

MARY, THE SAINTS AND THE AFTERLIFE

Session Description:

This session will look at Mary's special vocation in the church. It also offers a basic understanding of the meaning of the communion of saints, and it will explore eternal life as a call to every Christian to know God and desire eternity with Him.

Focus of the Session:

The unity of the Church extends in time to the past to consider those who have modeled what it means to live in grace of Christ. Mary's role as Mother of God and Mother of the Church is explored, along with what the Church teaches about Heaven, Hell and Purgatory .

“By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and. . . wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, she is the ‘exemplary realization’ (*typus*)⁵¹⁰ of the Church.” (CCC #967)

“When we have spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise...according to the command of the Lord and in his Spirit, we will find them once again, cleansed this time from the stain of sin, illuminated and transfigured, when Christ presents to his Father an eternal and universal kingdom. God will then be ‘all in all’ in eternal life. True and subsistent life consists in this: the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, pouring out his heavenly gifts on all things without exception. Thanks to his mercy, we too, men that we are, have received the inalienable promise of eternal life.” (CCC #1050)

Content:

1. Present the teachings on Mary: Mother of God, Immaculate Conception, Ever Virgin, Model of Discipleship, Mother of the Church, and her Assumption as presented in sacred Scripture and its ongoing expression in the life of the Church.
2. Discuss the role of Mary and the Saints as intercessors.
3. Introduce the shared life of the faithful in the communion of saints.
4. Review Catholic teachings on eternal life: judgment, including heaven, hell, and purgatory; and living forever with God in the happiness of heaven, entered after death by the soul of those who die in grace and friendship of God.

Learning Outcome:

As a result of this session, the catechist will:

1. Understand the special role of Mary to life in the church today.
2. Be able to relate the lives of the saints and Mary to life in the Church today.
3. Understand the meaning of the communion of saints.
4. Understand that Jesus Christ calls all people to eternal life with him.

References:

- A Catholic edition of the Holy Bible: Luke 1:46-5, Hebrews 12:1-2, Revelation 12:1-18, 19, 21-22
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: #946-977, 491-492, 488-511, 1020-1050
- *National Directory for Catechesis*: pp. 154-156, 300-302