



St. Thomas Aquinas Youth (STAY)

Death: There's No Escape

Outline of Events:

6:30: Dinner

7:20: Large Group:
Testimony by Emily
Staff; Skit by the
JCREW and Alison
and short video. Matt
will MC.

7:50: Small Groups

8:30: Pray the Prayer
for a Happy Death or
Prayer for the Dead
to end small group.

Main Points

- **Fear or Peace**—Is death viewed with fear or with peace. Death is feared only by the sinner, for it is the end of his earthly pleasures, and the beginning of his eternal punishment. For those who die in the state of Grace and are “ready” for our Lord, death is a welcome home to see the face of their loving Father. In modern culture we fear death. WHY? Our fear is a reflection of the way our lives are lived.
- **Near or Far**—Is death viewed as being far away from now, not immediate at all or is it viewed as being possible at any time. In modern culture we put off death, knowing that it will take place but also living in a way that the time is far off. Death is for the old, the sick. The Church asks us to be mindful of our death daily. We should “be ready” for the coming of our Lord (whether he comes to us or we die and go to him). We also are asked to be mindful of “our end” “In all your works remembers your last end, and you shall never sin.”

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The Christian who dies in Christ reaches at the end of his earthly existence the fulfillment of that new life which was begun in Baptism, strengthened in Confirmation and nourished in the Eucharist, the foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

Excerpts from *the Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church*

205. What happens to our body and our soul after death?

After death, which is the separation of the body and the soul, the body becomes corrupt while the soul, which is immortal, goes to meet the judgment of God and awaits its reunion with the body when it will rise transformed at the time of the return of the Lord. How the resurrection of the body will come about exceeds the possibilities of our imagination and understanding.

206. What does it mean to die in Christ Jesus?

Dying in Christ Jesus means to die in the state of God's grace without any mortal sin. A believer in Christ, following his example, is thus able to transform his own death into an act of obedience and love for the father. "This saying is sure: if we have died with him, we will also live with him" (2 Timothy 2:11)

It was not in God's plan for us to have to die (Compendium 72)

"In the plan of God they would not have had to suffer or die."

Death is a consequence of sin (Compendium 77)

"In consequence of original sin human nature, without being totally corrupted, is wounded in its natural powers. It is subject to ignorance, to suffering, and to the dominion of death and is inclined toward sin. This inclination is called concupiscence.

Genesis 2:16-17, "The Lord God gave man this order: 'You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die.'"

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

James 1:15, "Then desire conceives and brings forth sin, and when sin reaches maturity it give birth to death."

Galatians 6:7-8, "Make no mistake: God is not mocked, for a person will reap only what he sows, because the one who sow for his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows for the spirit will reap eternal life from the spirit."

Key Points:

- **Death is the separation of the body and the soul.**
- **"For the wages of sin death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."**
- **Romans 6:23**

"The dying have a right to live the last moments of their earthly lives with dignity and, above all, to be sustained with prayer and sacraments that prepare them to meet the living God."

Section 478 of the Compendium

Excerpts from *the Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Death is FINAL (311, 314, 316, 320, 354)

When a person is facing immediate death the Church especially offers the soul mercy at the hour of death through the Sacraments.

1. The absolution of certain particularly grave sins (like those punished by excommunication) is reserved to the Apostolic See (Pope) or local bishop or to priests who are authorized by them. **Any priest, however, can absolve a person who is in danger of death from any sin and excommunication.**
2. In cases of serious necessity (as in imminent danger of death) recourse may be had to a communal celebration of Reconciliation with general confession and general absolution, as long as the norms of the Church are observed and there is the intention of individually confessing one's grave sins in due time.
3. Viaticum (Food for the Journey). Viaticum is the Holy Eucharist received by those who are about to leave this earthly life and are preparing for the journey to eternal life. Communion in the body and blood of Christ who died and rose from the dead, received at the moment of passing from this world to the Father, is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection.
4. Anointing of the Sick— Any member of the faithful can receive this sacrament as soon as he or she begins to be in danger of death because of sickness or old age.
5. Christian Funerals—The Christian who dies in Christ reaches at the end of his early existence the fulfillment of that new life which was begun in Baptism, strengthened in Confirmation and nourished in the Eucharist, the foretaste of the heavenly banquet. The meaning of the death of a Christian becomes clear in the light of the death and Resurrection of Christ our only hope. The Christian who dies in Christ Jesus goes “away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Medical Ethics in regards to the dying:

471—What medical procedures are permitted when death is considered imminent?

When death is considered imminent the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. However, it is legitimate to use painkillers which do not aim at the death and to refuse “over zealous treatment,” that is the utilization of disproportionate medical procedures without reasonable hope of a positive outcome.

476 - Are the transplant and donation of organs allowed before and after death?

The transplant of organs is morally acceptable with the consent of the donor and without excessive risks to him or her. Before allowing the noble act of organ donation after death, one must verify that the donor is truly dead.

479—How are the bodies of the deceased to be treated?

The bodies of the departed must be treated with love and respect. Their cremation is permitted provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body.

Catechesis on Death from “My Catholic Faith”

What happens at death?

The soul is separated from the body.

The Soul goes to be judged and is rewarded with heaven (directly or purgatory first to be purified), punished with hell.

The Body begins to corrupt and returns to dust

Ecclesiastes 12:7— “And the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the life breath returns to God who gave it.”

2 Peter 1:13-14—I think it right, as long as I am in the “tent” to stir you up by a reminder, since I know that I will soon have to put it aside, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me.”

Our first pope Peter speaks of his body as a tent or tabernacle for the soul.

Exceptions of corrupt bodies turning to dust are Our Lord’s and Our Ladies, through the Resurrection and Ascension (Our Lord) and through the Assumption (Our Lady).

All men must die!

Death is the consequence of original sin. By their sin, our first parents lost the immortality of the body.

Genesis 3:19— “For you are dirt, and to dirt you shall return.”

Romans 5:12— “Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned.”

Although Jesus and Mary’s body did not suffer corruption Mary and Jesus did submit to death. They took on our punishment!

No one knows when they will die how they will die

There are two good reason God in his mercy keep us from knowing the hour of our death:

1. We might be overcome by fear when the moment approached
2. We might lead a sinful life in hope of repenting just before death.

Key Points:

- **The soul and body will separate and then one day be united again.**
- **All men must die, even Mary and Jesus submitted to death.**
- **No one knows the day, the hour or the way.**

How can we be ready for Death?

Death comes “as a thief in the night”. We should not be frightened but rather prepared.

Jesus says, “Therefore you must also be ready, because at an hour that you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.” (Matthew 24:44)

We can “be ready” ultimately by leading a good life and avoiding sin. Here are some practical ways we can be ready for death.

1. We keep in God’s grace and love so that when the Angel of Death comes, we welcome him not fear him. He will take us home to see our loving Father. The good do not fear death.

In order to stay “keep in God’s grace” what must we do?

- We live a Sacramental life. We live out our Baptism vows, Baptism began our spiritual life. We allow confirmation to strengthen us daily. We allow the Eucharist to nourish us. These three Sacraments are the Sacraments of initiation. We should not only be initiated into the life of the Church, but should stay in the life. Jesus says, “I am the vine and you are the branches” Through the Sacraments we stay connected to the vine.

- When we sin, we repent. It is important to say an Act of Contrition when we know we are in serious sin and then go to Sacramental Confession as soon as possible if in the state of mortal sin.

- If you are at peace “spiritually” with your life, you will most likely be at peace at your death. Imitate the Saints and their attitude about life and death. Here are some examples of their attitudes.

Simeon died in peace saying, “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word.”

St. Paul says, “I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will give me in that day”

St. Augustine says, “O how sweet it is to die, if one’s life has been a good one!”

2. We should often recall the thought of death and eternity so that we may avoid sin.

Sirach 7:36 it says, “In whatever you do, remember you last days (your end) and you will never sin. As a tree falls so it lies.

Once a priest explained that we are the clay and God is the potter. During our lives on earth we can be molded and water can be added, we can be shaped, clay can be added and taken away. Once we die, we are what we are. We are put in the kiln and are permanently fixed at whatever we have allowed ourselves to be formed into.

We do not think about when we will die, or how we will die, but simple “think” daily that we will one day die. That this life and the things of this life have a limit and are temporal.

3. Have your temporal affairs in order. Resolve issues that need to be resolved. Ephesians 4:26-27 says, “If you are angry, let it be without sin. The sun must not go down on your wrath; do not give the devil a chance to work on you. We do not know when we will die or when others will die so it is important to be a peace with others.

Lex orandi, lex credendi (prayer & belief)

In the Liturgy of the Hours (Night Prayer) the Church prays every day the following:

Protect us Lord as we stay awake; watch over us as we sleep, that awake, we may deep watch with Christ, and asleep, rest in his peace.

Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel. This is the prayer of the prophet Simeon who after seeing Christ was a peace to die. Simeon's prayer is found in Luke 2:29-32.

Can we say to Christ, "let your servant go in peace?"
Can we say to Christ, "your word has been fulfilled" in me?
Can we say to Christ, "my own eyes have seen salvation" today?

At the end of Night Prayer the Church prays,
"May the all-powerful Lord grant us a restful night and a peaceful death."

We can be ready for death by treating each day as if it were our last. Our rest at the end of each day is a foreshadowing of our eternal rest, our death. St. John Chrysostom says, "What is death at most? It is a journey for a season, a sleep longer than usual. If you fear death, you should also fear sleep."

At the end of each day we can ask the questions above:
"Can I go in peace?, Have God's word been fulfilled in my life?, have my eyes seen salvation?"

A prayer for a Happy Death

It seems odd in our modern culture to pray for a happy death. We don't want to even think about death. This is exactly what Satan would like for us not to think of death (our end). Saint Teresa of Avila said, "Everything seems to me to pass so quickly ... that we must concentrate our thoughts on how to die rather than on how to live. In this prayer we focus and actually pray for the state in which we would like to die.

O God, who has doomed all men to die, but has concealed from all the hour of their death, grant that I may pass my days in the practice of holiness and justice, and that I may deserve to quit this world in peace or a good conscience, and in the embraces of Your love. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Byzantine Prayer for the Deceased

God of the spirits and of all flesh, who have trampled death and annihilated the devil and given life to your world, may you yourself, O Lord, grant to the soul of your deceased servant N. rest in a place of light, a verdant place, a place of freshness, from where suffering, pain and cries are far removed. Do You, O good and compassionate God forgive every fault committed by him in word, work or thought because there is no man who lives and does not sin. You alone are without sin and your justice is justice throughout the ages and your word is truth. Since you, O Christ are God, are the resurrection, the life and the repose of your deceased servant N., we give you glory together with your un-begotten Father and your most holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

The Meaning in Music (Limitless & Gone)

Limitless by Remnant

All my relationships, they never seem to last, I have a real big closet by I fill it way to fast
I can be the best at everything but never get past the top, I can listen to my favorite band, the music final stops

Flipping through a book that ends to soon,, I could eat another pizza but my stomachs out of room
Drug and alcohol lead me know where fast, boring TV sitcoms with the same old cast

What are you running to, What are you running from, passing all the things on the way to the limitless One.

Football has it's end zone, the race it's finish line, I done all kind of drama, even pantomime
I been a million places, on my tenth hairdo, Everything has a limit, I can't break through

Often times God's Grace seems limited in my life, Operating ineffective from temptation and strife
Often God seem smaller than I am I try to place Him in my hand, but He can't be in the hands of man
At some point He'll break free from our plan, the Word become flesh and walked across the land
opening up His divinity, see God face to face, the limitlessness of his love, the limitlessness of His Grace
Limiting God's life, Limiting God's Grace, almost to the point where I had pushed it all away
But the limitlessness of the Lord wouldn't allow me to live that way
Like a shepherd to His sheep, by my side He'll always stay

Heavens Gates are open (front row tickets just for me), All the Saints and Angels (the blessed trinity)
Everything Has a limit (Everything has a limit)

Switcfoot—Gone

She told him she'd rather fix her makeup, Than try to fix what's going on, But the problem keeps on calling, Even with
the cellphone gone, She told him that she believes in living, Bigger than she's living now, But her world keeps spinning
backwards, And upside down, Don't say so long in the cellphone, Don't spend today away, Cuz today will soon be

Gone, like yesterday is gone, Like history is Gone, just trying to prove me wrong, And pretend like your immortal

She said he said live like no tomorrow, Every day we borrow, Brings us one step closer to the edge (infinity),
Where your treasure, where's your hope, Forget the world and lose your soul, She pretends like she pretends like she's
immortal, Don't say so long, Your not that far gone, This could be your big chance to makeup, Today till soon be

Gone, like yesterday is gone, Like history is gone, The world keeps spinning on, Your going going gone, Like summer
break is gone, Like Saturday is gone, Just trying to prove me wrong, You pretend like your immortal your immortal

We are not infinite, We are not permanent, Nothing is immediate
We're so confident, In our accomplishments, Look at how dark it is

Gone, like frank Sinatra, Like elvis and his mom Like al pichino's cash nothing lasts in this life, My highschool dreams
are gone, My childhood sweets are gone, Life is a day that doesn't last for long

Life is more than money, Time was never money, Time was never cash, Life is still more than girls
Life is more than hundred dollar bills, And oh the town fills, Life more than fame and rock and roll and thrills
All the riches of the kings, And up in wills we got information in the information age
But do we know what life is, Outside of our convenient lexus cages

She said he said live like no tomorrow, Every moment that we borrow, Brings us closer to the God who's not short of
cash, Hey bono I'm glad you asked, Life is still worth living, life is still worth living

Saint Quotes

St. Pope Clement I

“It is His breath that is in us, and when He wants to, He will take it away.

St. Cyprian of Carthage

“Fear of death is for those who aren’t willing to go to Christ.”

“Death is not an ending, but a transition, and – this journey through time having been completed – a passage into eternity. Who would not hasten things?”

St. Anthony of the Desert

“Let death immediately stand before your eyes, and you will never desire anything bad or worldly.”

St. Ambrose of Milan

“To the good man, to die is gain. The foolish fear death as the greatest of evils; the wise desire it as a rest after labors and the end of ills.”

St. John Chrysostom

“What is death at most? It is a journey for a season, a sleep longer than usual. If you fear death, you should also fear sleep.”

St. Anselm of Canterbury

“Nothing is more certain than death, nothing more uncertain than its hour.”

St. Catherine of Genoa

“I find only one fault with you, Death: that you are too stingy with those who long for you, and too lavish with those who flee from you.”

St. Thomas More

“We should never look at death as something far off; for even if he seem to be in no hurry toward us, yet we ourselves never cease to hurry toward him.”

“In what way we live – whether we wake or sleep, we eat or drink, we mourn or sing – all the while we are dying.”

St. Teresa of Avila

“Life is to live in such a way that we are not afraid to die.”

“Everything seems to me to pass so quickly...that we must concentrate our thoughts on how to die rather than on how to live.”

Blessed Junipero Serra (AMERICAN SAINT)

“Of all the things of life, a happy death is our principal concern. For if we attain that, it matters little if we lose all the rest. But if we do not attain that, nothing else is of any value.”

St. Charles de Foucauld

“Think often of death, so as to prepare for it and appraise things at their true value.”

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (AMERICAN SAINT)

“I am a prisoner too – with all this wide and beautiful creation before me, the restless soul longs to enjoy its liberty and rest beyond its bound. O Father call His child, how readily will He be obeyed!”

St. John Henry Cardinal Newman

“What he dieth, that must he be forever; as the tree falleth, so must it lie.”

St. Josemaria Escriva

“You, if you are an apostle, will not have to die. You will move to a new house: That’s all.

Some Thoughts...

1. This whole lesson can be summed up with four words (Near or Far; Fear or Peace) We should be at peace when we die. The Church gives us the Sacraments and many other graces to be a peace at the end of our life. We should have the attitude that death is not far off but rather near and could happen at any time.

Questions:

- Why would we fear death?

We fear two things, what will happen to our body, what will happen to our soul. We fear that our body will suffer, be in pain, the agony involved. We fear the judgment that awaits our soul. St. Benedict says to fear the day of judgment, so that we will not sin.

- How can we find peace in these fears?

In regards to the suffering of our body we look to Christ's passion and we are at peace in uniting ourselves to His suffering on the Cross. We can be at peace while in agony knowing that we are an offering for our own sins and the sins of the world. We can be at peace knowing the suffering has a use a meaning. In regards to the judgment of our soul. We can be at peace knowing the we have lived a good life, confessed our sins, done penance and can completely be at peace trusting in God's mercy

- What good could come from thinking that death might be near?

We make ourselves ready for Christ. We think of our end and then a line our now with our end.

- What harm could come from thinking that death is far away?

We could die in mortal sin. We could put off things, especially the Divine Life and Grace.

2. In the Hail Mary we say, “pray for us sinners NOW and at the HOUR OF OUR DEATH”

Questions:

Why is now and the hour of our death the most important times?

How does the hour of our death effect the way we live right now?

Why do we ask Mary's prayers at these times?

3. The challenge of the Church is to think often, even daily of the fact that we will die. We should not think of how or when but just “that” we will die. The big question is how can we do that on a daily basis and how can that be done respectfully?

- One of my friend's dad would read the Obituary section of the newspaper every morning with his breakfast. He would simply read about people's lives that had died. In this way he was reminded that he would one day die and that someone would one day read about him. He also showed respect and honor of those people by reading their stories.

- Praying the Prayer for a Happy Death is a great pray to pray each night because it reminds us of our goals: to practice holiness and justice, to quit this world in peace of a good conscience and to have embraced God's love.

- It is also a good habit to write down during the course of your life the names of people that die. These people could be relatives or simply people that your friends and acquaintances tell you have passed away. Each night pray for these people by name, whether you knew them or not. Pray for the soul to be purified in purgatory and for them to have rest in God. This not only shows respect for the dead but reminds us that we too will one day be on that list.

- What other ways can we be mindful of our own death?

Some Thoughts...

4. Some basic questions that could be asked in small group and answered from information in this packet are:
 - Why do we die?
 - What happens to our soul? To our body?
 - Why must all humans die?
 - What would you do if you knew the time and place of your death?
 - If you were given the option to know the time and place of your death, would you? Why?
5. It is always good to understand the Churches teaching and respect of both the body and the soul. The Soul (our intellect and will) animates / directs our Body. They both work together, one does not suppress the other. The Body is at the service of the Soul in that it give action to the intellect and will. We have to remember that both the Soul and Body where WOUNDED. They are both simply wounded, hurt and in need of healing and redemption.

How is our Body wounded?

It suffers, gets sick, has deformities and weaknesses and ultimately is subject to death.

How is it healed / redeemed?

God allows many ways to heal sickness and strengthen weaknesses and ultimately we believe in the Resurrection of the Body. God will completely restore and perfect our body after it has corrupted into dust, at the end of time.

How is our Soul wounded?

Our intellect is ignorant and our will is weak. We do not have integrity, in the beginning there was a wholeness a unity between the mind, will and body. Now our thoughts, desires and actions are confused and not all together. Have you ever hear some say, “don’t mind that person they are not all there, not all together.”

How is our soul healed / redeemed?

By God Grace in this life to bring our thoughts, desires and actions in union with God’s will and in purgatory to continue to purify us and unify us.

6. “In this world nothing is certain but *death and taxes*.” Benjamin Franklin was right. Death is for sure! Because of this our world has to answer the question of what happens when we die. We can not escape this reality. Read or listen to the songs in this packet (Limitless and Gone). What do they say about death? About Life? About how we should live and how we should die?
7. The Saints, like always give us the wisdom and teach us. Read the quotes of the Saint page in this packet and have each person in your group choose two quotes that they like or find interesting and explain why.
8. The word “cemetery” comes from the Greek, and means sleeping-place; there the bodies of the dead sleep till Judgment day. RIP means Requiescat in pace. May he rest in peace. Catholic Cemeteries are solemnly consecrated and Catholic grave sites are blessed by the priest. Some day the bodies of the just will rise in glory, and unite with their souls in heaven, it is fitting to bury bodies in consecrated ground. The bodies are buried facing the east, as a symbol of the hope the deceased placed in Christ, Light of the soul. As we await from the east the rising of the sun, so the body awaits from the east the Risen Christ.