

Knights of Columbus
Council 459
Spiritual Training
January: Sin, Judgment, Hell, Purgatory

Opening Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

[Demonstration underlying lecture: Discuss what is needed for conversion. You can demonstrate sin by having a student take small steps away from a crucifix (representing God) for venial sins and face away from the crucifix and take large steps for mortal sins. Emphasize that God never leaves us, but we move away from him when we sin. Conversion requires not only turning around, but stepping back toward God. These may include acts of love, penances, etc.]

Sin, Judgment, Hell, Purgatory

- Intro:
 - When I saw the topic for this month's lecture, my first thought was: Wow, not a happy way to start the new year.
 - Now, the new year is often a time of new resolutions.
 - Well, in order to make a resolution, we need to identify the problem first.
 - I hope we resolve in this new year to become more holy-- to become the best version of yourself that God intended us to be.
 - But in order to be our best, we have to examine those things and actions that keep us from God, that is, sin.
- Sin
 - Sin is a personal act which offends God, spiritually harms the sinner and others. It can be a thought, word, deed, or desire. It can be an action or a failure to act when we should.
 - Let me demonstrate how sin works in our life.

- (Frank stand facing a crucifix). You see Frank standing here facing the crucifix. Here, he is in right relationship with God. He keeps the sacraments, follows the commandments, and does acts of charity.
 - But, Frank isn't perfect. He passes by a homeless guy on the street because he does not want to be bothered. Then he tells a little lie to one of his friends. He boast about what a great architect he is.
 - (Frank takes small steps back with each sin). With each of these venial sins, Frank moves further away from God, but is still in relationship with God. He's sick but not dead.
 - But venial sins often lead to larger sins. Frank decides he's got better things to do on Sunday and starts skipping mass. He spends his time and money on wine, women, and song.
 - These mortal sins by Frank (grave matter with full knowledge and deliberate consent) mean that the sanctifying grace in him is destroyed.
 - (Frank turns away from crucifix). Now, he is no longer in right relationship with God.
- **Judgment and Hell**
 - Frank's situation is serious. For at our death Christ will come to judge the living and the dead, as we say in the Creed. The just will be taken to heaven, the evil doers to hell, a place of eternal separation from God.
 - Now, notice that the crucifix never moved. Frank moved. Frank stepped back. Frank turned his back on God.
- **Conversion and Purgatory**
 - It also means that God is waiting for us to come back.
 - This quote from C.S. Lewis is appropriate: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened."

- Frank has the opportunity, through God's mercy and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to get back into right relationship with God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - (Frank faces crucifix) By going to confession and receiving absolution of his sins, he is back facing God.
 - But, there is still a chasm between God and us. For you see, while the eternal punishment of sin (Hell) was removed, the temporal punishment for sin remains.
 - That temporal punishment can be removed in Purgatory, which is a place a purification which prepares souls to meet God in heaven.
 - The temporal punishment can also be removed through acts of prayer, penance, and charity.
 - Thus, by resuming his prayer life, praying the rosary, and doing acts of charity. Frank steps closer back to God. How much closer we do not know, but Frank is going in the right direction.
- **Conclusion**
 - Thus, as we start this year, let's examine our lives to make sure we are in right relationship with God. If we are not, let's avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to face God again in right relationship. And let us increase our prayer, penance, and charity in order to remove the temporal punishments for our sins.

Closing Prayer - Confiteor

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Resources

- Outlines of the Catholic Faith, 11, 15-18, 40-41