



COUPLES FOR CHRIST

USA

A Private International Association of the Faithful of Pontifical Right

Building the
Church of the
Home, Building
the Church of
the Poor

Families in the Holy Spirit Renewing the Face of the Earth

2014 Theme: "Behold and Ponders" John 19:26-27

Theme/Topic of the month:
Heaven: Our Final Destination

Teaching of the Month:
Heaven: Our Final Destination

Scripture of the month:
1Cor2:7-9 "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him."

Discussion question of the month:
How do you visualize Heaven to be?

Song of the month:
I can only Imagine by Mercy Me <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xwzltqYmll>

Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs of the month (Heaven):
CCC 1023-1029

Leaders' Teaching of the month:
Back to Basics (See attached Back to Basics Training Powerpoint summary)
Special Thanks: Chito Noriega (CFC SoCal Sector AGT Member and E&M Directorate)

Saint of the month (in line with Valentine's Day):
St Valentine

Prayer of the month:
Prayer of Blessing for Married Couples (HH Head prays over members)

Media (TV/CD/Book) of the month:
EWTN TV (Eternal Word Television Network)

iPhone/Smartphone App of the month:
Laudate (Free)

"Faith Without Action is Dead" Application of the month: The Kingdom of heaven is at hand:
Make a list of at least 10 people who you will invite to a CLP in 2014 and pray for them daily.

Theme/Topic of the month: Heaven: Our Final Destination (3 parts)
What Can We Expect in Heaven?



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We were created for one purpose: to get to heaven! St. Ignatius in Principle and Foundation expresses this with utter clarity: Man is created to praise God, reverence God, serve God and for the salvation of his soul---another way for saying to get to heaven. The classical catechetical text reiterates it in almost the same way: "We are created to know God, love God, and serve God in this life so as to be with Him forever in Heaven." To motivate us on our Highway to heaven, below are ten wonderful things that we can expect once we get to heaven and indeed we should long and yearn for heaven. "As the deer yearns for the running waters, so my soul yearns for you, O Lord my God." May our yearning for God become a reality in being welcomed by Jesus one day in Heaven! Even the most vivid imagination still cannot comprehend and penetrate the extraordinary greatness of what awaits us in heaven. St. Paul reminds us: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him."(I Cor. 2: 9)

Ten extraordinary Blessings of Heaven

1- ABSENCE OF SUFFERING. While on earth it is a time of constant struggle, unexpected pain and suffering, filled with insecurities. In Heaven there will be none of the above. The suffering that we willingly accepted from God in reparation for our many sins will be a jewel in our crown of glory. St. Paul reminds us: "The sufferings of the present time are nothing in comparison for the glory that awaits the sons and daughters of God.

2- ABSOLUTE PEACE. In the present state of affairs, across the world, we always encounter wars, starting with Cain who killed Abel. Our Lady of Fatima said that the reason for the World wars and the wars in general is sin and that if people did not stop sinning then a worse world war would breakout which happened--- the Second World War. St. Augustine defines peace as "The Tranquility of order." In Heaven order is total and peace universal! SHALOM! PEACE BE WITH YOU!

3- UNALTERABLE JOY! In this "Valley of tears" (The Hail Holy Queen) our emotional state can be compared to a roller coaster, for many today! One day our joy has no limits; we have reached the top of the Roller Coaster; the following day is a "Downer" in which a cloud of desolation seems to almost totally blind us. Not so in heaven. In heaven the joy will be complete. Jesus said that He will come to us and our joy will be complete! JESUS is the reason for that joy--- We will always be with Him!

4- PERMANENT LIGHT! Judas left Jesus that first Holy Thursday night and entered into the profound darkness of the night--- a very clear symbol of sin! Sin is leaving Jesus and entering into the thickets of darkness! In Heaven, the face of Jesus will shine on us at all times and we will not have any need for lamps or lights because the face God Himself will be our Light never to fade, dim, or extinguish! Jesus is the "Light of the World "who will be our light in Heaven for all eternity! Lord, while I still have life, cast out any darkness that might be lurking in the inner recesses of my soul!

5- NO SICKNESSES. Not only will we be free from any forms of suffering, but related to this, we will experience no forms of sickness--- neither emotional, physical, moral, spiritual, social, psychological--- the whole gamut---no sicknesses at all. As a result of Original Sin one of the consequences is the debilitating effect of the body resulting in sicknesses. No



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longer in heaven! All the doctors will be out of business!

6- SAINTS. The Saints will be our best friends and for all eternity. Even the best of human relationships in this limited world in which we live are subject to unfaithfulness and often failure. Not so in heaven! All of the saints will be our friends and forever. These are the "Masterpieces of the Holy Spirit." (Blessed Pope John XXIII). Joyful, dynamic, strong, intelligent, affective, interested and interesting, charismatic—all of these words describe to a limited degree all of the saints. They will be your best friends and you will be theirs. Your dialogue in friendship with them can be at any time, any length and with total openness! You can enter in dialogue with one of them, two of the saints, or with many at the same time! How we should yearn to go to heaven to be with these best of friends!

7- ANGELS. If that were not sufficient to have so many best of friends in the saints, there is still more--- THE ANGELS! The angels are superior to saints in the power of their intellect as well as the intensity of their will. Like the saints, the angels will be your companions and friends for all eternity. St. Thomas Aquinas divided them into ranks called choirs: Seraphim, Cherubim, virtues, dominations, powers, archangels and angels. There are myriad upon myriads of angels and each is a species unto himself! While on earth our Guardian Angel is constantly on the watch to protect us from the countless enemies and circumstances that could trip and trick us into sin. In heaven, no more! Our Guardian Angel and Angels--- like the multitude of saints—will be our best of friends!

8- THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. "Hail Holy Queen, mother of Mercy our life our sweetness and our hope..." In Heaven we will no longer be in this valley of tears.... The clouds of sadness and despair all coming from sin will be gone. Many of the greatest artists in the world have tried to paint the majesty, greatness and the beauty of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but have fallen far short! An artist painted a strikingly beautiful image of Our Lady of Lourdes and it was presented to the "seer"—St. Bernadette. Despite the remarkable beauty of the painting, St. Bernadette could only respond within air of sadness, "No, she is much more beautiful, much more beautiful, much more beautiful.... No artist in the world—even the greatest—could not, cannot nor ever will be able—to paint the glorious majesty and beauty of Mary the Mother of God. For that reason Saint John Berchmans, S.J. Stated: "I want to keep my eyes pure in this world so as to contemplate with ever greater clarity the beauty of the face of Mary in heaven." In heaven Mary will be our joy, our hope, and our Mother for all eternity!

9- JESUS OUR ELDER BROTHER AND BEST FRIEND. Of even greater magnitude will be the Presence of JESUS. While on earth, in this constant battle ground, sad to say, we can lose the Friendship of Jesus due to committing mortal sin. Having crossed the finish line, having slid "safe" into home-plate, having been awarded the "Gold-medal" of grace, Jesus will be our Friend, Companion, Lord, God and Savior as well as our King for all eternity! All of our deepest yearnings and longings will be fulfilled in the Person and Presence of Jesus the Lord.

10-THE BLESSED TRINITY. Loneliness, isolation, separation, abandonment--- all of these painful realities are non-existent in heaven. Heaven is family! The saints, the angels, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus, but still more.... The nature of God Himself is family; that is the most Blessed Trinity--- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God will be our loving Father for all eternity; The Son (Jesus) will be our elder Brother forever; the Holy Spirit will



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be our intimate Friend eternally. We will love them and they will love us and we will be absorbed in this endless bond of love.

FIVE ROADBLOCKS ON THE HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN.

Jesus warned us that the way to heaven is narrow and there are few that follow that path. However, the path that leads to destruction is wide and many choose it!

Highlighting the obstacles on the path to heaven can be of great help to us. The Shepherd must know where the wolf is hiding; the soldier must know where the enemy's attack is planned; the athlete must know the weak point of the opponent. The soldier of Christ indeed must detect his major obstacles.

1. **LAZINESS.** The Book of Revelation warns us of an attitude highly displeasing to God--- that of apathy and laziness. "You are neither hot nor cold, I wish you were either of the two, but lukewarm. I will spit you out of my mouth. (Rev. 3) To lose our first love, to surrender to apathy, to give in to discouragement, to lose the fire of passion for Christ—all is so easy! Why? Original Sin and its effects, an environment of apathy, and the devil--- all contribute to laziness. The saints were keenly aware of the shortness of life and the price of our salvation, the Precious Blood of Jesus. They did all they could to serve the Lord with a generous spirit.

2. **DISTRACTIONS.** Never in the history of the world have there been so many distractions. What do we mean by distractions? T.V., the internet, sports, parties, social activities, long-phone conversations, vacations, pets, cosmetics—these are all distractions! Not that these distractions are necessarily sinful, but how easily can they crowd God out of our lives! How easily can distraction become the principal focus of our lives and God becomes more and more distant like a ship leaving the port and disappearing into the midst of the sea!

3. **SENSUALITY.** Sensuality in all its forms can easily put God at a distance in our lives! Eating, drinking, smoking, drugs, disordered sexual appetites, a life of ease—these are manifestations of sensuality. A key example of the pernicious effects of sensuality is the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich man. Overtly, the Rich man did not seem to be evil. However, he did end up in the fiery pit. Why? Not so much for what he did do but for what he failed to do, the sin of omission, catapulted this piteous man into the fiery furnace. His luxurious and sumptuous meals, his expensive wardrobe, and high-class living blinded him from seeing Jesus who was truly present in Lazarus, the poor, raggedy, and wound-covered man outside the gate.

4. **RESENTMENT AND LACK OF FORGIVENESS.** Too many people today live as modern slaves. Their chains are not so much physical as moral shackles. One of the most common bondages today is resentment and lack of forgiveness. In the Our Father we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...." In other words, for me to be forgiven and to be a recipient of God's mercy, I must forgive and be merciful to others. It is a two-way street! Jesus came to set captives free. Forgiving those who have wounded us is setting the captive free. That is me! I free myself of the cage of unforgiveness and experience the freedom of the sons of God.

5. **IGNORANCE.** How can we love somebody that we do not even know? Impossible! How



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can we love an "Unknown God?" Impossible! Both agnosticism and atheism are two theological ideologies spreading like wildfire, especially in the USA. An atheist denies the existence of God. An agnostic lives in perpetual uncertainty. Ignorance, on any topic can only be dispelled by serious study. Professionals must be up to date, on the cutting edge and constantly in "Permanent Formation." Catholics (especially CFC brethren) must be "Professionals" with respect to religion and God. It should be their most ardent desire and longing to get to know God better which will lead to loving God more ardently, which in turn will lead to following Him more closely, and then in bringing others to Him.

In conclusion, beware of these five major roadblocks on the Highway to heaven: laziness, distractions, sensuality, unresolved resentments, and ignorance.

TEN HOLY REMINDERS TO GET US TO HEAVEN!

1. **LOVE OF GOD.** God is love; He created you out of sheer love; you are called to a vocation to love God and neighbor; if done, you will love God for all eternity!
2. **ONE LIFE.** You have one life to live. Life is extremely short. You know neither the day, the hour nor the moment of your death. Live your life to the fullest loving God at all times, places and circumstances!
3. **TEMPTATIONS.** Temptations are many and will continue until you die. However, they will come especially through three sources: the devil, the flesh, and the world. Be ready for...
4. **COMBAT TIME.** Life on earth is a constant battle. As the Word of God teaches: "Son if you decide to follow God, prepare yourself for battle." (Sirach 2:1) Fighting time is now; rest will be in heaven forever.
5. **HEAVEN.** Think often about heaven, your ultimate destiny. "Our Father who art in heaven... The constant thought of our heavenly home can help us to bear the heaviest crosses!
6. **PRAY ALWAYS!** Jesus exhorts us: "It is necessary to pray at all times without giving up hope." (Lk. 18:1) The principal reason for falling into sin is poor prayer or lack of prayer!
7. **REJOICE!** "Rejoice in the Lord; I say it again: rejoice in the Lord." (Phil. 4:4) The knowledge that Jesus is our best Friend always there for us should fill us with constant joy! Joy as well as sadness is contagious. Hopefully you will be a herald of glad tidings!
8. **SACRIFICE!** Jesus paves the way to heaven—it is through the cross. "If anyone wants to be my follower let him renounce himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24) When we say "No" to ourselves, we say "yes" to God!
9. **ANGELS AND SAINTS!** Loneliness weighs down many. It should not be that way. The Beatles sang, "Get a little help from your friends." Our best friends are the angels and saints. Invite them to walk with you always!
10. **MARY.** She is the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church, and your Mother. It was through her powerful intercession that Jesus performed His first Public miracle turning water into wine. (Jn. 2:1-12). Mary can turn our water--- our many problems—into wine, the resolution of the problems!

Read and meditate upon these short but substantial ten reminders and you will be travelling



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on the path of holiness and the Highway to Heaven. Mary, Gate of Heaven, pray for us!

Catechism of the Catholic Church CCC 1023-1029

Source: Fr Ed Broom OMV

Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs of the month: CCC 1023-1029

Heaven

1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face:598 (954) By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints... and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died,... or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death,...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment—and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven—have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.599

1024 This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity—this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed—is called "heaven." Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness. (260, 326, 2794, 1718)

1025 To live in heaven is "to be with Christ." The elect live "in Christ,"600 but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name.601 (1011)

For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom.602

1026 By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has "opened" heaven to us. The life of the blessed consists in the full and perfect possession of the fruits of the redemption accomplished by Christ. He makes partners in his heavenly glorification those who have believed in him and remained faithful to his will. Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ. (793)

1027 This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light, peace, wedding feast, wine of the kingdom, the Father's house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."603 (959, 1720)

1028 Because of his transcendence, God cannot be seen as he is, unless he himself opens up his mystery to man's immediate contemplation and gives him the capacity for it. The Church calls this contemplation of God in his heavenly glory "the beatific vision": (1722, 163)

How great will your glory and happiness be, to be allowed to see God, to be honored with sharing the joy of salvation and eternal light with Christ your Lord and God,... to delight in the joy of immortality in the Kingdom of heaven with the righteous and God's friends.604

1029 In the glory of heaven the blessed continue joyfully to fulfill God's will in relation to



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other men and to all creation. Already they reign with Christ; with him "they shall reign for ever and ever.

Source: Catechism of the Catholic Church

Saint of the month: St Valentine

Feastday: February 14

Patron of Love, Young People, Happy Marriages

Died: 269

Valentine was a holy priest in Rome, who, with St. Marius and his family, assisted the martyrs in the persecution under Claudius II. He was apprehended, and sent by the emperor to the prefect of Rome, who, on finding all his promises to make him renounce his faith ineffectual, commanded him to be beaten with clubs, and afterwards, to be beheaded, which was executed on February 14, about the year 270. Pope Julius I is said to have built a church near Ponte Mole to his memory, which for a long time gave name to the gate now called Porta del Popolo, formerly, Porta Valetini. The greatest part of his relics is now in the church of St. Praxedes.

The Origin of St. Valentine

The origin of St. Valentine, and how many St. Valentines there were, remains a mystery. One opinion is that he was a Roman martyred for refusing to give up his Christian faith. Other historians hold that St. Valentine was a temple priest jailed for defiance during the reign of Claudius. Whoever he was, Valentine really existed because archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine. In 496 AD Pope Gelasius marked February 14th as a celebration in honor of his martyrdom.

The first representation of Saint Valentine appeared in a The Nuremberg Chronicle, a great illustrated book printed in 1493. [Additional evidence that Valentine was a real person: archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine.] Alongside a woodcut portrait of him, text states that Valentinus was a Roman priest martyred during the reign of Claudius the Goth [Claudius II]. Since he was caught marrying Christian couples and aiding any Christians who were being persecuted under Emperor Claudius in Rome [when helping them was considered a crime], Valentinus was arrested and imprisoned. Claudius took a liking to this prisoner -- until Valentinus made a strategic error: he tried to convert the Emperor -- whereupon this priest was condemned to death. He was beaten with clubs and stoned; when that didn't do it, he was beheaded outside the Flaminian Gate [circa 269].

Saints are not supposed to rest in peace; they're expected to keep busy: to perform miracles, to intercede. Being in jail or dead is no excuse for non-performance of the supernatural. One legend says, while awaiting his execution, Valentinus restored the sight of his jailer's blind daughter. Another legend says, on the eve of his death, he penned a farewell note to the jailer's daughter, signing it, "From your Valentine."



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St. Valentine was a Priest, martyred in 269 at Rome and was buried on the Flaminian Way. He is the Patron Saint of affianced couples, bee keepers, engaged couples, epilepsy, fainting, greetings, happy marriages, love, lovers, plague, travelers, young people. He is represented in pictures with birds and roses.

Source: Catholic Online

Prayer of the month: Prayer of Blessing for Married Couples (HH Head prays over members)

Almighty and eternal God, you have so exalted the unbreakable bond of marriage that it has become the sacramental sign of your Son's union with the Church as his spouse. Look with favor on these couples, whom you have united in marriage, as they ask for your help and the protection of the Virgin Mary. They pray that in good times and in bad they will grow in love for each other; that they will resolve to be of one heart in the bond of peace.

Lord, in their struggles let them rejoice that you are near to help them;
in their needs let them know that you are there to rescue them;
in their joys let them see that you are the source and completion of every happiness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Media (TV/CD/Book) of the month:

EWTN is a global, Catholic Television, Catholic Radio, and Catholic News Network that provides catholic programming and news coverage from around the world. Check your local provider for your respective EWTN Channels. Our CFC leaders have appeared at EWTN programs in the past, and have been invited to appear in a future program very soon. We will keep you posted but set your remotes automatically tuned into EWTN!

iPhone/Smartphone Catholic App of the month:

Laudate (Free App)

Laudate combines a large number of Catholic religious resources into a single app, giving you instant access to everything you could need, Bible readings for the day, to prayers, confession prompts, and more. While it won't replace the company and guidance of a Priest in your parish, it will provide a range of tools for praying at home, suggestions for daily readings, and more.

When you open Laudate for the first time, you'll find a list of numerous options including prayers, stations of the cross, rosary and chaplet prompts, order of the mass, and much more. You can scroll through these and find anything you need with the tap of a finger, set bookmarks in any of the files (accessible from a separate bookmark menu), or read through



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the Bible and Vatican documents. Laudate is a solid app that allows you access to a huge range of Catholic information and resources.

