**Upper Room: December2020/January 2021**

*Host or designated reader/leader begins the Upper Room prayer hour by first reading this message from Fr. David:*

Dear friends in Christ:

For the next 2 **Upper Rooms** we consider death and Hell and death and Purgatory. If you were asked the question “What does your death mean to you?” would one or all of these places be a part of your answer or discussion? Let’s have a discussion about death and Hell in this Upper Room, there isn’t much written in the Catechism or even in the Bible about Hell. But that’s ok

In Christ;

Fr. David

**Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

L: **Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.**

R: And you shall renew the face of the earth

L: **Let us pray – God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on Your Church to begin the teaching of the Gospel; now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord.**

R: Amen

L: **You, O lord, will open my lips.**

R: And my tongue shall announce Your praise.

L: **Incline unto my aid, O God.**

R: O Lord, make haste to help me.

L: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit**.

R: As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

**Lesson**

Read:

**1033** We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: "He who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren. To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell."

1. Excluding oneself from communion with God and His merciful love, to fail to meet the needs of the poor and of children, this is the path to hell. Sinning against God and our neighbor is a “lack of love” and he who does not love remains in death. By this definition is it only the “Hitler types” that go to hell? Discuss if you think it is harder or easier to find yourself or other loved ones separated from God for all eternity?

**Read:**

**1035** The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. 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." 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.

1. Define: what makes a mortal sin again?
2. How would you teach a 5th grader how a mortal sin separates you completely from God?
3. People who persist in mortal sin are typically impervious to the place before God. How could you wake them up to reality?

**Read:**

**1036** The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a call to the responsibility incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent call to conversion: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

*Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed, we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed, and not, like the wicked and slothful servants, be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth.*

1. A “call to responsibility” to use your freedom to make the right and moral decisions, leading to life eternal. What is the most important, responsible, decision you can make that leads to heaven and away from hell?
2. Few find the “narrow gate” that leads to life. Jesus doesn’t quantify this (exactly how many find it). But if we understand what the narrow gate means we can have some understanding. What do you think it looks like to find and enter the narrow gate in this life? Give 3 to 5 ways the narrow gate appears to us.

Read:

Matthew 25:31-46

1. Identify how you can fulfill each of these needs and who the needy are in your world today (hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, ill, imprisoned)
2. Why would a person “go to Hell” if they didn’t do these things, according to Jesus?
3. Can you share a story about a time when you recognized the face of Jesus in someone?
4. Do you have a story of regret for a time when you missed an opportunity?
5. Those experiences and the feelings they foster (4-5) are the difference between Heaven and Hell. Discuss

**Prayer**

 Please pray a Divine Mercy Chaplet