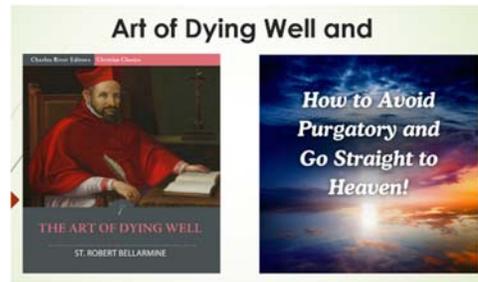


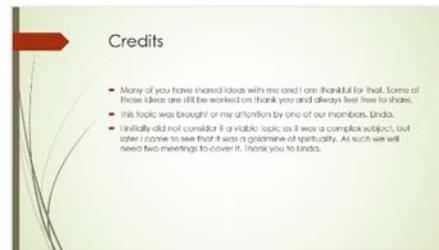
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## Part 1 - Die as you live



## Credits



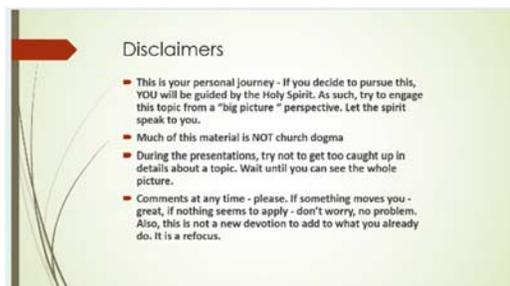
- Many of you have shared ideas with me and I am thankful for that. Some of those ideas are still be worked on thank you and always feel free to share.
- This topic was brought or my attention by one of our members, Linda.
- I initially did not consider it a viable topic as it was a complex subject, but later I came to see that it was a goldmine of spirituality. As such we will need two meetings to cover it. Thank you to Linda.

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## Disclaimers:



This is your personal journey - If you decide to pursue this, YOU will be guided by the Holy Spirit. As such, try to engage this topic from a “big picture “ perspective. Let the spirit speak to you. God creates new, and each of us is new and original and only the Holy Spirit truly knows us.



► Much of this material is NOT church dogma

► During the presentations, try not to get too caught up in details about a topic. Wait until you can see the whole picture.

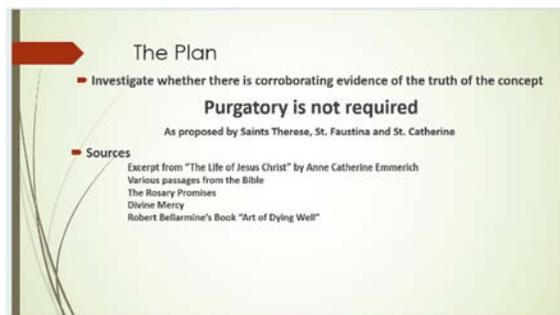
► Comments at any time - please. If something moves you - great, if nothing seems to apply - don't worry, no problem.

TIME — Spirituality and sacraments were viewed differently throughout history.

Saints reflections can be tainted by their personal views – we had a presentation on this. So, keep that in mind if you feel uncomfortable with a particular saint's revelations.

Seek advice from a priest if you are confused. Hopefully we can make the connection between the videos and the topic of purgatory and the “Art of Dying” by St. Robert Bellarmine.

## Our Outline



► Investigate whether there is corroborating evidence of the truth of the concept

**Purgatory is not required**

**As proposed by Saints Therese, St. Faustina and St. Catherine**

► Sources

**Excerpt from “The Life of Jesus Christ” by Anne Catherine Emmerich**

**Various passages from the Bible**

**The Rosary Promises**

**Divine Mercy**

**Robert Bellarmine's Book “Art of Dying Well”**

We will look at several related topics about “avoiding purgatory”

I am skipping over books and writers who address how to “minimize time in purgatory” such as the pamphlet

Other saints who said the same thing (upcoming meetings)

## Spoiler Alert



### **You must ask God for this specific blessing**

“Pray to God for the grace to love Him and to want to be with Him”.

Since this is the only purpose for which we were created, He will answer your prayer

The spoiler is at the beginning to give you a perspective of where we are going with the topic

Try to keep this topic as your focus - big picture

## St Therese Video



Thérèse of Lisieux 1897

## Comments on St Therese

She says “ we would ask God to spare us from purgatory” (key word being ASK)

The sister in the story believed she was not holy enough to go to heaven. (I can relate to that feeling.)

Purgatory is not God’s first choice for us. (Later we will see it referred to as Plan A and Plan B. I will use that terminology often in the discussion.)

The key to skipping purgatory is trust. We would not even have a knowledge that God exists if He did not give it to us. (“Jesus I trust in you”)

Holiness isn’t earned by perfection. (Our life can sometimes be built around GUILT. This is both good and bad. )

assuming we will go to purgatory is NOT a sign of humility but actually offensive to God.

While you live this new focus on love of God, still TRY to remain faithful. ( an example is God lets us be distracted in adoration or mass not to place guilt on us but to keep us humble)

When we love God, we CANNOT go to purgatory.

## Fr. Mike video



## Comments on Fr Mike.

God wants us to bypass purgatory

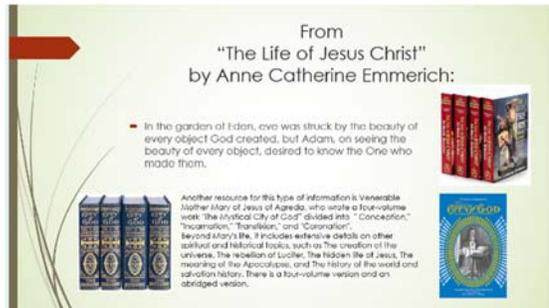
There are Merits contained in each moment of your day

He describes how to live “not going to purgatory” but doesn’t say that message explicitly

Fr Mike 2025

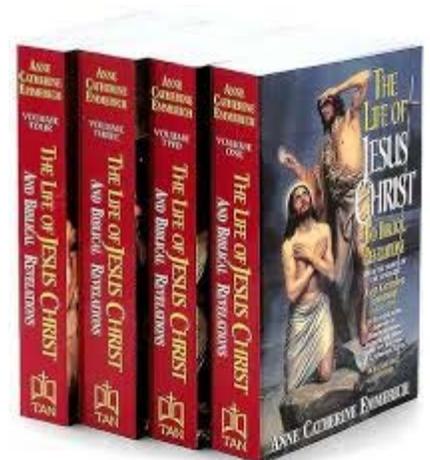
He has many you Tube videos including FAKE videos. Always be wary of online content – even AI. Much of it is a lie !!!!!!!

## From Life of Jesus Christ by Anne Catherine Emmerich:

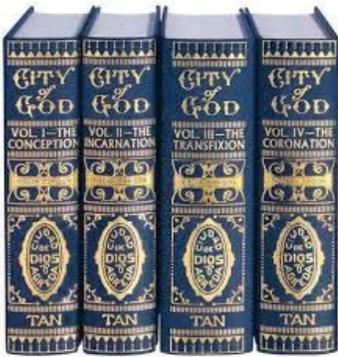


In the garden of Eden, eve was struck by the beauty of every object but Adam, on seeing the beauty of every object desired to know the One who made them.

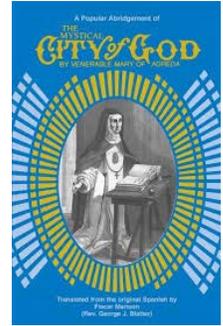
In Ann Catherine Emmerich, whenever God revealed something new or created and new creature, Adam would remain mesmerized by the Creator. Eve on the other hand was taken by the creation and did not see the creator only the creation.



Another resource for this type of information is Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus of Agreda, who wrote a four-



volume work 'The Mystical City of God' divided into "Conception," "Incarnation," "Transfixion," and "Coronation".



Beyond Mary's life, it includes extensive details on other spiritual and historical topics, such as The creation of the universe, The rebellion of Lucifer, The hidden life of Jesus, The meaning of the Apocalypse, and The history of the world and salvation history. There is a four-volume version and an abridged version.

[ This is a sharing from Laurie book is highly recommended ]

Fr Pat often talks about the wonders of creation and then quickly switches to the wonders of our creator.

Consider this scenario: A baker makes a pie, and one person tastes the pie and loves it and proceeds to eat more. Another person tastes the pie and looking away from the pie says "I want to know the person who made this pie." This is a rather lame story of where we are trying to take our spiritual life.

## Recap



To enter heaven without purgatory .....

You must desire to be with God, and to love him for who He is.

To do this, you pray for that grace. VERY important , you must ask for this grace.

You will not know the words to say when you ask for that grace to love God at first but will come to understand.

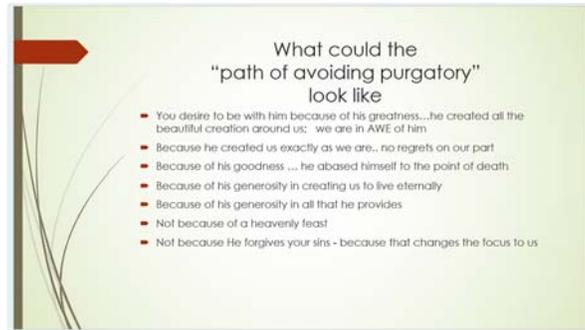
Comments:

Not in any particular order

100 years ago no of us existed. Today we are all here and ETERNAL. Our place in heaven is set at the moment of death and will not go up or down if we go to purgatory or not

It would serve God no purpose to prolong our separation from Him. Yes we must avoid sin, but our number one goal is to know and love God.

## What would the path look like?



You must desire to be with God and to love him for who He is.

To do this you pray for that grace. VERY important , you must ask for this grace.

You will not know the words to say when you ask for that grace to love God at first but will come to understand.

You desire to be with him because of his greatness...he created all the beautiful creation around us; we are in  
AWE of him

Because he created us exactly as we are.. no regrets on our part  
Because of his goodness ... he abased himself to the point of death  
Not because He forgives your sins - because that changes the focus to us  
Because of his generosity in creating us to live eternally  
Because of his generosity in all that he provides  
Not because of a heavenly feast  
Not because He forgives your sins - because that changes the focus to us

### Comments:

Not in any particular order

100 years ago no of us existed. Today we are all here and ETERNAL.

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### Sr Faustina Video



## Sr Faustina Video Comments

**Point 1. Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less ....focus on God**

**Point 2. God is not offended by our sins ... but pride offends Him. Pride - like how much I did in prayer, penance, good works**

We cannot save ourselves we must trust in God and not look at our sins

Not holy enough to enter heaven? You're right ... trust is the only way

Humility is the key to heaven AKA the "narrow door"

Single act of trust "Jesus has this" Let go and be in awe of God

Heaven is a gift not an attainment

Heaven will not be in us remembering what good we did on earth but in what God did

Lord I just want to be with you, to love you with awe and amazement

Three prayers

1 Acknowledge your nothingness before God - .Jesus I am nothing without you....[you are God and I am not]

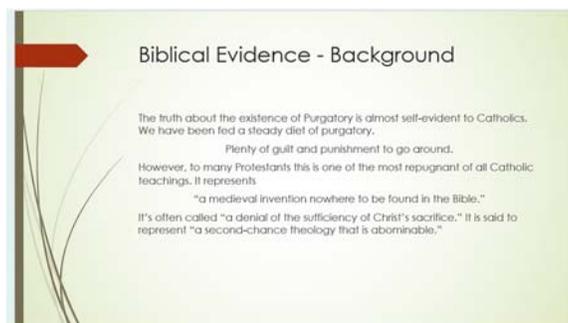
2. Embrace hiddenness

3.Trust in His mercy... it will be there for you... we can't want to never earn heaven no matter how hard we try and when we fall, return to God and forget the guilt, we will always have plenty of guilt

Sister Faustina 1938

A slightly different perception of the path of no purgatory but the big picture is still "it is about God not you"

## Biblical Evidence- Background



The truth about the existence of Purgatory is almost self-evident to Catholics. We have been fed a steady diet of purgatory.

Plenty of guilt and punishment for everyone.

However, to many Protestants this is one of the most repugnant of all Catholic teachings. It represents "a medieval invention nowhere to be found in the Bible."

It's often called "a denial of the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice." It is said to represent "a second-chance theology that is abominable." Biblical Evidence that avoiding purgatory is possible:

Comments:

True, but do we desire to be with God?

## What does the Bible have to say?



**The Bible**

- The Bible is God's story – we have often talked about this.
- But the Bible is a thousand pages and spans 5000 years and is one story after another, and many if not all follow a theme.
- Very simplistic – “We get in trouble God fixes it.”
- The question is “WHY” – why write it all down, why not shorter, why did Christ have to suffer so much?
- Could God be trying to draw our attention away from ourselves and to focus on HIM?

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The question is “WHY” – why write it all down, why not shorter, why did Christ have to suffer so much?

Could God be trying to draw our attention away from ourselves and to focus on HIM?

Did He do all that the bible says just to punish us later for our sins?

## Biblical Evidence - St Dismas



**Biblical Evidence  
Saint Dismas**



- St Catherine of Siena, St Theresa and St Robert Bellarmine take up the same personage but with very different opinions. Bellarmine takes this almost as an exception, as an objection, the example of the good thief, who lived ill and yet died well.
- Regardless, Dismas entered heaven **WITHOUT** purgatory
- Dismas saw no reason to look inward, but look to God for all things. His sins, like ours are nothing in light of Christ's death. Dismas asked for no purgatory and received it.

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Being crucified as a thief did not mean he stole apples from some else's tree. At this time in history only a few items were moveable assets, namely money and livestock and being crucified for it meant he was a probably a

habitual offender, a career criminal. "Good Thief is a poor description, maybe repentant thief, but it does not say he even repented.

Dismas asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom, acknowledging Jesus as God and His ability to carry out the request.

The good thief crucified with Christ. Immediately at the start of St. Bellarmine's book he takes up the topic of St Dismas. I found this to be coincidental since the other two sources we will look at ...St Catherine of Siena and St Theresa... take up the same personage but with very different opinions. Bellarmine takes this almost as an exception , as an objection, the example of the good thief, who lived ill and yet died well.



► Regardless, Dismas entered heaven **WITHOUT** purgatory

This was not the case; for that good thief led a holy life, and therefore died a holy death. But even supposing he had spent the greater part of his days in wickedness, yet the other part of his life was spent so well, that he easily repented of his former sins, and gained the greatest graces.

"For, burning with the love of God, he openly defended our Savior from the calumnies of His enemies; and filled with the same charity towards his neighbor, he rebuked and admonished his blaspheming companion, and endeavored to convert him."

Being crucified as a thief did not mean he stole apples from some else's tree. At this time in history only a few items were moveable assets, namely money and livestock and being crucified for it meant he was a probably an habitual offender, a career criminal. Now Dismas admits on the cross he is a thief and here is where the saints diverge. Dismas saw that Christ was the focus not himself. He asked to go to heaven. He did not ask for forgiveness of his sins(not in words) but turned his attention to Jesus. We talked about this in our Eucharistic adoration topic, the cataclysmic proportions on the singular event and its implications. Dismas saw no reason to look inward but look to God for all things. His sins , like ours are nothing in light of Christs death. Dismas asked for no purgatory and received it.

What do we know as facts in this case. Dismas is a sinner. He acknowledged his sin to the other thief in the presence of Jesus

Dismas asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom, acknowledging Jesus as God and His ability to carry out the request. (We need to always acknowledge God as God in our daily prayers and requests.)

Jesus for His part granted the no purgatory request without conditions.

Yes, Dismas may have known Jesus earlier in life but that would only led him by grace to this moment. Dismas would still have consciously need to go along with the grace but this is immaterial to our discussion.

## The Narrow Gate



A narrow gate does not exclude other gates.

The narrow gate, also called the narrow door, is referred to by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14 and Luke 13:23-24. Jesus compares the narrow gate to the “broad road” which leads to destruction (hell) and says that “many” will be on that road. By contrast, Jesus says that “small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” What exactly is meant by the few?

While there will be relatively few who go through the narrow gate compared to the many on the broad road, there will still be multitudes who will follow the Good Shepherd. The apostle John saw this multitude in his vision in the book of Revelation: “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’

Saint John the apostle clearly attained heaven by the narrow gate, having died without martyrdom.

The Bible itself doesn't detail the end of John the Apostle's life, but traditional accounts state he was exiled to the island of Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation, later released, and then lived out his days in Ephesus, dying peacefully of old age, becoming the only apostle not to be martyred. Some legends say he was thrown into boiling oil but miraculously survived, and an apocryphal tradition even suggests he ascended to heaven rather than dying

## Other Old Testament Personages

Consider The holiness of Abraham - living with no sacraments, no Jesus, no previous saints to imitate, but pleasing to GOD

The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament actually gives us the names of three individuals that are traditionally thought of as never having died.

1. Readers who have ever noticed an empty place setting at a Passover seder will remember Elijah, who was taken to heaven in a whirlwind after being separated from his disciple Elisha by a chariot of fire pulled by fiery horses (2 Kings 2:11–12). Because the Bible records Elijah as being taken to the heavens while still alive, he became a candidate for one who would one day return to proclaim the coming of the messiah.
2. A second biblical figure that is said to never have died is Melchizedek, the ethereal priest-king of Salem. In Genesis 14:18, Melchizedek apparently materializes while Abram is speaking to the King of Sodom, blesses Abram, and then following the exchange of a tithe, apparently disappears, while Abram continues his conversation with the King of Sodom in verse 21. This ephemeral encounter caused the author of Hebrews 7:3 to write concerning Melchizedek, "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life..." contributing to the legend that Melchizedek never died.
3. The third and final undying individual is much more obscure and not nearly as grandiose, at least not until Jewish apocalyptic literature became popular. Genesis 5 contains a genealogy, which is why most

people skip or skim over it when reading Genesis. Every personal entry in the genealogy follows the exact same pattern of (1) introducing their name, (2) how long they lived before their son was born, (3) how long they lived after their son was born, and (4) how many years total they lived before they died. Each genealogical entry ends with the Hebrew word *vayamōt* (וַיָּמָוֹת), "and he died," except one: Enoch. Genesis 5:24 ends with, "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him" (וַיֵּיבֶנֶה אֱלֹהִים (כִּי-לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים)). The deviation from the template coupled with the fact that the text never specifically says the words "and he died"—despite the fact that "being no more" because "God took him" is likely a euphemism for death—allowed for the possible interpretation that Enoch never died, but was rewarded for his righteousness (literally "walking with God") by being taken directly up into the heavens while still alive.

Could their love for God have been such that God even spared them death? If not why were they spared?

## St Catherine of Siena – The Dialogue Video



## St Catherine of Siena – Comments

Video is about her comments of skip[ping purgatory altogether

Book “The Dialogue” is difficult to read

Book by St Raymond of Capua O.P. is about her life

From page 37 as related in the video - “Now, therefore, you have understood how suffering satisfies for guilt by perfect contrition, not through the finite pain; and such as have this contrition in perfection satisfy not only for the guilt, but also for the penalty which follows the guilt, as I have already said when speaking in general; and if they satisfy for the guilt alone, that is, if, having abandoned mortal sin, they receive grace, and have not sufficient contrition and love to satisfy for the penalty also, they go to the pains of Purgatory, passing through the second and last means of satisfaction.”

From page 30 ...“ However, I wish that you should know, that not all the pains that are given to men in this life are given as punishments, but as corrections, in order to chastise a son when he offends; though it is true that both the guilt and the penalty can be expiated by the desire of the soul, that is, by true contrition, not through the finite pain endured, but through the infinite desire; because God, who is infinite, wishes for infinite love and infinite grief. Infinite grief I wish from My creature in two ways: in one way, through her

sorrow for her own sins, which she has committed against Me her Creator; in the other way, through her sorrow for the sins which she sees her neighbors commit against Me. Of such as these, inasmuch as they have infinite desire, that is, are joined to Me by an affection of love, and therefore grieve when they offend Me, or see Me offended, their every pain, whether spiritual or corporeal, from wherever it may come, receives infinite merit, and satisfies for a guilt which deserved an infinite penalty, although their works are finite and done in finite time; but, inasmuch as they possess the virtue of desire, and sustain their suffering with desire, and contrition, and infinite displeasure against their guilt, their pain is held worthy."

DIFFICULT but in summary

1. Our desires are what are most important attached to our actions – our offerings have merit only if attached to our desire for God. The video makes a connection to the "little flower" and St Dismas
2. Most IMPORTANT – we must ask for this grace !!!
3. A desire can ONLY have infinite merit if it is God who draws them from us.
4. The grief is infinite because of our perfect love for God, who is infinite, not because of the punishment we are trying to avoid

**All of this is unattainable ON OUR OWN. We must ask for it as a grace.**

## Where are we going with this?

Summary

- Pray for the specific blessing of avoiding purgatory
- You cannot ignore everything else
  - You can still lose your way – Moses is an example of this.
- Use what we already know
  - Rosary – Promise 9
  - Scapular – You will enter heaven
- St Robert Bellarmine book

## Moses striking the rock –

God told Moses to **speak to the rock and call the water out of it**, but Moses struck it with his staff.

The Lord explicitly stated "Because you did not believe in me, to **uphold Me as HOLY in the eyes of the people** of Israel" you will not enter the promised land.

By resorting to a physical action (striking) rather than relying solely on God's spoken word, Moses demonstrated a lack of trust in God's power and sufficiency. After forty years of the Israelites' constant complaining and rebellion, Moses was angry and frustrated. He lashed out, calling the people "rebels" and striking the rock twice in a display of human impatience and wrath, rather than channeling the situation through divine direction.

This seemingly minor change was a significant act of disobedience, showing a disregard for the Lord's specific will and disrespect.

In the 1189 chapters of the Bible, God only speaks. Hence the “Word became flesh”. His mere speaking creates.

Water from the rock was to be undeniably from God. Sticks, waving your arms etc. were common in superstitions in those days and could have been construed as some type of magic.

## The Rosary

Promise 9. **I shall deliver from purgatory those who have been devoted to the Rosary.**

Our attention should be on awe and gratefulness to God . That is the Bible the story of God not us. In The rosary we are asked to meditate on the mysteries. Why? Not just words of the prayer, to bring our attention to God, his generosity, His love, His ....

New rosary scriptural meditation on awe of God, generosity of God.....

Examples...

Glorious mysteries

Resurrection... Jesus did not need to come back to perform our redemption, but how great it was that He gave us that and the ascension. These events were only for our benefit

Nativity —meditate on the poverty of his birth or his generosity of being born

Mary promises in the rosary to deliver us from purgatory

Our prayers assure us we will get there but they do not assure us of no trials tribulations or suffering. Prayer will lead us to the sacraments and practice of the virtues.

When someone starts making us feel good about ourselves then the moment we think of someone of less then our tool should come out

God does not allow us distractions in adoration to humiliate us rather to allow us to us the tool of humility to be aware of our lack of importance

## Scapular.

The main promise of the Brown Scapular, given by Mary to St. Simon Stock, is that:

**"Whosoever dies clothed in this Habit shall not suffer eternal fire"**

This signifies special protection and salvation, with an extension called the **Sabbatine Privilege** promising aid from Purgatory on the first Saturday after death if certain conditions are met.

These promises aren't a magic charm but a sign of devotion, requiring a life of faith, chastity, and prayer

How could a promise be made to save us from purgatory on the first Saturday after our death be made **if purgatory was built only on our guilt?**

# St Robert Bellarmine's Book- Introduction

Bellarmino, a Doctor of the Church, wrote this work in his old age as a preparation for his own death, dividing it into two main parts:

Book One: Precepts to follow while in good health - The virtues, sacraments and avoiding sin

We focused on many of these already like keeping Sunday holy, the Lord's name etc. so we are skipping this discussion.

Book 2: Those things to observe when near death, the specific "immediate" preparations and terminal attitudes required at the actual hour of death.

The dying person must be particularly vigilant during their final hours to close these "gateways" to the world.

- **Eyes:** Succumbing to last-minute worldly lusts or distractions.
- **Hands and Feet:** Regretting missed opportunities to do good or reflecting on theft of property.
- **Ears:** Listening to lies or idle gossip.

A recurring takeaway is the gravity of the **Particular Judgment** that occurs immediately after death. **The Three Participants** At the moment of death, the devil is the accuser, the individual's conscience is the witness, and God is the Judge

Bellarmino offers hope through the example of the "**Good Thief**" (St. Dismas). He notes that while it is dangerous to delay conversion, one can still "live well" in their final hours by sincerely repenting and begging for God's mercy.

## St. Robert Bellarmine's The Art of Dying Well Book ONE

- He addresses what to do while healthy.
  - The virtues
  - sacraments
  - avoiding sin
  - ..... are the cornerstones for the first part.
- St. Robert Bellarmine also addresses specific sins and fears related to the Last Judgment, urging preparation through a virtuous life and frequent self-examination.
  - **Neglect of good works**
  - **Immoderate love of the world and riches**
  - **Delaying conversion**

## ► Sins of omission

### Living in a state of mortal sin

St. Robert Bellarmine addresses specific sins and fears related to the Last Judgment, urging preparation through a virtuous life and frequent self-examination. The primary fears and sins addressed include:

#### Sins Related to the Last Judgment

- **Neglect of good works:** A significant sin is the failure to perform the works of mercy commanded by Christ in Matthew 25 (feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick/imprisoned, etc.). Bellarmine emphasizes that works follow the deceased and are the evidence of true faith at judgment.
- **Immoderate love of the world and riches:** The sin of an inordinate desire for worldly possessions is highlighted. Bellarmine cautions that the wealthy who ignore the poor will face condemnation, as exemplified by the rich man Dives in scripture. The accumulation of superfluous wealth without sharing it is a failure of stewardship for which one must account.
- **Delaying conversion:** A major failing is the "dangerous thing to defer till death our conversion from sin to virtue". Procrastinating repentance until the final moments, when one may be incapacitated or lack the full use of reason, is a grave risk.
- **Sins of omission:** Bellarmine reminds readers to consider not only the evil deeds they have done, but also the good things they have left undone, as these will be judged.
- **Living in a state of mortal sin:** Receiving the Holy Eucharist unworthily or otherwise remaining in mortal sin without seeking the Sacrament of Penance puts one in a dangerous spiritual state, eating and drinking judgment upon oneself.

#### Fears Related to the Last Judgment

- **Fear of eternal damnation:** The ultimate fear addressed is that of being condemned to "everlasting fire" and eternal misery, which the sinner brings upon himself by his choices in life.
- **Fear of an unprepared death:** The uncertainty of the hour of death is a recurring theme, encouraging constant vigilance and preparation. The fear is of being caught unprepared, "like a thief who often comes when least expected".
- **The scrutiny of conscience:** Bellarmine addresses the fear of having to give an account of every thought, word, and deed, even idle words, with one's conscience acting as a witness and the devil as the accuser.

- **Uncertainty of salvation:** Drawing on St. Peter's question, "If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?", Bellarmine highlights the gravity and difficulty of salvation, which can be a source of anxiety for the dying.
- **The severity of God's judgment:** The prospect of facing the Supreme Judge, a God who is all-powerful and all-knowing, can be a source of intense fear for those with a guilty conscience.

Notes:

It would be unnecessary for me to lecture you on the importance of attending mass on Sunday or going to confession. Also, we have covered many of these topics in detail - keeping holy the Lords Day, the name of Jesus, prayer especially the rosary, divine mercy and more.

It would not surprise me that some or all of you avoid purgatory after listening to these discussions. All of you here are special. I mentioned that several times at other meetings and it is not to inflate your pride. In all of Tiverton, you might be the only real believers. We might not be able to cover this with those not yet familiar with virtues and sin. They may be caught at book one of st Bellarmine's book. I will to jump ahead and assume you are working on virtue, avoiding sins and frequenting the sacraments and are therefore trying to stay on the right path.

Billions of people never acknowledge God even once in their lifetime!

## Chapter 18 is missing!

Chapter 18 – Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary at death

### Understanding Kindness vs appeasement

Components were removed because of the protestant reformation in about the year 1550 was in full bloom when Bellarmine wrote this book in 1600 entirely in Latin. Bellarmine had a huge devotion to the daily rosary, but scholars deleted the chapter on mary and then the entire book2 it may have offended those adhering to the beliefs of the reformation. This is what is typically returned on an internet search as the translation by Dalton in the year 1847 in English with both parts missing.

St. Robert Bellarmine's *The Art of Dying Well* discusses devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary primarily in its 18th chapter, which is sometimes excluded from abridged versions of the book by Dalton in 1847.

In the context of preparing for death, the devotion to Mary is presented as a powerful means to gain God's grace for a holy death. Bellarmine frames it as a way to receive assistance in dying well, emphasizing that through her intercession, the faithful can be aided in overcoming worldly attachments and preparing their soul for eternity.

Central role: In a complete version of the text, the 18th chapter of *The Art of Dying Well* is specifically dedicated to Marian devotion as **a key part** of a holy death.

Purpose: The devotion to Mary is seen as a spiritual aid for preparing for death and a way to acquire grace from God to die well.

Benefit: By praying to the Virgin Mary, a person can receive help to overcome worldly attachments and be more prepared for their final judgment. Bellarmine emphasizes the importance of calling upon Mary's intercession, especially at the hour of death. He viewed her as a powerful advocate for sinners before the throne of God.

**The Grace of a Happy Death:** He highlights that devotion to Mary, including practices like reciting the Rosary and the Saturday fast in her honor, is a means to obtain the grace of a happy and holy death.

## The Significance of Devotion to Mary

His emphasis on Mary's role can be summarized by these points:

- **A weapon against the devil:** Bellarmine argued that the devil hates and fears Mary because she is the new Eve who helped crush his head. Seeking her help at the time of death is a powerful weapon against the final spiritual attacks.
- **The Mother of Mercy:** He stressed that Mary is the "Mother of Mercy," who extends her compassion to souls in their final moments. Her role is to plead with her Son, Jesus, on behalf of the dying.
- **An ideal model:** Mary's own holy and peaceful death is presented as the ideal model for Christians to strive for. Bellarmine advised pondering her peaceful departure and imitating her love for God to prepare for one's own end.
- **Source of grace:** According to Bellarmine, Mary, as the Mother of God, is a special channel of divine grace. Cultivating a deep devotion to her during one's lifetime is a way to ensure a greater flow of grace, leading to a more holy life and, consequently, a better death.

### The impact of the omission

For readers of the abridged English translation, the absence of Chapter 17 results in a less complete picture of Bellarmine's full theology on preparing for death. While the rest of the book offers guidance on living a virtuous life, the missing chapter removes a significant and explicitly Catholic aspect of Bellarmine's teaching regarding the final hours of life. The full version of the text, in contrast, presents a more holistic Catholic perspective on the "art of dying well" by integrating both a life of virtue and **specific devotional practices** namely the rosary!!!.

### *In Chapter 18 of [The Art of Dying Well](#)*

*, Bellarmine emphasizes several key themes regarding Mary's intercession:*

- **Mary as Mediatrix of Grace:** *A central theme is that God has ordained that all graces and heavenly blessings which flow from Christ, the Head of the Church, pass through Mary to the members of the Church. This highlights her unique and instrumental role in the distribution of God's gifts.*
- **Humility and Unworthiness:** *Bellarmino encourages a deep sense of humility in believers, who should deem themselves unworthy to approach God directly on their own. Seeking Mary's intercession is presented as an act of profound humility that God favors, allowing access to Him through her mediation.*

- ***Aversion of Divine Wrath: Drawing on patristic and medieval traditions, a key function of Mary's intercession is her ability to appease or turn away God's just anger. This provides a sense of security and hope for the dying.***
- ***The Communion of Saints: The discussion of Mary's intercession is part of the broader doctrine of the Communion of Saints, where those in heaven (the Church Triumphant) intercede for those on earth (the Church Militant). Mary, being the highest among the saints, has the greatest power of intercession.***
- ***Maternal Care: Mary is portrayed as a loving mother in the order of grace who cares for her children "who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties". This maternal role makes her a particularly accessible and comforting advocate for the dying.***
- ***Model of Virtue: Bellarmine also emphasizes imitating Mary's virtues, such as her perfect love for God, obedience, faith, and charity, as a necessary part of a holy life and preparation for a good death.***

***By embracing these themes, a person preparing for death can find comfort and confidence in Mary's powerful and merciful assistance.***

Notes:

The early founders of the reformation like Luther and Calvin had devotion to Mary, but as they disappeared the reformation and all of Protestantism took on a much more aggressive anti-Mary slant especially in the 1700s-1800s.

## St. Robert Bellarmine's The Art of Dying Well Book TWO

The second part or book two is how to deal with temptations at death among other things.

My primary weapons are:

1. The brown scapular – it does not rely on me and I have no self confidence
2. The Rosary – Mary promised to be there with me
3. Some of my viewpoints about life.
  - a. He is God and I am not. Good against despair, why me suffering? Why my life, judging others. God has a plan for each life so when I judge someone I say I don't like Gods plan
  - b. Temptations can happen at death and are not sins. The five second rule
  - c. Scrupulosity - I accept all the official teachings of the church even if I don't understand them or even know of them
  - d. God I am a sinner, forgive my sins, I want to be with You and praise You forever. I am in awe of your creation and thankful for my life as it is. (Sound like Franklin Graham?)
  - e. My sins are history and the heavenly feast is not in the picture
4. The two temptations of self-righteousness and despair, thinking about our good works and believing they can get us to heaven or being obsessed about our sins and despairing over them, not trusting in

God's infinite love and mercy. In both cases, it is PRIDE that keeps us focused on our good works, and it is PRIDE also that can keep us glued to our guilt for all the wrong things we have done.

### **Understand three types of suffering**

**God given suffering**

**Satan imposed suffering**

**Natural suffering (demise of our human bodies as a result of original sin)**

Also, Some suffering we endure is from nature( there really is no nature" because as man sins more and more God withdraws and His benefits given to us through our surroundings decrease. Evidence of this statement is Our Lady of lasalette where she says that if the people of that district kept holy the lords day "wheat would grow right from the rocks"

In conclusion, let us be assured that God loves us, is for us, and wants to help us overcome temptation. Victory over sin is indeed possible. Paul emphasized this to the Corinthians when he said, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13). That is a word for us today. Whatever temptation may confront us, it isn't unique. We aren't the only person ever to deal with it, and we can overcome it if we really want to. God will never allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist and will always provide the way of escape. But we must want it, look for it, and take it. When we do, He is glorified, and we are spiritually strengthened and conformed more into the likeness of our Lord and Savior.