

## Why I Am Catholic

The Church helps us prepare for what lies ahead.

The Bible tells us we do not know "the day nor the hour" of our own death or of Jesus' return. The Church urges us to not be afraid of death nor to ignore death. The issue of death is always there whether we recognize it or it is in the background. Our morality can either motivate us to live well or lead us to paralysis or excessive living.

A person focused on heavenly rewards and on Jesus, can prepare for a happy, peaceful death. Not in a morbid way, but in a way that cooperates with Christ's plan for service and loving action. St. Ignatius of Loyola explains how decisions made in view of our death can help us have no regrets.

If we place ourselves mentally at the moment of death and look back to this moment, we are less likely to make decisions that only benefit ourselves or are only of temporary benefit. We can imagine ourselves looking back and wishing we had made a different choice and make that better choice now. We also hopefully will act on things we need to do. Reconciling relationships, a deeper prayer life, a retreat, a trip to a spiritual place. We will stop postponing and making excuses, and act in faith.

Death causes many people to act out of fear. The Mid-Life Crisis is a time when many people act foolishly because time is passing them by and they want to feel young again. They decide their life is boring and want some "fun." Instead of taking this to prayer, they act impulsively and with no sense of maturity or responsibility.

A subconscious fear of death leads to poor choices and big regrets.

We can fight death or find peace with the reality of death. Peace requires surrender. It means letting God be in charge of our lives, seeking His will, and living according to His plan. Very few people do this because they spend so much time trying to be in control.

We see this at many deathbeds people still not ready to let God take control. It is sad to see them holding on to the myth and still not ready to let go. They in a sense are saying: "Heaven cannot possibly be better than this." Our view of death says a lot about our view of Heaven.

Jesus is Lord of the living and the dead. Of Heaven and Earth. Until He is Lord of our lives, fully and completely, something will always be missing. Jesus does not want us to fear death or fear living. The cross takes away death's power and The Ascension opens Heaven. The Easter Resurrection makes Heaven possible for all of us and is the clearest sign of God's power and love.

In John 14, Christ tells His Apostles and us that He goes to prepare a place for us. And that where He is we also shall be. Heaven is for people who want to be with Jesus. And who, by His grace, live wise, good, and holy lives here and now.