

TEN SIGNPOSTS ON THE HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

The purpose of our life is to get to heaven. Our catechism teaches us very clearly: "We are created to know God, love God, and serve God in this life so as to be happy with Him forever in heaven." "Man is created to praise God, reverence God, serve God and by means of that to save his soul". In concrete terms, this really means that all of us—none excluded—are called to become saints! "Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy!" This is not whimsical or simply wishful thinking, but rather this is an imperious command given to us by the Savior Himself.

Therefore, this being the case, all of us must make a concerted effort to make it to heaven (and this means that we must strive to become saints). God, of course, will give us the necessary means that we must use so as to arrive at our eternal destiny which is heaven. Worldliness and distractions can very easily pull us off the straight and narrow course that leads to heaven and misdirect us on the wrong road, which is wide, spacious, appealing, seductive, tantalizing, and pernicious, and eventually leads us into the eternal suffering of hell. This we want to avoid at all costs!!!

SIGNPOSTS that can be of eternal value for all of us to arrive at the end and ultimate purpose of our eternal destiny and that is HEAVEN!!!

1. **PRAYER.** All of us should make a concerted effort to both pray more and pray better. Advice on this: read a good book on prayer; find a set time for prayer and a quiet place.

2. **PENANCE.** Jesus said very clearly: "Unless you do penance you will not enter the Kingdom of God." Advice on this: Every day decide to offer some form of sacrifice as an act of love to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, who suffered so much for the salvation of our immortal souls!

3. **HOLY COMMUNION.** Of course the most efficacious means for all of us to grow in holiness and to attain eternal salvation in heaven is faith-filled, fervent and frequent reception of Jesus in Holy Communion.

4. **CONFESSION.** Another most efficacious means to make it safe to heaven is by the practice of frequent confession. Jesus gave us this Sacrament Easter Sunday night in the Upper Room with the Apostles when He breathed on them and said these words: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you forgive will be forgiven; whose sins you bind will be held bound." The normal means by which our sins are forgiven after Baptism is by the reception of the Sacrament of Confession, also called Reconciliation, or the Sacrament of God's Mercy, with the priest who represents Jesus the Healer or if you like, the Divine Physician. Frequent Confession serves as curative medicine as well as preventive medicine.

5. **SPIRITUAL READING.** An extraordinarily great help is for us to get into the habit of doing some good spiritual reading on a daily basis, for at least fifteen minutes and if possible for half an hour. What should I read??? The response: talk this over with your pastor or a friend. With their help you will find the best literature for you to read so that you can cultivate your mind spiritually!

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6. **BE MERCIFUL.** In the Diary of Divine Mercy In My Soul, Jesus speaking to St Faustina invites us to do at least one act of mercy every day. Our merciful Savior offers three

suggestions: 1) Pray for someone; this is mercy; 2) Words—speak kindly to someone; 3) Deeds—finally, we should express the mercy in our hearts by external actions.

7. **CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY.** In fact, we will be judged on our love for God by the way we treat people who are created in the image and likeness of God. Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, visiting the prisoner and the sick, as well as burying the dead—all of these are what we call The Corporal Works of Mercy.

8. **INSPIRATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** If you are baptized and striving to live in the state of grace and practice recollection—meaning maintaining a certain amount of silence in your exterior life and interior life, then you will be open to hearing often the gentle but insistent voice of the Holy Spirit. These are called heavenly inspirations. However, these can present a real challenge and it is this: even though we may hear these inspirations, we might decide to put them off until later or simply dismiss them as unimportant or irrelevant. If we do that, we sadden the Holy Spirit within us. The desire of our hearts should be the prayer of the young Samuel: "Speak, O Lord, for your servant is listening."

9. **ENCOURAGE OTHERS!** Another very important practice for those who really want to become saints and make it to heaven is the practice of trying to encourage people. Of course, we should first start with our family because charity begins at home! How? A smile, a kind word, an act of service, a compliment, a thumb's up or even a high five. When you see anybody who is discouraged say a kind word, offer your Holy Communion for them, tell them that you are praying for them and will continue to pray for them.

10. **OUR LADY: THE QUEEN OF ANGELS AND SAINTS!** Invite Our Lady, Mary most holy, the Queen of the Angels and Saints, the Queen of the Universe, into our conversation. Some ways that we can grow daily in our love and devotion to Mary:

- READ good literature on Mary; you cannot love her if you do not know her. We would suggest two Marian classics: The Glories of Mary by St. Alphonsus Liguori and True Devotion to Mary by St. Louis de Montfort.

- THE HOLY ROSARY. Never allow a day to pass without praying the prayer that Our Lady loves most—the most Holy Rosary!

- IMITATE MARY. Not only should we pray to Mary and promote devotion to Mary, but we should try to imitate her virtues. St. Louis de Montfort in his classic True Devotion to Mary highlights ten virtues of Mary.

- IN DISTRESS, CALL ON MARY. We all go through tough times in life. In these bleak, dark, and even hopeless times we should turn to Mary, talk to Mary, and entrust our cares to Mary. Remember the words of the Hail Holy Queen: "Hail Holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope..." Let us entrust our worries, cares, and sufferings to Mary; she will never abandon us!

- DIE IN THE ARMS OF MARY. When all is said and done in life, the only thing that really matters is for us to make it safely home to Jesus and Mary. The most important moment in our life is the very moment that we die. This will determine for all eternity our eternal destiny—either heaven or hell. Let us entrust our dying moments into the arms of Mary with these words: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.