

## *Death*

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"Whither goest thou?" John 16:5

This is a question we all have to answer one day since each of us will leave this earth and enter into eternity. This question has only two answers: Heaven or eternal damnation. St Paul in Hebrews (9:27) says that "it is appointed unto men once to die".

Death is the separation of the soul from the body; thus the end of time for that soul and the beginning of eternity, the end of ambitions, earthly joys, sorrows and such. It is the end of the time of trial and probation. Death was not intended from the beginning, but entered the world as a consequence of sin. In Wisdom we read "God created man incorruptible" (Wis 2:23). Everyday thousands and thousands of people die all over the world. Death is one thing that is certain, yet knowing this, though it is fearful, it is also salutary. It helps us to be properly prepared for the eventuality. We do not know when it will happen, though sometimes we can know it is near. It can happen at an early age or we might live many years. We do not know where we will be, or the manner of death, whether suddenly, from an illness and slowly, or just naturally. Will a priest be present to give the sacraments? We sure hope so, but we cannot be certain of this, since often deaths are sudden and unexpected.

We know death is a certainty and it is good for us to remember that. It will help us to avoid sin and overcome temptation. It can help us to be prepared at all times and to detach our hearts from the earth. No matter how rich we are, we leave it all behind to face our Creator. At the time of death, temptations can be very strong because the devil does not want us saved. Thus when the priest comes to give Extreme Unction and Viaticum, he first blesses the room to chase away any demons and he invites the holy angels to keep watch. This is a great comfort for the dying. We should not wait too long to call the priest if we know we are sick and in danger of death.

What can we do to prepare for that day when we pass into eternity? Live a good holy life. This is the only real preparation. If we are faithful in serving God with everything we do, we will have nothing to fear at the approach of death.

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