

We believe in everlasting life

Most people do not like to think about death, seeing in it an end rather than a beginning. Of course, death is the end of our physical life on earth; however, our faith tells us that it is also the start of a new life.

When we die, our souls are separated from our bodies, but at our resurrection on the last day God will give incorruptible life to our bodies and reunite them with our soul. At the time of our death, we undergo a personal, or particular, judgment in which we receive either the eternal reward of Heaven or the eternal punishment of Hell. Heaven and Hell are a state either of eternal happiness with God or eternal separation from him. In Heaven, we will be in a perfect relationship with the Blessed Trinity, and will share in the joy of this relationship with the Virgin Mary, and all the angels and saints. Angels are spiritual creatures who exist to serve and glorify God and to cooperate in his plan for our salvation.

Through his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ made it possible for us to share in the reward of Heaven. Of course, most people do not die in a state of perfect holiness. Therefore, before entering Heaven, souls often must undergo a period of purification to achieve the holiness necessary for eternal joy with God in Heaven. This purification is called Purgatory.

Those who fail to love God and freely choose to commit serious sin against him or against their neighbor or themselves are subject to eternal death, or Hell. These souls must endure unending separation from God. Whereas each person faces a particular judgment immediately after death, at the end of time, when Christ returns in glory, a Last Judgment will occur in which all will be raised from the dead and will appear

before Christ, to receive their eternal reward or eternal punishment. At that time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness, and the just will reign with Christ forever, glorified in body and soul. Faith is essential for salvation; we cannot achieve eternal happiness with God if we do not have faith in his promises and freely choose to love him. The Church, as the Communion of Saints, seeks the salvation of all people, and entrusts the dead to God's mercy and prays for their eternal reward in Heaven. Although the Church prays for the souls in Purgatory at every Mass, we remember them in a special way on the second day of November, the Feast of All Souls' Day.