

The Domestic Church

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Understanding Death

"...we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal". (2 Cor.4:18, Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition)

In order for us Christians to understand death, we must understand the mission and goal of our time spent on earth. Then the passage from earthly life to eternal life: death has a proper context.

Our goal in this life is to reach heaven, the Home that God is preparing for us in eternity. We should also strive to bring many others with us, as St. Paul did when he expressed himself thus to the Corinthians: *"Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God". (2 Cor.4:13-15)* All of this is what a favorite radio show host of mine calls developing a view to the eternal.

"We look not to things that are seen but to the things that are unseen..". The goal of our time spent on earth is unseen. And yet, a taste of heaven lies veiled within our tabernacles, in the eucharistic Host that mysteriously becomes the living Body of Christ. A glimpse of heaven lies in the union with God that is prayer. A foretaste of heaven is found in the love shared between spouses as they live out the Sacrament of Matrimony. Heaven is an eternal feast, where the hunger of our souls is filled in totality.

The threshold of death which leads to eternal life is also unseen. This is the more difficult mystery to ponder, and the one that much of this issue of *The Domestic Church* will be devoted to. Death of the body is a consequence of sin. Read on to discover that God never intended for death to come to humanity (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1008) yet along with human sin came death. Also, sin must be rejected if one is to inherit eternal life. Here lies the bitter truth that hell is real; we must acknowledge God and turn to Him in this life in order to begin our personal journey of renewal. (As parents, we initiate this journey for our children in their baptisms.) God is Mercy and eagerly awaits us.

Death need not be fearful for Christians. St. Alphonsus de Liguori wrote that the just have nothing to fear at the hour of death. *"If God holds fast in his hands the souls of the just, who can snatch them from him? It is true that hell does not cease to tempt and attack even the saints at the hour of death; but it is also true that God does not cease to assist, and to multiply helps to his faithful servants, whenever their danger is increased". (St. Alphonsus de Liguori The Ascetical Works, Volume I. Preparation for Death)*

Death in Christ begins mysteriously on earth. It is tied up with the CROSS, a reality that God's grace helps us to accept. To quote St. Paul once again: *"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh". (2 Cor.4:7-11)*

Let us then look with courage upon the topic of death, knowing that we cannot afford to be careless or indifferent where our eternal life is concerned.

Ruth Andreas
Editor



Philosophy for Beginners

The Theology of Death

The most vital question in any study of the nature of death is this: in what sense can death be said to be the destiny of Man? This will help us to answer further questions about the natural character of death, and help us to understand Christ's death and our own.

St. Thomas Aquinas is very clear about the nature of death. He says: "The necessity of dying for Man is partly from nature and partly from sin". Death due to nature is caused by the contrary elements of the body. Every material element in the body is composed of both active and passive elements held together in a tenuous connection. From the point of view of these elements, death is natural. Nor is there any power in the material elements themselves or in the soul to keep my body or any body from death. From the point of view of the body, then Man is mortal and doomed to die.

Yet, Man is not only a body, but also a soul. The soul is the spiritual element in Man's composition. Philosophy and the Catechism call it the *form* of the body, that element in Man that organizes matter into being, and into the being which is Man. The body and the soul are not two separate principals but complimentary ones, which must exist in union with each other for Man to exist perfectly. Soul, or form exists within matter and organizes it because Man is not an angel. Body could not exist as human without soul. Thus, the destiny of Man could in no sense be determined by only one of these elements. Both are necessary.

Though the body tends to death because of its contrary elements, it tends to life because of the presence of the soul. In fact, from the point of view of the soul, death is not natural to Man. St. Thomas says: "A thing is said to be natural if it proceeds from the principals of nature. Now the

essential principles of nature are form and matter. The form of Man is his reasoning soul, which is immortal, wherefore death is not natural to Man from the point of view of this form or this soul".

Though it is true that, naturally speaking death is the destiny of Man if one considers one part of him: the body, nothing could be further from the Truth if one considers him from the point of view of the spiritual soul. Reason considered the destiny of the soul and realized that there is active in Man intelligence, which goes beyond our body and is not open to death. Some ancient philosophers knew this. According to St. Thomas, Aristotle knew this, and he knew this from reason alone. St. Thomas says: "This conclusion also comes to light thru the authority of Aristotle, for he says in his treatise on the soul, 'the intellect is evidently a substance and is incapable of being destroyed'" (i.e. immortal).

The first implication of this idea in the discussion of death should be that it is absolutely impossible even from the standpoint of reason to maintain that death is the final destiny of Man, or for that matter that life is absurd. Death is a fact, but it cannot be the destiny of Man for this reduces Man to only the material order. In fact, there is no solution to the problem of death until it is considered from the point of view of the soul.

St. Thomas makes the point many times that the soul, in its act can only be fulfilled in intelligence and understanding. Once the intellect knows one relationship of cause and effect, then the power of the mind cannot be stilled until the first cause, the primary cause, the ultimate Cause (in this case, God) is directly experienced.

Aristotle speaks of this intellectual power or dynamism in his first book of metaphysics. He says this: "For it is owing to their wonder

Fr. Brian Mullady, OP

that men both now begin and at first began to think philosophically. They wondered originally about obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about greater matters. For we know each thing only when we know its ultimate cause". St. Thomas makes much of this text when he discusses the problem of human destiny. He also exactly reproduces it when he considers that, even reason must reach the necessary conclusion that Man must see God to be fulfilled.

This is because of the natural desire of the intellect. If this is true, our intelligence must see God to be fulfilled; this is our final purpose, and Man must be able to live forever.

If the vision of God is the fulfillment of the soul, and the soul the life of the body, then by implication death cannot be Man's end. Moreover, the body really ought not to die. A philosopher would have to conclude that, though the body does die, the soul lives forever and that this is not a natural condition, because the perpetual division of the dead body and the immortally living soul would be like a violent condition. In us, the body and the soul go together. According to Aristotle, anti-natural or violent conditions cannot exist forever. Therefore, the ancient philosophers were brought by these considerations to a box canyon.

Now, Man considered in *this* way was truly an absurdity. How to explain the fact that the soul has this dynamism to go to God; the soul itself must live forever yet the body, which is inexorably joined to the soul (absolutely necessary for the existence of the human being) dies forever? There is neither power in my soul nor in my body to make it live forever.

The solution to this problem can only be: the resurrection of the dead. But there is no power on earth that can bring about resurrection. The

absurdity, then would be that the body lies dead forever, while the soul lives forever. Yet, this was the absurdity that the ancient philosophers were led to when they tried to resolve this contradiction only by reason.

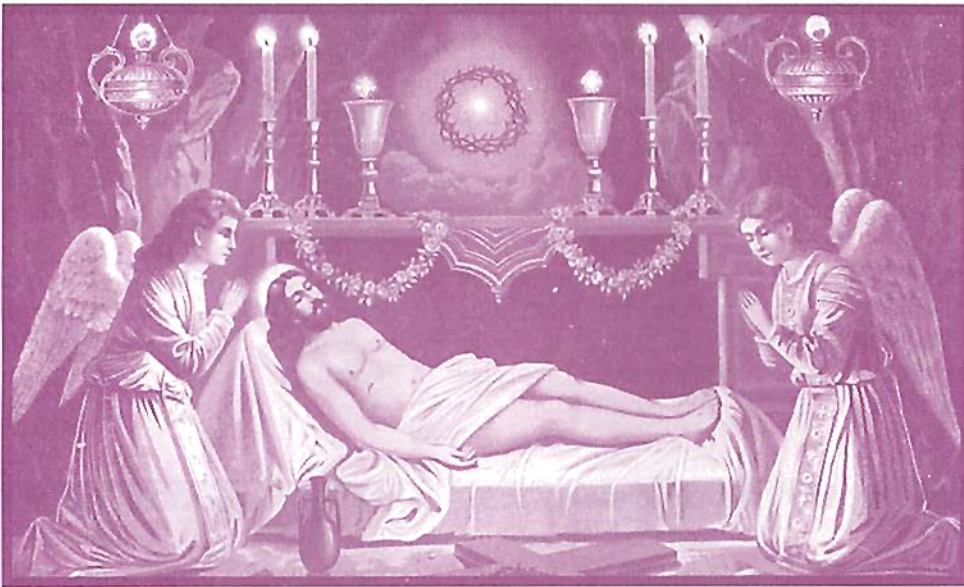
In fact, the resolution is not possible by reason. One has to experience the Bible, revelation and especially the fact of resurrection to resolve it. Ancient philosophers could not solve this problem because they did not know that Man had been and could be called to intimacy with God. They did not know about grace. Seneca, an ancient Roman philosopher who taught that death was natural to Man taught this because he did not know about the Scriptures and he did not know about the condition of Man before the Fall. (Adam and Eve did not have the necessity of dying before the Fall.) St. Thomas says about them, "Seneca and the other philosophers considered human nature

according to those principles that belong to it (human nature) only from the principles of nature. They did not know about the state of the first condition of original innocence, which is held only by faith. Therefore, they only spoke about death as a natural defect, although this natural defect for us is a punishment in some way".

Man, in fact was originally created correctly. He had communion and intimacy with God. He had no sin, and therefore he did not suffer from the necessity of dying. In other words, a condition of unity and integrity in the human character was only as permanent as the state of grace. God subjected Man to a beautiful union of love in which God's grace and life permeated all of the powers of Man and gave Man the gift of being able to control his own body.

This power was lost when sin entered the world. Sin, which is death of the soul leads to the necessity of the death of the body. There are then two deaths of Man who is in the state of original sin: the death of the soul is the cause of the necessary death of the body. Of course, we know that the soul does not die in its being, and yet it is like something dead, because as the soul gives life to the body, so God gives life to the soul. A soul that cannot experience communion with God is as though dead. And that is why we call the sin by which we lose grace "mortal sin". It renders the soul like a dead thing.

By way of conclusion, it is



obvious that the death of Man is a tragedy that is caused by a much deeper tragedy: the death brought about by sin. The experience of death without knowing about grace causes an extreme tension within each human person because death seems so unnatural and absurd. This is not because life after death is just some sort of wishful thinking. The necessity of the afterlife is perfectly reasonable because of our understanding of intelligence. Man in the state of sin is left in a box canyon without an exit. This is because Man can know that the soul lives forever. However, for the body to not share in this life is a violence that cannot be explained. The source of the tragedy is sin, of course. The philosopher, who relies solely on reason can recognize this as an intolerable condition. He

cannot possibly know why it exists.

Therefore, the problem is not that Man is hopeless and finds life completely absurd, something of which he can make no sense. Rather, the source of the absurdity is that Man knows that life is eternal. But in the first place, because of the death of the soul he has no power to arrive at any object that is eternal. Secondly, even if he could, his body could not follow where his soul would lead. If one were a Platonist (Plato believed that the body was a prison that the soul was in unnaturally) this would be fine. But, for one who understands both the eternity of the soul and the unity between the body

and the soul, the death of the body is an absurdity precisely because of the immortality of the soul.

But nihilism, and existential anguish have no place here. If death were Man's destiny, sin would not be madness. However, the madness of sin comes in the fact that men will exist, but in a completely unfulfilled state.

Man without grace can have no natural completion. And there can be no completion for the eternally-existing soul, because union with God is impossible.

Grace changes all this. The man who understands grace understands that there is a twofold resurrection that corresponds to this twofold death. To the death of the soul, we have the resurrection of the soul and sanctifying grace. And to the death of the body we have the resurrection of the dead, which is the perfect completion of the resurrection of the soul.

The true existential anguish of Man, then can only be over the existence of sin. The uneasiness experienced on the part of Man is found in pagans who do not know that their nature is not as it ought to

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Spiritual Fatherhood

A Daughter Remembers

by Lynette Schmidt

Lynette Schmidt wrote and presented this memorial on the occasion of her father's funeral at Easter of 2001. Lynette and her husband Ric live in Nome, Alaska where they are raising six children and contributing vital work to KNOM, a Catholic radio station.

In the hallway of our house, mounted in one of those collection frames, is a snapshot of Dad with my sister, Celine on her wedding day, pinching her smiling face. It reminds me of a common thread in Dad's relationships with all of his children. He took great delight in all of our milestones, our joys and our achievements. But mostly, he delighted in simply being our Daddy.

Being a quiet man, Dad wasn't one for flowery expositions of love. Nevertheless, we knew that he loved us deeply. He showed us. Our own children will attest to Pepere's (French for "dad") special loving twinkle in his eye.

When we were young, Dad would shine shoes every Saturday night, then offer himself as a human jungle gym. He methodically levelled, then planted a sprawling lawn so that we

could have a good place to play ball. Remember the year he tried to make an ice rink? He also taught us to fix our bikes. He spent years building our home in Tiverton, then again on Bainbridge Island. During our teen years, he patiently spent many afternoons and weekends with us under the hoods of our old jalopies.

Dad let us borrow his tools as we began providing for our own families. He built toy boxes as the grandchildren started coming fast and furiously. He helped us with home repairs and improvements. He was always willing to help us out. Looking back, I think what he really liked was just being with us, working side by side. Dad's legacy is a life of deliberate Faith, passed down with love amidst the ordinary. His legacy fills many of the pews in the church this morning.

Dad was diagnosed with cancer just two and one half months ago. This news brought to an end the excruciatingly painful four-month search for an answer to why his health was deteriorating so quickly. Though it was not good news, he bore it with the same strength and determination with which he approached everything in his life. After all, he didn't earn the nickname "Super Pepere" for nothing!

Dad's most rapid decline in health took a downward turn on Ash Wednesday: a fall in the middle of the night. The resulting injuries took a long time to heal. Throughout Lent, there were several trips to the emergency room. The frequency of hospitalizations also increased as he got sicker. Each time the family rallied around him, he'd walk right up to the

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Theology, *ctd from page 3*

be. The death of the body is problematic, and the very difficulty is caused because Man can know that he can live forever, and that his actions have to influence his destiny.

What sense does this make for the death of Christ? The death of Christ, although extremely painful is not a death experienced in any kind of existential darkness as far as his intelligence is concerned. Catholic doctrine has taught for many centuries that Christ enjoyed the beatific vision from the moment of his conception...Christ not only saw God from the moment of his conception, but he also sees all of us. All of us are taken into every action of his. That includes his death.

John Paul II has said this: "Jesus had the clear vision of God, and the certainty of his union with the Father dominated his mind [on the cross]. But in the sphere bordering on the

senses...Jesus' human soul was reduced to a wasteland". In other words, from the point of view of Jesus' feelings and imagination [at the time of death] it was black and dark. But not from the point of view of his intelligence, or of his will. This was always and completely united to the Father. It is very important to see that the death of Christ is not existential *angst* (fear). Christ did not throw himself into the face of an unknown, with no idea of what resolution God could possibly make of the situation.

What should our attitude be towards death? It should be the same as the Lord's. For the Christian, death is not a darkness, an absurdity or a plunge into a nonsensical unknown. The Christian knows that death is painful and sorrowful. It is not a pleasant experience. It is a punishment for the original sin. Still, the Christian should not worry about

physical death. What gives death its sting is not that the body dies and corrupts in the grave. One who has lived a life of union with God on earth knows with the firmest conviction of faith and of reason that the soul lives forever. One also knows, following the resurrection of Christ, with the firmest conviction of faith that he or she will have a part in that resurrection. The real problem with death is that it is painful. But for one who has faith, there should be no uncertainty about what lies beyond death, nor does one have to resolve the seeming contradiction of the spirit's dying by merely projecting something nice and wonderful and possible afterwards.

The real absurdity of death consists in someone knowing what lies beyond the grave, and yet going to it unprepared. The sting of death is sin.

Gifts from the Magisterium

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd edition

Part One, Section Two, Chapter Three, Article 11:

“I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body”

II. Dying in Christ Jesus

1005 To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must “be away from the body and at home with the Lord”. In that “departure” which is death the soul is separated from the body. It will be reunited with the body on the day of resurrection of the dead.

1006 It is in regard to death that man’s condition is most shrouded in doubt. In a sense bodily death is natural, but for faith it is in fact “the wages of sin”. For those who die in Christ’s grace it is a participation in the death of the Lord, so that they can also share his Resurrection.

1007 *Death is the end of earthly life.* Our lives are measured by time, in the course of which we change, grow old and, as with all living beings on earth, death seems like the normal end of life. That aspect of death lends urgency to our lives: remembering our mortality helps us realize that we have only a limited time in which to bring our lives to fulfillment:

Remember also your Creator
in the days of your youth,...
before the dust returns to the

earth as it was, and the spirit
returns to God who gave it.
(Ecclesiastes 12: 1,7)

1008 *Death is a consequence of sin.* The Church’s Magisterium, as authentic interpreter of the affirmations of Scripture and Tradition, teaches that death entered the world on account of man’s sin. Even though man’s nature is mortal, God had destined him not to die. Death was therefore contrary to the plans of God the Creator and entered the world as a consequence of sin. “Bodily death, from which man would have been immune had he not sinned” is thus “the last enemy” of man left to be conquered. (1 Cor. 15:26)

1009 *Death is transformed by Christ.* Jesus, the Son of God also himself suffered the death that is part of the human condition. Yet, despite his anguish as he faced death, he accepted it in an act of complete and free submission to his Father’s will. The obedience of Jesus has transformed the curse of death into a blessing.

The meaning of Christian death

1010 Because of Christ,

Christian death has a positive meaning: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”. (Phil. 1:21) “The saying is sure: if we have died with him, we will also live with him”. (2 Tim. 2:11) What is essentially new about Christian death is this: through Baptism, the Christian has already “died with Christ” sacramentally, in order to live a new life; and if we die in Christ’s grace, physical death completes this “dying with Christ” and so completes our incorporation into him in his redeeming act...

1011 In death, God calls man to himself. Therefore, the Christian can experience a desire for death like St. Paul’s: “My desire is to depart and be with Christ”. He can transform his own death into an act of obedience and love towards the Father, after the example of Christ: “...I want to see God and, in order to see him, I must die”. (St. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, chap.1) “I am not dying; I am entering life”. (St. Therese of Lisieux, *The Last Conversations*).

1013 Death is the end of man’s earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers him so as to work out his earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide his ultimate destiny. When “the single course of our earthly life” is completed, we shall not return to other earthly lives: “It is appointed for men to die once”. (Heb.9:27) There is no “reincarnation” after death.

Daughter, *ctd from page 4*

brink of death, decide the timing wasn’t right and come back. And Dad was anointed. In fact, we joked that he was anointed with the Holy Oils so much that he was going to slide right through the pearly gates of heaven!

Dad kept bouncing back, although he wasn’t quite as strong. During Lent, it was as if God kept asking him successively to surrender some part of himself...his ability to take care of the yard, to putter in his well-organized garage, to walk, to get out of bed and then finally, to live. As

he placed each of those things at the foot of the cross, Dad lost more independence and was forced to rely on family and friends. He demonstrated for us true Lenten sacrifice. In the end, all that was left was his essence: his faith, his hope and his love. He taught us that the things which really matter boil down to laughing, to praying and to loving.

In the last two weeks of his life, God spared Dad some of the pain he had endured for the previous six months. He was home then, surrounded by those he

loved: his wife and his children. Dad’s charm, humor, faith and love were able to shine the brightest.

Before Dad died, we asked him to send us a sign that he’d made it to heaven. He ended his Lenten journey on Good Friday, while Mom and several of his children prayed the last decade of the rosary’s sorrowful mysteries: the death and crucifixion of Christ. I believe that this was his sign, and I believe that Dad spent Easter this year with the Risen Lord.

A Woman's Place

by Billie Vasquez

Billie Vasquez is a lay Carmelite and a mother of two daughters. Her family lives in Portland, Oregon.

There seems to be a sense of urgency within us women about uniting for peace, for a better society, for justice. I think we have a built-in and keen sense of the environment that we are raising our little ones in. I converted to Catholicism while I searched for what was good for my children. Edith Stein talks about this also. We women feel like we need to do something to improve our environment. But at the same time, the message needs to hit home. That is, it needs to hit our own souls first! If we want to change the world, we must first equip ourselves with Christ more perfectly.

Our attitude in carrying out such activities should not be based on condemnation but rather on salvation. The first stems quite often from a judgemental attitude, while the latter stems from mercy. Also, we need to reflect on our motives for wanting these changes in our environment. Most of us agree that we want society to be better in its morals and in every way. But do we want this for the sake of having a better place to live, or for the sake of salvation?

As mothers, God doesn't just expect us to teach our little ones how to be respectable Christians in appearance and lifestyle. He also expects us to light the flame of a burning love for Him in their little hearts. How do we do this? Love cannot be taught by words; love is taught by acts of love.

Are we mothers examples of love? When our children see us, do they see love or lack of it? Do they see that I am madly in love with God? This is different from being obsessed about God. It is a true joy within a soul that comes from being in love with God. Do we radiate that?

I must commend any effort that is put forth to improve society, or the lives of those who suffer. They will

have my support always. But let us not stop there; let us reach for heaven while we are on earth. Let us experience the "indwelling God" within us, who satisfies our thirst, who in the privacy of our souls communes with us. We must desire this for ourselves and for our children. Because we want to raise children who can be trusted to do the right things when our backs are turned. We want to raise our children to act according to a conscience which is governed by God. We want to raise children who have a proper fear of the Lord. We want to raise children who have living faith.

We want our children to experience God. We want our children to be in love with God. The children of Fatima had living faith; we needn't think that it was only for them. Your children, my children can have knowledge of the living God who dwells in them. To desire anything less for our children is not good enough.

Having said this, it is better that we mothers admit to God our own inability to raise holy children, because we are not holy to begin with. Let us then give our children to God to raise. Let us admit our inabilities and become humble before God. Then we can say to the Lord, "Lord, thank you for giving me these children, but I do not know how to lead them to heaven. While I desire them to be holy, I fail myself in holiness every day. How can I possibly do any good for them? Please protect them from my sins and inabilities, and take them as your own. Raise them as your own. I trust in you, Lord; don't let me interfere with your work in their lives. May your Will be done in my soul and in the souls of my children, and in my husband's soul, in spite of my interference".

When a woman sits down to

meditate on the words above, she finds that there is something in her soul that opposes giving up her control to God. She finds that she is in a bit of a tug of war with God over control of her own children. This tendency must die if she wants to be Mary-like. If the mother wants her prayer to be heard, if she wants to be good for the family, this tendency in her must die!

This is Eve, who wanted Adam to achieve without God. Eve wants Adam and her offspring to achieve success with *her* help, independent of God. Oftentimes, society praises this woman as a good wife or a good mother. However, she is bringing glory to herself, void of God. But since this woman cannot give her children salvation, the only success she can give to them is of the world.

Because the Blessed Mother did not have this tendency, the audacity to stand in opposition to God, she is so loved by the Lord. She is humility. It is so important that we women see this seed of disobedience within ourselves. Because we want to become women and mothers whose prayers are powerful before God. We don't want to live under an illusion that we alone are good, and that what the world needs is us.

In conclusion, I am trying to say that if we want to see positive changes in our children, in our families and ultimately in the environment in which we live, we need to change our own inner disposition as women; we really need to pray with a humble heart.

"A woman's life must be a Eucharistic life. Only in a daily, confidential relationship with the Lord in the tabernacle can one forget self, become free of all of one's own wishes and pretensions, and have a heart open to all the needs and wants of others". - Edith Stein (Woman, p.56)

The Family Bulletin Board

MOVIE NIGHT

Miracle at Midnight (1983)

This is an amazing family movie! Its setting is a danish city in 1943, when Denmark was under Nazi control. A Christian surgeon uses the local hospital to hide the city's entire population of Jews, after receiving a secret tip from a high-ranking German official concerning the imminent deportation and arrest of all Jews there. Based on a true story, the film details how the surgeon's family, and the Christian population at large in this danish city sacrificed their own safety for the sake of their Jewish friends and neighbors. The film illustrates what it truly means to "live", that is in the service of others, which is the legacy of our Christian Faith. Stars Sam Waterston and Mia Farrow.

A Dog of Flanders (1999)

This is a wonderful film about a boy in Holland that touches on a number of basic human themes, not the least of which is "death". The life of this poor boy gives meaning to many people around him. Catholic overtones. Well worth the time! Stars Jack Warden, Jon Voight and Cheryl Ladd.

**Its predecessor film, made some forty years ago is not recommended.

Little Men (1997)

Here is another winner based on Louisa May Alcott's novel. Love, virtue and positive discipline triumph over time in the hardened hearts of "little men". Inspiring ideas for the home school. Stars Michael Caloz, Mariel Hemingway and Chris Sarandon.

Preparing for Death

When we think of our own death, there may be a natural tendency to avoid the subject. The desire to want to live, along with the fact that we do not know when death will come may prevent us from preparing for this ultimate moment of earthly life. However, when we take time to prepare for death, rather than waiting until it is thrust upon us, we have opportunities to help effect a good death for ourselves and for others for whom we pray.

In giving to Saint Faustina the devotion to The Divine Mercy, Our Lord offered us one means of easing the path of our own death. Our Lord pointed out more than once in His revelations to Saint Faustina what good would come to the dying, who had practiced the devotion to The Divine Mercy. *"I have opened My Heart as a living fountain of mercy. Let all souls draw life from it. Let them approach this sea of mercy with great trust. Sinners will attain justification, and the just will be confirmed in good. Whoever places his trust in My mercy will be filled with My divine peace at the hour of death".* (*Divine Mercy in My Soul, The Diary of Sister M. Faustina Kowalska*, 1520)

How to Become Involved in the Divine Mercy Devotion

This devotion has the authority of a recently-declared 20th century saint behind it: Saint Faustina Kowalska of Poland. Her diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul* is the source of our Lord's requests regarding the form(s) of this contemporary devotion.

1) One may begin their involvement by contacting a local Catholic bookstore to obtain a copy of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a daily prayer that uses rosary beads. Praying this prayer, particularly at the 3:00 hour, the hour that our Lord expired is particularly efficacious.

2) Next, be aware that a special Image of Divine Mercy is available in some places for veneration.

3) Third, in His revelations to Saint Faustina, our Lord expressed his desire that a Feast of Divine Mercy be established on the first Sunday after Easter:

"...I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day, the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall receive complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day are open all the divine floodgates through which graces flow. Let no soul fear to draw near to me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel will be able to fathom it throughout all of eternity"... (699)

4) Finally, pray this chaplet for others. Our Lord has said, *"...In this hour (the 3 o'clock hour) you can obtain everything for yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world--mercy triumphed over justice".* (1572) This is truly an awesome invitation!

Fr. Ted Bradley's Quotables

"Beatitudes for Friends of the Elderly"

Blessed are they who understand my faltering step and palsied hand.
Blessed are they who know that my ears today must strain to catch the things you say.
Blessed are they who seem to know that my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.
Blessed are they who looked away when coffee spilled at table today.
Blessed are they with a cheerful smile who stopped to chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who never say, "You've told me that story twice today".
Blessed are they who know the ways to bring back memories of yesterdays.
Blessed are they who make it known that I'm loved, respected and not alone.
Blessed are they who know I'm at a loss to find the strength to carry the Cross.
Blessed are they who ease the days on my journey Home, in loving ways.

**Participant Review of the 2nd Annual
St. Joseph's Center
Retreat for Married Couples**

“We would recommend this retreat to other couples; it is very beneficial and refreshing”.

“The reality and responsibility of the family as ‘domestic church’ takes a while to click...the retreat helps us realize the graced power we have”.

“Timing and theme were so appropriate”.



Web site under construction.

E-mail us at:
domesticchurch@msn.com

Saint Joseph's Board Members:

- President: Mark Andreas
- Vice President: Frank Dulcich
- Secretary: Teri Sykes
- Treasurer: Dennis Sykes
- Spiritual Director: Fr. Pius X Harding OSB

We wish to welcome Steve Nicholes as a new advisor to St. Joseph's Board of Directors. His legal counsel is very much appreciated.

*Mission Statement
Founded in January 1995, St. Joseph's Center for the Domestic Church is a Catholic apostolate dedicated to serving the family. Our mission is to help families recognize their role as the "domestic church," the Church at home, and to re-establish the home as a sacred refuge.*

Saint Joseph's Center for the Domestic Church
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