



## The Month of the Dead

The feasts of All Saints and All Souls invite reflection on the mystery of death, so I've gathered the following quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to turn our minds to the world that is to come.

**Death** "Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning. . . . In death, God calls man to himself. Therefore the Christian . . . can transform his own death into an act of obedience and love towards the Father, after the example of Christ" (CCC 1010-1011).

**Judgment** "Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgment on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world" (679).

"The New Testament . . . repeatedly affirms [e.g., in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, in the words of Jesus to the good thief on the Cross] that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith . . . in a particular judgment" that delivers him to hell, to purgatory, or to heaven (1021, 1022).

**Hell** "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 . . . .To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice . . . [in] 'hell'" (1033).

**Purgatory** "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven" (1030).

"The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned" (1031).

"[E]very sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth or after death. . . . [The Divine punishment of Purgatory] must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin" (1472).

"**Heaven** is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longing, the state of supreme, definitive happiness" (1024). "And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3).

### **Prayer for the Dead**

"For even dead, we are not at all separated from one another, because we all run the same course and we will find one another again in the same place. . . . [W]e are united with Christ as we go toward him" (1690).

". . . God our Savior . . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim 2:3-4).

"We do not pray to change divine decree, but only to obtain what God has decided will be

*obtained only through prayer.* In other words, as St. Gregory says, 'by asking, men deserve to receive what the all-powerful God has decreed from all eternity to give them'" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

"I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth" (St. Therese of Lisieux).

Perhaps these fragments will help you draw closer to the faithful departed, whom we remember especially this month and whom we hope one day to meet in heaven.