Editor's Note: The word "Heaven" is capitalized and bolded by the author, even within quotes, for effect.

See here for Part I, here for Part II, and here for Part III of this series.

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Fourth Sunday in Lent (*Laetare* Sunday)

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

For the glory of God and for the salvation of souls, the theme of "**The Four Last Things**" is a traditional meditation in our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Four Last Things are: **Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell**. Today is *Laetare* Sunday and the rose-colored vestments are usually worn instead of the darker Lenten purple. *Laetare* means "rejoice" and hence is well suited for the topic of **HEAVEN**. Accordingly, in this last reflection, we will offer meditations upon **HEAVEN** and the related subject of Purgatory.

Fatima

The Message of Fatima is a compendium of Catholic Church teaching and a reaffirmation of the Gospel. It is an answer to our troubled times of doctrinal confusion. The Fatima Message affirms the traditional teaching of our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which is being denied today. In particular, Fatima teaches us about the existence and necessity of Purgatory. Our Lady dispels the false notion that all of those destined for Heaven go there immediately after death.

When Our Lady of Fatima first appeared to Jacinta, her brother Francisco, and their cousin, Lucia, on May 13, 1917, she was asked by Lucia: "Where is Your Grace from?" Our Lady responded: "I am of **HEAVEN**." Lucia would go on to ask if she would go to **HEAVEN**. The welcome answer was: "Yes, you will." When Lucia asked about her younger cousin, Jacinta, Our Lady replied that Jacinta would also go to **HEAVEN**. Asking about her other cousin, Francisco, Our Lady said: "Also, but he will have to say many Rosaries."

From that time on, Francisco prayed many Rosaries. Many years after Francisco's death, Church officials wanted to disinter his body to move it into the newly constructed Our Lady of the Rosary Basilica. However, they had trouble locating his body in the local cemetery. Francisco's body was finally located and identified, in part, by his Rosary beads which were imbedded in the remains of his hands.

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Some people think that Francisco must have been a bad boy, since Our Lady said that he must pray many Rosaries to get into **HEAVEN**. But, by all accounts, he was a very good child. As such, I believe that God had given him the grace, the capacity, to pray "many" Rosaries. Accordingly, unless Francisco used that gift to pray many Rosaries, he would endanger his eternal salvation. So remember, to whom much is given, much is expected (cf. Luke 12:48). If we have gifts from God that we do not use for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, we may not make it into **HEAVEN**.

The following month, on June 13, Lucia said to Our Lady: "I would like to ask you to take us to **HEAVEN**." "Yes, I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. But you are to stay here some time longer," as Our Lady explained, because "Jesus wishes to make use of you to make me known and loved." This reminds us that Almighty God has plans for all of us, including calling some to judgment sooner rather than later. Jacinta was nine years old when she died and her brother, Francisco, was only ten. Lucia would become a religious sister and live on for many more years. As long as we are alive, we have a vocation and a mission from God. How well we fulfill God's plan for our lives will determine whether we make it to **HEAVEN**.

On May 13, Lucia asked Our Lady if her friend Amelia, who was around 18 to 20 years old when she died, was in **HEAVEN**. The Blessed Mother said, "She will be in Purgatory until the end of the world." Our Lady thus affirmed the traditional Catholic belief in Purgatory, which is so shamefully ignored or denied in our modern times. People who die in a state of grace, but who had not made sufficient reparation for their sins on earth, will go to Purgatory.

Traditional Catholic Teaching

The **1917 Catholic Encyclopedia** teaches that "**HEAVEN** is the abode of the blessed, where (after the resurrection with glorified bodies) they enjoy, in the company of Christ and the angels, the immediate vision of God face to face, being supernaturally elevated by the light of glory so as to be capable of such a vision. There are infinite degrees of glory corresponding to degrees of merit, but all are unspeakably happy in the eternal possession of God. Only the perfectly pure and holy can enter **HEAVEN**; but for those who have attained that state, either at death or after a course of purification in purgatory, entry into **HEAVEN** is not deferred, as has sometimes been erroneously held, till after the General Judgment."

Concerning Purgatory, the **1917 Catholic Encyclopedia** teaches that it "is the intermediate state of unknown duration in which those who die imperfect, but not in unrepented mortal sin, undergo a course of penal purification, to qualify for admission into **HEAVEN**. They share in the communion of saints and are benefited by our prayers and

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good works."

The traditional **1891 Baltimore Catechism (#3)**, "Lesson 37, On the Last Judgment & Resurrection, Hell, Purgatory, & HEAVEN", teaches the following [with my comments in brackets]:

Q. 1381. What is Purgatory?

A. Purgatory is the state in which those suffer for a time who die guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins.

Q. 1382. Why is this state called Purgatory?

A. This state is called Purgatory because in it the souls are purged or purified from all their stains; and it is not, therefore, a permanent or lasting state for the soul.

Q. 1383. Are the souls in Purgatory sure of their salvation?

A. The souls in Purgatory are sure of their salvation, and they will enter **HEAVEN** as soon as they are completely purified and made worthy to enjoy that presence of God which is called the Beatific Vision.

Q. 1384. Do we know what souls are in Purgatory, and how long they have to remain there?

A. We do not know what souls are in Purgatory nor how long they have to remain there; hence we continue to pray for all persons who have died apparently in the true faith and free from mortal sin. They are called the faithful departed.

Q. 1385. Can the faithful on earth help the souls in Purgatory?

A. The faithful on earth can help the souls in Purgatory by their prayers, fasts, alms, deeds; by indulgences, and by having Masses said for them. [Padre Pio said that more souls of the dead (from Purgatory) visited him at San Giovanni Rotondo than those of the living. He helped countless souls from Purgatory enter into **HEAVEN**.]

Q. 1386. Since God loves the souls in Purgatory, why does He punish them?

A. Though God loves the souls in Purgatory, He punishes them because His holiness requires that nothing defiled may enter **HEAVEN** and His justice requires that everyone be punished or rewarded according to what he deserves.

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Q. 1392. In what state will the bodies of the just rise?

A. The bodies of the just will rise glorious and immortal.

Q. 1395. What is HEAVEN?

A. **HEAVEN** is the state of everlasting life in which we see God face to face, are made like unto Him in glory, and enjoy eternal happiness.

Q. 1396. In what does the happiness in HEAVEN consist?

A. The happiness in **HEAVEN** consists in seeing the beauty of God, in knowing Him as He is, and in having every desire fully satisfied.

Q. 1397. What does St. Paul say of HEAVEN?

A. St. Paul says of **HEAVEN**, "That eye hath not seen. nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Q. 1398. Are the rewards in HEAVEN and the punishments in hell the same for all who enter into either of these states?

A. The rewards of **HEAVEN** and the punishments in hell are not the same for all who enter into either of these states, because each one's reward or punishment is in proportion to the amount of good or evil he has done in this world. But as **HEAVEN** and hell are everlasting, each one will enjoy his reward or suffer his punishment forever.

Sacred Scripture

From the traditional **Douay-Rheims Bible** [with my comments in brackets]:

"For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 Mach. 12:44-46). [This is the classic 'proof text' for Purgatory in the Bible. Those who are in **HEAVEN** would need no prayers. Those who are in hell could not be helped by prayer. Therefore, there must be a third place, which Catholics know as Purgatory. It is said that Martin Luther removed the Second Book of Machabees from his 'bible' since Protestants do not believe in Purgatory.]

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"Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing" (Matt. 5:25-26). [The "prison" is classically seen as Purgatory. The "last farthing" represents the last amount of reparation needed to enter into **HEAVEN**.]

"Do penance: for the kingdom of **HEAVEN** is at hand" (Matt. 3:2, 4:17).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of **HEAVEN**" (Matt. 5:3).

"He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called least in the kingdom of **HEAVEN**. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of **HEAVEN**" (Matt. 5:19).

"Our Father Who art in **HEAVEN**, hallowed be Thy Name" (Matt. 6:9).

"I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in **HEAVEN** upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance" (Luke 15:7).

"This is the Bread which cometh down from **HEAVEN**; that if any man eat of it, he may not die" (John 6:50).

"I am the Living Bread which came down from **HEAVEN**" (John 6:51).

"Unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in **HEAVEN** for you" (I Pet. 1:4).

"And a great sign appeared in **HEAVEN**: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Apoc. 12:1).

There are 238 verses in the Douay-Rheims New Testament that contain the word **HEAVEN**.

Saints

St. Thomas More: "Earth hath no sorrow that **HEAVEN** cannot heal."

St. Isidore of Seville: "The more we are afflicted in this world, the greater is our assurance in the next; the more sorrow in the present, the greater will be our joy in the future."

St. Ignatius of Loyola: "A precious crown is reserved in **HEAVEN** for those who perform

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all their actions with all the diligence of which they are capable; for it is not sufficient to do our part well, it must be done more than well."

St. Thérèse of Lisieux: "The world is thy ship, not thy home."

St. John Vianney, the Cure D'Ars: "O my dear parishioners, let us endeavor to get to **HEAVEN**! There we shall see God. How happy we shall feel! If the parish is converted, we shall go there in procession with the parish priest at the head. … We must get to **HEAVEN**!"

St. John Vianney, the Cure D'Ars: "A priest goes to **HEAVEN** or a priest goes to hell with a thousand people behind."

St. Bernadette Soubirous: "My crown in **HEAVEN** should shine with innocence and its flowers should be radiant as the sun. Sacrifices are the flowers Jesus and Mary chose."

St. Louis Marie de Montfort: "According to St. Bonaventure, all the angels in **HEAVEN** unceasingly call out to her: 'Holy, holy, holy Mary, Virgin Mother of God.' They greet her countless times each day with the angelic greeting, 'Hail, Mary,' while prostrating themselves before her, begging her as a favor to honor them with one of her requests. According to St. Augustine, even St. Michael, though prince of all the heavenly court, is the most eager of all the angels to honor her and lead others to honor her. At all times, he awaits the privilege of going at her word to the aid of one of her servants."

St. Thomas Aquinas: "As sailors are guided by a star to the port, so are Christians guided to **HEAVEN** by Mary."

Conclusion

As Catholics, we *must not* forget our dear departed loved ones who may be in Purgatory! Those who console themselves by saying that their loved ones are 'in a better place' most likely never pray or offer good works for their dead. Our prayers and good works, such as having Masses offered for our deceased loved ones and obtaining plenary indulgences for them, help the souls in Purgatory get to **HEAVEN** sooner! You do not want to have your dearly departed loved ones suffering in the purifying fires of Purgatory, while you go about *not* praying for them with the false assumption that they are in **HEAVEN**. Even if they may be in **HEAVEN**, your prayers will never be wasted as they will be applied to some other poor soul.

At Fatima, Our Lady appeared at one point during the Miracle of the Sun on October 13, 1917 dressed as Our Lady of Mount Carmel and holding a Brown Scapular. You can protect

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yourself from going to hell by wearing the Brown Scapular, as Our Lady of Mount Carmel said to St. Simon Stock: "Whoever dies in this garment will not suffer everlasting fire." You may be released from Purgatory on the First Saturday after your death by wearing the Brown Scapular and by earning the Sabbatine Privilege. Make sure that you and your loved ones are enrolled in and die wearing the Brown Scapular. The Brown Scapular is a **FIRE INSURANCE POLICY**! Sister Lucia of Fatima said, "The Rosary and the Brown Scapular are inseparable."

In the traditional Catholic 'Act of Contrition', we say that we "dread the loss of **HEAVEN** and the pains of hell". To gain the everlasting happiness of **HEAVEN** and to avoid the eternal pains of hell, go to Confession regularly and receive Holy Communion in a state of grace at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as often as possible.

Padre Pio would say, "It is easier for the earth to exist without the sun than without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass." He also said: "Confession is the soul's bath. Even a clean and unoccupied room gathers dust. Return after a week and you will see that it needs dusting again."

Attend the Traditional Latin Mass. Firmly resolve, with the help of God's grace, to confess your sins, to do penance, and to amend your life.

This will bring you peace in this life and one day happiness forever in the life of the world to come: **HEAVEN**.

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

This article has been updated since the time of publication.

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