39

PRAY FOR A HAPPY DEATH

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

O Mary, conceived without sin,
 pray for us who have recourse to you.
 O refuge of sinners, Mother of the dying,
 do not abandon the hour of our death;
 obtain for us the grace
 of perfect sorrow, sincere contrition,
 the pardon and remission of our sins,
 a worthy receiving of the holy Viaticum,
 and the comfort of the Sacrament of Anointing,
 in order that we may appear with greater security
 before the throne of the just but merciful Judge,
 our God and our Redeemer.
 Amen.

40