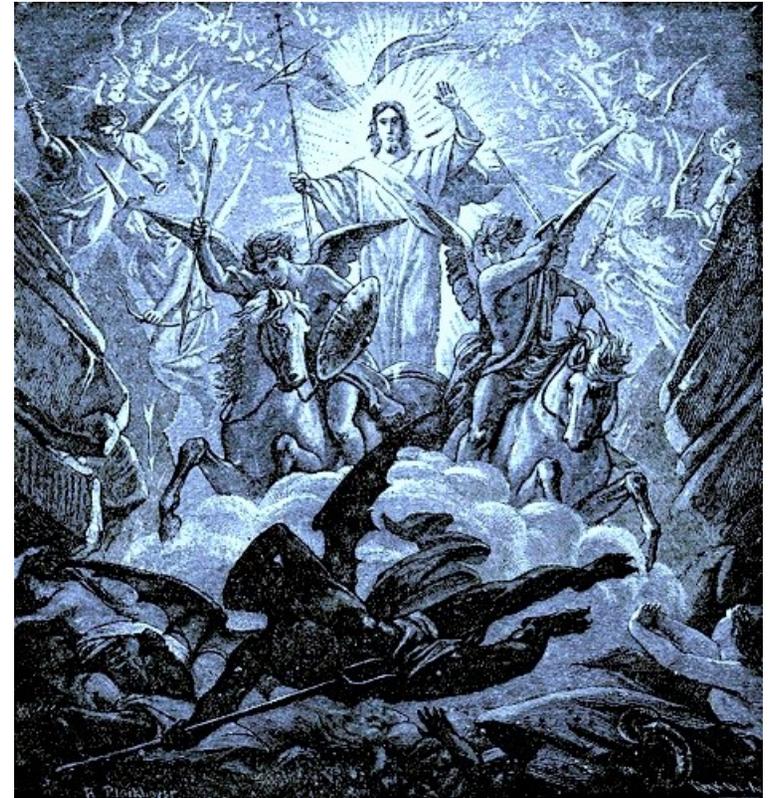


- [31] cf. Mt. 13:42
- [32] CCC 1037
- [33] 2Pet. 3:9
- [34] Saint Joseph's Baltimore Catechism, pg. 91, 185.
- [35] Romans 8:27
- [36] Fr. Barron, Catholicism, pg. 257
- [37] Goffines, The Church's Year
- [38] cf. Eph. 2:8-10
- [39] CCC 1023
- [40] 1Pt. 5:8-10
- [41] Goffines, The Church's Year, pg. 441

Link to Liturgy



26th Sunday of Ordinary Time Not Losing Our Reward

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Lessons and Discussions

Page 5 – Religion: not just for Religious

“For whoever is not against us is for us”

Page 9 – Save our self, save others

“Whoever causes one of these little ones...to sin...it would be better...if...he were thrown into the sea”

Page 11 – Hell

“the fire is not quenched”

Introit Entrance Antiphon – Daily Roman Missal

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Omnia quae fecisti Dan 3: 31, 29, 30, 43, 42

111

ALL that you have inflicted upon us, O Lord, *
has been dealt out in true justice, for we have sinned
against you and we have failed to o-bey your command-
ments; but give glory to your name and deal with us
according to the abundance of your mer-cy.

Alternate options:

Limitless (Remnant)

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

O God, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy, bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us and make those hastening to attain your promises heirs to the treasures of heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

tion of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

English Translation

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of they womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

“The End” Notes

- [1] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy Vol. IV, pg. 80
- [2] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 5, 20.1 pg. 113
- [3] cf. Luke 10:1-12
- [4] cf. Acts 6:6
- [5] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Christifideles laici, 30 December 1988, 30
- [6] John 14:6
- [7] Genesis 3:1
- [8] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 5, 20.1 pg. 112
- [9] 2 Thessalonians 2:15
- [10] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 5, 20.1 pg. 112
- [11] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 5, 20.2 pg. 114
- [12] J. Escriva, The Way, 814
- [13] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 5, 20.2 pg. 113
- [14] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy Vol. IV, pg. 81
- [15] St. Pius X, Catechism of Christian Doctrine, 417
- [16] St. Mark's Gospel Navaree Bible Commentary pg. 133
- [17] Genesis 4:9
- [18] cf. St. Augustine, De consensus Evangelistarum, IV, 16; St. John Chrysostom, Hom. On St. Matthew, 60
- [19] St. Mark's Gospel Navaree Bible Commentary pg. 134
- [20] Hardon, The Catholic Catechism pg. 268
- [21] The Navarre Bible St. Mark Commentary
- [22] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 246
- [23] Goffines, The Church's Year, pg. 440
- [24] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 1056
- [25] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 1035
- [26] St. Alphonsus Liguori, What Will Hell Be Like?
- [27] The New Saint Joseph's Baltimore Catechism, pg. 45, 48.
- [28] Hardon, The Catholic Catechism pg. 268
- [29] CCC 1033
- [30] CCC 1035

devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace." We pray this prayer after every decade when praying the rosary.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Marian Antiphon – Salve Regina – Simple Tone

IV. ANTIPHON SALVE REGINA, SIMPLE TONE
From First Vespers of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity to None on Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent.

Ant.
5.
S

Alve, Re-gí-na, * ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ : Vi- ta, dulcé-do, et spes nostra,
salve. Ad te clamámus, éxsu-les, fi-li-i Hevæ Ad te suspi-rámus,
gemén-tes et flentes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advocá-ta
nostra, il-los tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ócu-los ad nos convér-te. Et Je-sum,
bene-díctum fructum ventris tu-i, nobis post hoc exsí-li-um osténde.
O clemens : O pi-a : O dulcis * Virgo Ma-rí-a.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi

Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habita-

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Gospel Reading – Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
- Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time, John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 25th Sunday of OT

From the prologue of the commentary on Isaiah by Saint Jerome, priest

I interpret as I should, following the command of Christ: *Search the Scriptures, and Seek and you shall find.* Christ will not say to me what he said to the Jews: *You erred, not knowing the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God.* For if, as Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and

wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.

Therefore, I will imitate the head of a household who brings out of his storehouse things both new and old, and says to his spouse in the Song of Songs: *I have kept for you things new and old, my beloved.* In this way permit me to explain Isaiah, showing that he was not only a prophet, but an evangelist and an apostle as well. For he says about himself and the other evangelists: *How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news, of those who announce peace.* And God speaks to him as if he were an apostle: *Whom shall I send, who will go to my people?* And he answers: *Here I am; send me.*

No one should think that I mean to explain the entire subject matter of this great book of Scripture in one brief sermon, since it contains all the mysteries of the Lord. It prophesies that Emmanuel is to be born of a virgin and accomplish marvelous works and signs. It predicts his death, burial and resurrection from the dead as the Savior of all men. I need say nothing about the natural sciences, ethics and logic. Whatever is proper to holy Scripture, whatever can be expressed in human language and understood by the human mind, is contained in the book of Isaiah. Of these mysteries the author himself testifies when he writes: *You shall be given a vision of all things, like words in a sealed scroll. When they give the writings to a wise man, they will say: Read this. And he will reply: I cannot, for it is sealed. And when the scroll is given to an uneducated man and he is told: Read this, he will reply: I do not know how to read.*

Should this argument appear weak to anyone, let him listen to the Apostle: *Let two or three prophets speak, and let others interpret; if, however, a revelation should come to one of those who are seated there, let the first one be quiet.* How can they be silent, since it depends on the Spirit who speaks through his prophets whether they remain silent or speak? If they understood what they were saying, all things would be full of wisdom and knowledge. But it was not the air vibrating with the human voice that reached their ears, but rather it was God speaking within the soul of the prophets, just as another prophet says: *It is an angel who spoke in me; and again, Crying out in our hearts, Abba, Father, and I shall listen to what the Lord God says within me.*

and His word remains for all eternity. Endeavor rather by a pious life to escape hell, descend there in spirit frequently according to the advice of a saint, contemplate the torments of the damned, and let this reflection urge you to imitate Christ, who has promised the joys of heaven to all His faithful followers.”[41]

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – St. Michael the Archangel Prayer & Our Lady of Fatima Prayer

On Sunday April 24th 1994, Pope John Paul II recommended this prayer be used by all Catholics as a prayer for the Church when he said: "May prayer strengthen us for the spiritual battle we are told about in the Letter to the Ephesians: 'Draw strength from the Lord and from His mighty power' (Ephesians 6:10). The Book of Revelation refers to this same battle, recalling before our eyes the image of St. Michael the Archangel (Revelation 12:7). Pope Leo XIII certainly had a very vivid recollection of this scene when, at the end of the last century, he introduced a special prayer to St. Michael throughout the Church. Although this prayer is no longer recited at the end of Mass, I ask everyone not to forget it and to recite it to obtain help in the battle against forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world."

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
cast into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

In 1917, Our Lady appeared to three young children and revealed to them certain apparitions. She also showed them a glimpse of hell. Our Lady said, "You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world

If God were so good and loving why would He create a place like Hell? This question is thrown in every time the conversation of hell is brought up. While it is absolutely true that God loves and is all-merciful, it is not God who sends souls to Hell, but rather the soul itself due to their sinful ways. “But those who speak thus, forget that God is just, that His love and mercy are indeed always ready to forgive the contrite and penitent, but that His justice must also be satisfied, when the sinner continually rejects the merciful love of God they forget, that every grievous sin which man commits voluntarily and knowingly is an infinite, eternal insult offered to God which can only be atoned for by an eternal punishment. For the perverted and malicious will of a man, who dies in mortal sin, remains perverted and malicious forever, therefore he must also be punished eternally.”[37]

What helps us avoid Hell? We must have Fear of the Lord, a gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes us desire God’s grace. We should seek conversion wherever there is sin in our lives. We must stay vigilant to remain in the life of Christ. St. Paul said we are saved by grace, through faith, and acted in charity[38]. It is because the grace of God and Jesus Christ we have Heaven open for all of us. It is in our faith in Jesus that we are brought into His Bride, the Church, and through the Church we are infused with His graces in the Sacraments that transform and perfects our being.

We should all strive to live and to die in God’s grace and friendship because; “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.”[39] All this being said we must remain “sober and alert. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings. The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ [Jesus] will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little.”[40]

We must guard our soul against the danger of hell. There are many who will attempt to deceive us and even those who will attempt to deceive saying there is no hell. “O my dear Christian, do not listen to such deceivers; for just on account of their sinful life, they fear hell and therefore they endeavor to free themselves from this fear by denying the existence of hell; but they cannot succeed; for Jesus, the Truth, has told us that there is a hell,

Responsory – Office of Readings

We are warriors now, fighting on the battlefield of faith, and God sees all we do; the angels watch and so does Christ.
– What honor and glory and joy, to do battle in the presence of God, and to have Christ approve our victory.

Let us arm ourselves in full strength and prepare ourselves for the ultimate struggle with blameless hearts, true faith and unyielding courage.
– What honor and glory and joy, to do battle in the presence of God, and to have Christ approve our victory.

Religion: Not just for Religious

“For whoever is not against us is for us”

Today’s first reading and Gospel reading are both about the spreading the Good News. In the first reading (Nm 11:25-29), Moses stops Aaron from the sin of jealousy because two others that were not part of the group were prophesying. They were able to prophecy because God is not controlled or constrained by human norms. In other words, God is not bound to use one particular group for prophecy; He uses whoever He desires. By doing so, God shows us how generous He is with His grace. In the Gospel, likewise, John tells Jesus that he wants to rebuke those who are performing miracles in Jesus’ name. John doesn’t say this out of genuine concern, but out of jealousy that other people who are not a part of their group could do such things. “But Jesus, like Moses, disapproved, because anyone who does good in Jesus’ name shows that he is spiritually near to the Church, even if not actually a member of it, and has at least the beginning of faith. For this reason he should be respected and treated with kindness in confident hope of the seed’s ripening...”[1]

How are members of Catholic Church different from “non-members”? As Catholics, we are bound to the Sacramental life. The Sacraments are God’s “ordinary means” of Salvation. The Sacraments, which were established by Christ and entrusted to the Church, are the primary means in which God gives Grace. However, this doesn’t mean that God *only* gives grace within the Sacraments. God is not bound by anything, and while the Sacraments are God’s preferred, or “ordinary means”, He can and does use “extraordinary means” to give grace as well.

Think of it this way: if we were to go to a New York deli and see

the many different types of sandwiches offered, all of which would feed us, we might get overwhelmed at the options. We might ask the owner of the deli which sandwiches he prefers or suggests and then order a sandwich based on the owners advice. God is generous and offers many graces, but the Sacraments are the “chef’s choice”. For this reason we should not only *want* to utilize the Sacraments, but we should also be *honored* and *thankful* that we are bound to the Sacraments.

We are all called to spread this faith and the Sacramental life. Sometimes we think it is only the priests and religious job to spread Christianity, but they are the smallest group within the Church Militant. It is every Christian’s responsibility. “...men and women, priests and laity, young and old, widowers, married people, members of religious orders, associations inspired to do the work of the Holy Spirit...No Christian is exempt.”[2]

What right do we have to spread religion? First, we have the right by Jesus Christ. He did not give this job to spread the faith to the Apostles alone. If we recall, He also commands seventy-two disciples to baptize and spread the Good News.[3] The Apostles then after Pentecost began laying hands on their successors to pass the faith on to the whole world.[4] Blessed Pope John Paul II affirmed that through our Baptism all Christians have the call and a right to spread the Kingdom of God. As long as we are in the Church we are in Christ, and as long as we are in Christ we are doing His will.[5]

Furthermore, the Eighth Commandment, thou shall not bear false witness, is part of the Natural Law, written on every human heart. Even if someone is not Baptized or a believer, he or she is obliged to spread the truth according to the Natural Law. Logically then, if a person learns how to spread the truth, they will then be led to Jesus Christ, who is the “the way, and the truth, and the life.”[6] Our obligation to spread the faith begins with our common human responsibility to spread truth.

In fact, one of the sins against the Holy Spirit is to cast doubt upon or criticize the known truth. This is what Satan does in the Garden. Satan is a fallen angel—he knows the truth. In the garden he impugns the known truth. “The serpent asked the woman, ‘Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?’”[7] Satan is sowing the seeds of doubt which cause Eve to doubt the truth of God and His trustworthiness. We are not

God created the world and created each soul and is present to us in this world, whether we see or acknowledge Him or not. No matter how bad a person may feel or how lost they seem, God is still present and offering them grace to come back home. We think of the prodigal son, who left the Father’s physical presence and went against His Father’s wishes, but kept the Father in his mind and eventually came home.

If we were ever to feel that our life is a living hell, this should be even more of a reason to avoid hell. If we feel this bad and yet God is still present, it is impossible to imagine what life would be like with the complete absence of God. Much of the pain in our lives results from removing ourselves from the presence of God. The prodigal son chose to remove himself from the father and when things got bad, he then chose to go back into the presence of the father and things got better.

Is anyone predestined for hell? No. “God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a willful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end.”[32] If God has predestined people to hell then God would not be God because He would not be all loving and merciful and we would not have free will. God does not want “any to perish, but all to come to repentance”[33].

Who is in hell? Why do people end up in hell? “Those [who] are punished in hell who die in mortal sin; they are deprived of the vision of God and suffer dreadful torments, especially that of fire, for all eternity.”[34] We know that Satan and the other fallen angels are in hell, as for humans we don’t know who is in hell, because it is God, not man that knows the heart and mind. A moral sin consists of a grave sin, one that is done with full consent (heart) and full knowledge (mind). While we are able to judge an action (grave sin) only God can fully judge both heart and mind. We can inquire and know what a person is feeling and thinking if they tell us, but even then only God “who searches hearts”[35] can fully know.

Can someone get out of hell once they are in hell? No. It is not because God does not want souls to leave, but because the soul refuses to. C.S. Lewis once said that the door of hell is locked from the inside and not from the outside. “As Lewis pointed out...if there are any human beings in hell, they are there because they absolutely insist on it.”[36]

terminated from any revealed document. St. Thomas also declared that the dimensions of Hell, which will be the dwelling place of the damned after the resurrection, cannot be determined.”[26]

What does it mean in the Creed when we say Christ descended into hell? “When we say that Christ descended into hell we mean that, after He died, the soul of Christ descended into a place or state of rest where the souls of the just were waiting for Him. The word ‘hell’ here does not mean the place where those souls go who have lost heaven forever. It means the place where the good souls were waiting until heaven was reopened by Christ. The souls of such good people as Abraham, Moses, and St. Joseph were there waiting for Jesus.”[27]

What is hell like? What happens to us in hell? We do not know all of what hell entails. “The discomfort that people sometimes feel at the thought of eternal pain may be due to the imagination dwelling on certain aspects of the subject while overlooking the simple teaching of the Gospel.”[28] Many put images like Dante’s Inferno and attribute it to the Catholic Church’s teaching. This is not so. It is an expression of one man’s opinion. Nevertheless, we can come up with some with some basic points of what happens to us.

First, as the Catechism points out that hell is the “state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God...”[29]. “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.”[30] This is means a soul is forever separated from God. God can never touch the soul again. This means the soul is completely devoid of God. As bad as this world can be with all its cruelty and sin, it is nothing like hell because we still have the presence and love of God. Hell is completely empty of this. It makes sense then when Jesus says there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.[31]

Secondly, Jesus tells us in the Gospel today is that hell is the “eternal fire”. It is the unquenchable fire. As said earlier he uses an actual place, Gehenna, to help demonstrate the eternal severity of hell.

How do we know that what we go through on earth is not hell? Many people might say, “My life is a living hell” It is impossible for our life on earth to be hell. As we mentioned earlier, Hell by definition is the complete absence or deprivation of God.

only obligated to teach the truth but we must safeguard and never allow the whole truth to be compromised.

Do non-Catholics have the right to spread the Kingdom? Yes and no. They have pieces of the whole truth, and this allows them to do many things in Christ’s name. They are baptized and follow the truths which they were taught. However, non-Catholics reject portions of Catholic doctrine and tenants of the faith. If they spread what they believe to be true, but it is in fact false, they are spreading heresy. While they can help to spread the Kingdom and bring more Christians into the fold, they may also be doing great harm because they reject portions (with full knowledge or not) of Church doctrine. An example of this is while both Catholics and Protestants believe in Sacred Scripture and it being the divine word of God, Catholics do not believe that the Bible is the sole authority of faith. This belief is a heresy. Nowhere does Sacred Scripture say that it is the sole authority of our faith. Our Church follows its’ authority on Sacred Scripture along with Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium. This can also be the case for people who claim to be Catholic but do not speak well of the Church or live a life contrary to that of the Church. Think of friends, family members, celebrities, athletes and politicians who claim to be Catholic, but do not conform to Christ’s Church. “All Christians should live a filial unity with the Pope and the Bishops”[8].

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - Compassion and Toleration\]](#)

How can I defend the truth if I don’t know as much as priests or scholars do? What if I am not as intelligent as the Saints? That is perfectly fine. Some of the greatest saints that ever lived had a very limited intelligence. St. Faustina had the equivalence of an eighth grade education and Jesus came to her personally. She wrote a diary that is now read by millions of people every year. Like everything, there is only so much we can learn and know. Not even our Holy Father knows everything about our faith. It is impossible to know everything because only God is all-knowing. However, this does not mean we should just give up before we even start. If we strive to know, love, and serve the Lord, He will give us the wisdom and knowledge enough to do what is needed of us. He will give us the right words to say to other people when speaking about our faith.

How do I know God will give me the right words to speak the faith? God has given us a written (Sacred Scripture) and oral tradition (Sacred Tradition) with clear teachings, which includes the Bible, the Catechism, as well as writings of the Saints and Papal Councils. These teachings are to be passed down exactly so that we are not contradicting the faith passed down before us. In the case of faith, “plagiarism”, is acceptable, because we do not and should not change the words of Jesus, Saint Paul, or the Church. We like Saint Paul, “stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours.”[9]

To illustrate this idea more clearly, let’s use Dr. D’Ambrosio’s family recipe analogy. We usually learn how to cook by watching grandma or a parent prepare the meal in the kitchen. In this case, we’re essentially being walked (or talked) through it. Also, we would also probably write the recipe down.

Why then do we also feel the need to write the recipe down?

For one, grandma will one day no longer be with us, so we want to be assured that we remember everything. Secondly, we might want to share the recipe with more people, even those outside the family. The same is true of the faith. While at first the apostles transmitted the faith orally, once Christianity became legal to spread to others, it was necessary that the faith be written down! This same process has been taking place for the last 2000 years.

How are we supposed to spread the faith? God gives us the words we need to spread the faith through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, but we have to bring the faith alive! “The Lord wants there to be apostles in the factory, the office, the university, in the home.”[10] Within all of these places we can live out our faith in every aspect of life: “There is no doubt that work, rest, social life, sport, can all provide chances to bring people to God.”[11] One way of doing this is St. Therese’s “little way”. Blessed Mother Theresa showed great love in all her little actions and she attributed it to her patron, Saint Therese, the Little Flower. St. Jose Maria Escriva said, “A little act, done for love, is worth so much.”[12] We should use what ever talents God has given us as our ability to spread the faith.

At times, we may face persecution for spreading the faith. When others persecute us and want to destroy our faith, we should

“Reason tells us that there is a just God who will punish sin. It is evident that all sins are not punished in this world; there must, therefore, be a place, where every mortal sin not atoned for by sorrow and penance will be punished, and this place is hell. All nations from the beginning of the world, even those who had not the light of revelation, believed this. But clearer still is the existence of hell shown by holy Scripture. The pious Job (10:22) speaks of a region of misery and darkness, where the shadows of death and no order, but where eternal terror dwells. The Prophet Isaias (30:33) says that hell is deep and wide, and that the fire burning in it, is like a stream of sulphur, ignited by the breath of the Lord. Our Savior expressly says that those who have done evil shall go to everlasting torment (Mt. 25:46) and shall be tortured by everlasting fire (Mt. 25:41). He makes mention of hell, and says that an inextinguishable fire burns there, and a worm which never dies, plagues the wicked (Mk. 9:42-43; Mt. 10:28). All the Fathers of the Church teach and testify to the same doctrine. St. Augustine, among many others, says: ‘The infinite wisdom of God tells us that there is a hell, and the illimitable power of God it is that punishes the damned in a wonderful, but real manner.’”[23]

Is Hell an actual place? “Following the example of Christ, the Church warns the faithful of the ‘sad and lamentable reality of eternal death’ (GCD 69), also called ‘hell.’”[24] The Catechism also says, “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.’”[25] We can descend in two ways: we can descend to a physical place, but also descend to an emotional place, as in the phrase they are going into a depression or they are going into a tunnel. Saint Alphonsus Liguori answers the question, “Is Hell a definite place?” He says that Hell is a definite place and that “this assertion is confirmed by a passage of St. Luke (16:22): “But the rich man also died and was buried in hell.” The sacred text employs the word “buried,” because burials are made within the earth. Moreover, the rich man himself describes Hell as a ‘place of torment’ (Lk 16:28), confirming the opinion that Hell is a determined and definite place. In another place it is called a ‘lake’; ‘Thou hast saved me from those descending into the lake’ (ps. 29:3); and elsewhere, a pool: ‘And the devil who deceived them was cast into the pool of fire and brimstone.’ (Rev. 20:9). It is evident, therefore, that Hell is a determined place, and most probably situated within the earth. But as to where, precisely, it is situated, whether at the very center of the earth or nearer to the surface, cannot be de-

ing and the souls in purgatory. [The prayer is at the end of this packet]

Just like Heaven, hell is a mystery: “which means that even after the fact has been revealed, we are still unable to understand why it must be so or how the attribute of God’s justice, which stands behind the mystery, can be reconciled with his infinite love.”[20] This does not mean though that we do not know anything about hell. The Catholic Church has never waived on about this truth that was told by Christ.

VIDEO – What Every Catholic Needs to Know About Hell – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:24

<http://youtu.be/1MW2kHHGPa8>

This is a quick introduction into what Catholics need to know about hell. If you would like to watch the whole series you certainly may by going to the Pop Culture Connection Page (or click here) [Part 1: <http://youtu.be/UUXhtFi4Aog> Part 2: <http://youtu.be/wNldpZ5N99I> Part 3: http://youtu.be/GVaYd2nL_1k Part 4: <http://youtu.be/BUttKYOnb-g> Part 5: <http://youtu.be/BIEmxCYYUbo>]. For those with limited time, we recommend completing the packet first, and then as time allows, go through the videos. The videos are much longer and go through greater details on the doctrine of Hell.

What is “Gehenna”? “Ge-hinnom’, was a little valley south of Jerusalem, outside the walls and below the city. For centuries it was used as the city dump. Usually garbage was burned to avoid it being a focus of infection. Gehenna was, proverbially, an unclean and unhealthy place: our Lord used this to explain in a graphic way the unquenchable fire of hell.”[21]

What is Hell? “The place and state of eternal punishment for the fallen angels and human beings who die deliberately estranged from the love of God. There is a twofold punishment in hell: the pain of loss, which consists in the deprivation of the vision of God, and the pain of sense, which consists in the suffering caused by outside material things. The punishment of hell is eternal, as declared by Christ in his prediction of the last day (Matthew 25:46), and as defined by the Fourth Lateran Council, stating that the wicked will ‘receive a perpetual punishment with the devil’ (Denzinger 801). The existence of hell is consistent with divine justice, since God respects human freedom and those who are lost actually condemn themselves by their resistance to the grace of God.”[22]

defend ourselves, but our words and actions should show the charity of Christ, and bring about conversion to Christ.

What are your talents that God has given you to spread the faith?

Why should we want to spread the faith? If we don’t who will? “In the face of cowardliness, laziness or excuses, we have to keep in mind that many people depend on our word and example if they are to receive the grace to follow Christ more closely. We can never stop doing apostolate with the people whom God has placed by our side.”[13] We should want to spread the faith to show God’s charity to others who are made in the image and likeness of God. Everyone has dignity and if we treat everyone with that dignity then we will win souls for Christ.

Save our self, save others – Lesson and Discussion

“Whoever causes one of these little ones...to sin...it would be better...if...he were thrown into the sea”

After speaking to John and the other disciples about confronting strangers, Jesus uses strong language to discuss the responsibilities and duties toward “the little ones”.

What does Jesus say that makes it “strong language”? When Jesus says it is better for someone to attach a boulder to his neck, and then throw himself into the sea to drown rather than create scandal, that should raise a few eyebrows. “We should not pass lightly over these words, but should ponder them deeply and monitor our own behavior so that neither our words nor our attitudes will trouble the faith of the little ones or of the good People of God.”[14]

What does he mean by “little ones”? Jesus is talking about children.

Why would it be a scandal to lead a child to sin? The scandal caused toward a “little one” is heinous because they have no way of defending themselves from the evil that is being committed against them.

What exactly is a scandal? “Scandal is anything said, done, or omitted which leads another to commit sin”[15]. Since sin is the greatest of all evils, it is easy to understand why scandal is so serious and, therefore, why Christ condemns it so profoundly.

Causing scandal to children is especially serious, because they are so less able to defend themselves against evil. “What Christ says applies to everyone, but especially to parents and teachers, who are responsible before God for the souls of the youth.”[16]

Who else has a great amount of influence on the young?

Other examples include entertainers, athletes, and celebrities. While they are accountable for the young because of their influence on them, there are unfortunately so many from this group that cause scandal. We must pray for them to realize their great influence and to use it to promote truth and virtue, rather than sin.

What are some examples of scandal in our time, especially scandal towards young children?

What are the ways we can be an accessory to another’s sin?

Many times we believe that as long as we don’t “personally” sin then we are not responsible. This is not true, however—we don’t want to make the same mistake that Cain made in saying to God, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”[17] We can be an accessory to another’s sin by poor counsel, command, consent, provocation, praise, concealment, partaking, silence, or even by defense of the sin committed. **How can I be an accessory to sin by poor counsel or command? Give examples of each.**

When Jesus said “ if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off” and “if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out”, does He really mean it? No. What the Church Fathers have expressed in terms of this passage is to be ready to figuratively “cut off” any thing or person who leads us into sin. If someone is trying to entice us to sin using our eyes, hands, or feet we should try to distance ourselves at all costs or cut ourselves off completely so that we may not follow their way of life, which is the way to hell. [18]

Jesus is giving a basis for Christian moral teaching when dealing with the “occasion of sin”. “He is very explicit: a person is obliged to avoid proximate occasions of sin, just as he is obliged to avoid sin itself; as God already put in the Old Testament: ‘Whoever lives in danger will perish by it’ (Sir. 3:26-27). The eternal good of our soul is more important than any temporal good. Therefore, anything that places us in proximate danger of committing sin should be cut off and thrown away. By putting things in this way our Lord makes sure we recognize the seriousness of

this obligation.”[19] When we make an act of Contrition during Reconciliation we will strive to “avoid whatever leads me to sin”.

Can you give an example of a relationship or activity that you have had to “cut off” because it was leading to sin?

What sins can be caused by our hands? What sins can be caused by our feet? What sins can be caused by our eyes? To be able to answer these questions we should do an examination of conscience at the end of the day, and especially before we go to confession.

ACTIVITY – Examination of Conscience

Download the link “Examination of Conscience” and go through the examination with the group or individually. If with a group, it is recommended to have one person read through it all slowly and prayerfully. Have the group spread out and go over it by themselves. You may want to have them write their sins down while it is being read. It is also helpful to have reflective music related to penance or forgiveness playing in the background. If possible, have a priest available during and after the examination so the group can go to Confession.

Hell – Lesson and Discussion

“the fire is not quenched”

Hell is one of what the Church calls the Four Last Things, which also includes Death, Judgment, and Heaven. While it is important that we have a clear understanding of all four, this lesson focuses on Hell. For more information on the other three, see the link below:

[See also Link to Liturgy Packet Feast Days - All Souls]

In today’s Gospel reading Jesus speaks of Gehenna (Hell) several times. Many of us do not want to think of Hell. Others of us completely disregard it. In fact, there is a growing trend among certain Christians to proclaim that there is no such thing as Hell. However, Holy Scripture and the Church teach us that there is a Hell.

Souls who are not in communion with God and have fallen in Mortal Sin are in danger of going to Hell. It is recommended at this time to pray the St. Michael the Archangel prayer for the soul of the readers of this lesson, the protection of all souls liv-