

Upper Room: April/May/ 2021

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

Dear friends in Christ:

I'm pretty sure that if you are at an Upper Room meeting you are not going to Hell. It's possible but not very likely. The soul that finds themselves in hell has completely turned themselves away from God and His love or perhaps it is a soul that has never known God and this reality has created a darkness of being, removed from God's grace. Whatever the dark reason, this person probably doesn't even believe in Hell, doesn't really think about its existence or isn't very afraid to end up there. For the believer it works as a deterrent of sorts. Punishment for sin dates back to some of our earliest memories as children with your parents and God's punishment for our sins (we were told) would be that much more epic. A person can create in their mind this fiery place of torture, with machines and demons running amuck implementing all kinds of perfidy and abuse. But what is the truth. I like for us to examine the truth of Hell in this Upper Room... 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 Revelation 21:8:

Literally understood, John the Evangelist “would cast into hell” the worst of the worst. An aggressive, overt, seemingly sinister, evil person is dunked headfirst into the lava bath. Is this how it works do you think? Are all hell-bound souls all despicable? I know we can’t judge a person to be in hell or not (that is God’s business) but (taking license here) share stories of people you have known who lived a hell-bound life.

Rev. Benedict Groeschel (noted Catholic author) wrote once about Hell: “Believing in Hell may not be so hard, but what you may not realize is that Hell is a part of Divine Mercy. God does not make Hell. He cannot make anything bad. Hell is a place where those who have turned away from God forever hide from Him. Those who have spent their lives running from God are least miserable in Hell, not most miserable.”

If God did not create Hell, who did? Why are demons least miserable there? What is the hardest part of dwelling in Hell?

Read the following CCC paragraphs:

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.

What makes a mortal sin a mortal sin? Of the three things that make a mortal sin, what is the one part that makes committing a mortal sin the most difficult (in your opinion)? Why is being in the state of mortal sin at death worthily punished by God with eternity in Hell?

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."

Discuss the phrase where Jesus says about getting to Heaven, "narrow the gate, the way is hard and those who find it are few." Do you believe that only a few go to Heaven? Consider how many "wicked and slothful" people you know, do you believe that only a few go to Hell? What does your experience tell you about salvation and damnation?

1037 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. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want "any to perish, but all to come to repentance":

Father, accept this offering
from your whole family.
Grant us your peace in this life,
save us from final damnation,
and count us among those you have chosen.

"Predestine" means from the beginning it was God's intention to send the soul to Hell. Discuss how insane this is considering God's view of free will.

A perfect intercession is "For the conversion of sinners and the union of all Christians." This is a constant prayer of the Church in our liturgy. How is it or can it be made a part of your personal prayer?

Finally, affirm the truth. How is Hell avoided and Heaven gifted?

Please pray The Divine Mercy Chaplet.