

DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?

We continue our new message series (preaching series) called **INSOMNIA - THE LIES THAT KEEP YOU UP AT NIGHT**. Last weekend we looked at the fear of abandonment and rejection. This weekend we look at the fear of death.

WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH?

One of the greatest fears we have in our lives is that of the end. We know that it is coming, and we know that sooner or later we will face that reality and yet it is something that for many is left to the last moments possible. We may be under the illusion that if we don't prepare and don't talk about it that it won't happen to us too soon.

Unfortunately we have all experienced the reality of death with the passing of a loved one. We know that our lives are limited here on earth but maybe we don't think enough about what comes after death?

Our faith reminds us that the heaven awaits all those who embrace a life of faith. Jesus died and rose again so that we may never die but live forever. We are constantly reminded through the Mass of our call to eternal life, yet I think this is still something that is unknown to us and that we constantly try to avoid.

The saints are wonderful reminders of our journey to the kingdom. They sacrificed their lives to Christ for others knowing that there is something greater than they can see in heaven. They are the tangible witnesses of a life geared for something so much greater that lasts forever — heaven!!!

WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE?

This is a question that I asked some of the school children at a couple of the opening school Masses back in September. Fr. Pedro and I are preaching a message series throughout the year with our 3 schools focussed on the journey to heaven. We are on a hiking trip, a pilgrimage to our true and eternal home. Over the months we are sharing different aspects of faith that will help us on the journey.



I was totally amazed at the responses the children had about heaven. They described heaven as a peaceful, kind, loving place that includes angels, saints, our loved ones and lots of white clouds!! They mentioned that everyone would be happy and that there would not be any school. These seem to be common concepts that even adults would have. But it didn't stop there. It went deeper and a few of their responses made me say "WOW".

One child said that heaven would be an adventure where we will be able to explore and discover new things. Then I heard likely the best description of heaven— a young girl, probably in grade 1 said, "heaven is like a waterslide." I was speechless!!! What a perfect description of heaven. A waterslide is fun, adventurous, overwhelming, breathtaking, fearful (for me at least), but ends with wonderful laughter and joy when flying into the pool at the end of the slide. This description of heaven is definitely a place where we want to go — a place that we long for and not avoid.

This is where we want to be!!

HOW DO WE PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY HOME?

(1) DEEPEEN YOUR FAITH

There is no question that we need to deepen and practice our faith so that we discover that death is a doorway or threshold to a life of wonder, adventure and pure joy!! Our daily prayer, reception of the sacraments and striving to be the best version of ourselves helps us maintain our sights on the kingdom.

(2) FUNERAL PREPARATION

If you have not prepared we at the parish can help you. Even though it might be something that will take place a long time from now, it is something that you need to do. We have had a number of people book a time with Mary Catherine to make the final funeral celebrations by picking the readings and music. Not only does this make it easier for loved ones when the inevitable happens, it helps us spiritually focus on the gift of heaven that awaits us. Call us at the office anytime and we can walk you through the steps.

(3) SUPPORT THE GRIEVING

One of the ways we can go beyond ourselves and to be a people of hope is to share the gift of our faith and the promise of heaven with others. It is so important to take the time to connect with those who have lost a loved one and are grieving. A visit, a call and a cup of coffee are simple examples of supporting those who are grieving. Take the time to visit at the funeral home or attend the funeral celebrations.

CHRIST IS RISEN

(excerpts from a song by Matt Maher)

*Let no one caught in sin remain
Inside the lie of inward shame
We fix our eyes
upon the cross
And run to Him
who showed great
love*



*And bled for us
Freely You've bled
for us*

*Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling over death by death
Come awake, come awake
Come and rise up from the grave*

*Christ is risen from the dead
We are one with Him again
Come awake, come awake
Come and rise up from the grave*

*Beneath the weight of all our sin
You bowed to none but Heaven's will
No scheme of Hell, no scoffer's crown
No burden great can hold You down*

*In strength You reign
Forever let Your church proclaim*

*O death, where is your sting?
O hell, where is your victory?
O church, come stand in the light
The glory of God has defeated the night
Sing it, o death, where is your sting?*

*O hell, where is your victory?
O church, come stand in the light
Our God is not dead, He's alive,
He's alive*