

Fr. Joseph's Corner

"The Christian Concept of Hell"

HELL IS THE STATE OF THOSE WHO REJECT GOD (CCC 1033-1037).

God is an infinitely good and merciful Father. But man, called to respond to Him freely, can unfortunately choose to reject His love and forgiveness once and for all, thus separating himself forever from joyful communion with Him. It is precisely this tragic situation that Christian doctrine explains when it speaks of eternal damnation or hell. It is not a punishment imposed externally by God but a development of premises already set by people in this life.

The very dimension of unhappiness which this obscure condition brings can in a certain way be sensed in the light of some of the terrible experiences we have suffered which, as is commonly said, make life "hell."

In a theological sense however, hell is something else: it is the ultimate consequence of sin itself, which turns against the person who committed it. It is the state of those who definitively reject the Father's mercy, even at the last moment of their life.

Hell is a state of eternal damnation. To describe this reality, Sacred Scripture uses a symbolic language which will gradually be explained. In the Old Testament the condition of the dead had not yet been fully disclosed by Revelation. Moreover it was thought that the dead were amassed in Sheol, a land of darkness (cf. Ez. 28:8; 31:14; Jb. 10:21f.; 38:17; Ps 30:10; 88:7, 13), a pit from which one cannot re-ascend (cf. Jb. 7:9), a place in which it is impossible to praise God (cf. Is 38:18; Ps 6:6).

The New Testament sheds new light on the condition of the dead, proclaiming above all that Christ by His Resurrection conquered death and extended His liberating power to the kingdom of the dead. Redemption nevertheless remains an offer of salvation which the *Book of Revelation* figuratively portrays in a "pool of fire" those who exclude themselves from the book of life, thus meeting with a "second death" (Rv. 20:13f.). Whoever continues to be closed to the Gospel is therefore preparing for "eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might" (2 Thes 1:9).

The images of hell that Sacred Scripture presents to us must be correctly interpreted. They show the complete frustration and emptiness of life without God. Rather than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy. This is how the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* summarizes the truths of faith on this subject: **"To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called 'hell'"** (CCC 1033).

"Eternal damnation," therefore, is not attributed to God's initiative because in His merciful love, He can only desire the salvation of the beings He created. In reality, it is the creature who closes himself to love. Damnation consists precisely in definitive separation from God, freely chosen by the human person and confirmed with death that seals his choice forever. God's judgement ratifies this state.

Hell is not a punishment imposed externally by God, but the condition resulting from attitudes and actions which people adopt in this life. It is the ultimate consequence of sin itself. Sacred Scripture uses many images to describe the pain, frustration, and emptiness of life without God. More than a physical place, hell is the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy. So eternal damnation is not God's work but is actually our own doing. Christian faith teaches us that there are creatures who have already given a definitive "no" to God; these are the spirits which rebelled against God and whom we call demons. They serve as a warning for human beings: Eternal Damnation remains a real possibility for us, too. The reality of hell should not, however, be a cause of anxiety or despair for believers. Rather, it is a necessary and healthy reminder that human freedom has to be conformed to the example of Jesus, who always said "yes" to God, who conquered Satan, and who gave us His Spirit so that we, too, could call God "Father."

—Prayerful wishes, Fr. Joseph

St. Joseph Catholic Church

150 E First St., P.O. Box 1315, Prineville OR 97754
January 14, 2024 † The 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Vigil Mass Saturday	5:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass (English)*	9:00 a.m.
Sunday Mass (Spanish)	12:00 p.m.
Holy Days	8:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Mondays • Tuesdays • Thursdays	8:00 a.m.
Wednesdays • Fridays	12:00 p.m.

*Coffee and Donuts are served after the 9 a.m. Mass.

Pastor ♦ Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Kunnelaya T.
Secretary ♦ Darlene Counts

Parish Office Hours ♦ Monday – Thursday ♦ 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Parish Office Telephone: (541) 447-6475

Fr. Joseph: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. ♦ (541) 420-4458

Parish Website: <https://stjosephsprineville.org>

Email: stjosephparish@bendbroadband.com

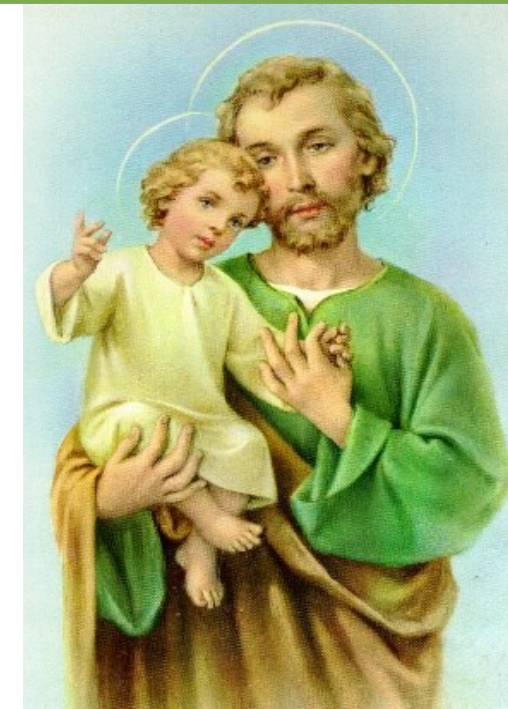
Pastor: fatherjoseph@bendbroadband.com / joekunel55@gmail.com

Facebook: St. Joseph Parish / Instagram: [st_josephparish](https://www.instagram.com/st_josephparish) Director of Religious

Education ♦ Barbara Dalton

RCIA ♦ Jim Friese

Parish Bulletin Designer / Editor ♦ Tina Hill



Confessions

Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Saturdays: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

(other times by appointment)

Anointing of the Sick

Contact Fr. Joseph for this Sacrament

♦ DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET AND CENACLE GROUP: Every Monday after the 8 a.m. Mass.
♦ FRIDAY ROSARY at 11:30 a.m., MASS at 12:00 p.m., EXPOSITION of the Blessed Sacrament immediately following Mass, EUCHARISTIC ADORATION 1-2 p.m., BENEDICTION AND REPOSITION



Baptisms

Baptisms will be held on Saturdays.

Parents of children to be baptized must be registered members of the parish 6 months prior to baptism.

A Baptismal Preparation Class is mandatory for both parents and godparents.

For more information, call the Parish Office.

Marriages

Couples need to make an appointment with Fr. Joseph 6 months before the proposed date.

A Marriage Preparation Course is mandatory.

MASS INTENTIONS / DAILY READINGS

The practice of requesting a Mass to be offered for loved ones, living or deceased, is a beautiful and wonderful part of our Catholic tradition.

👉 Please Call the Parish Office to Have a Mass Intention Reserved 👈

Monday	01/15/2024	8:00 a.m.	Steve Arndt (D)	1 Sm 15:16-23; Mk 2:18-22
Tuesday	01/16/2024	8:00 a.m.	St. Vincent de Paul (D)	1 Sm 16:1-13; Mk 2:23-28
Wednesday	01/17/2024	12:00 p.m.	Helen Husar (D)	1 Sm 17:32-33, 37, 40-51; Mk 3:1-6
Thursday	01/18/2024	8:00 a.m.	Rudolfo Mendoza (D)	1 Sm 1/6-9, 19:1-7; Mk 3:7-12
Friday	01/19/2024	12:00 p.m.	Gloria Wilcox (D)	1 Sm 24:3-21; Mk 3:13-19
Saturday	01/20/2024	5:00 p.m.	Walter Husar (D)	Jon 3:1-5, 10; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mk 1:14-20
Sunday	01/21/2024	9:00 a.m.	Anita Marquez (L)	Jon 3:1-5, 10; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mk 1:14-20
Sunday	01/21/2024	12:00 p.m.	Rose Marquez (L)	Jon 3:1-5, 10; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mk 1:14-20

(L) Living ♦ (D) = Deceased

Today's Homily

Ordinary Time

Welcome back to **Ordinary Time**, the longest of the Church's Seasons! This is our "baseline," our "normal." The other seasons celebrate something (Christmas, Easter) or anticipate something (Lent, Advent). But good old Ordinary Time is when we cover most of the story of Jesus' life, preaching, parables, miracles—His day-to-day struggles and successes).

The main theme of today's Scripture readings is Divine vocation—that everyone is called by God to be a witness for Christ by doing something for others with his or her life, using his or her unique gifts and blessings. Hence, today's readings remind us of our personal and corporate call to become witnesses for Jesus, the *Lamb of God*, by leading lives of holiness and purity.

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist claims that his vocation is to introduce Jesus to two of his disciples as the *Lamb of God*, suggesting Jesus' vocation to become a sacrificial lamb to atone for our sins. The disciples followed Jesus to His residence, accepting His invitation to *come and see*. They stayed with Him that day. Then Andrew brought his brother, Simon, to Jesus, introducing Jesus to him as the *Messiah*. Thus, today's Gospel also describes the call or vocation of the first apostles and challenges us to invite others to Christ by our Christian witnessing.

Our Christian call is to live and die like the Lamb of God.

We live like a lamb: 1) by leading pure, innocent, humble, selfless lives, obeying Christ's commandment of love; 2) by appreciating the loving providence and protecting care of the Good Shepherd in His Church; 3) by partaking of the Body and Blood of the Good Shepherd in the Holy Eucharist and deriving spiritual strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the Sacraments.

We die like a sacrificial lamb: 1) by sharing our blessings of health, wealth, and talents with others in the family, parish, and community; 2) by bearing wit-

ness to Christ in our illness, pain, and suffering; 3) by offering our suffering for the salvation of souls and as reparation for our sins and for those of others.

Our call is to rebuild broken lives.

Like the missionary call of Samuel and the apostles, we, too, are called. Our call is to rebuild broken lives, reconciling them to God's love and justice through Christ Jesus, our Lamb and Lord.

Our call is to bear witness to the Lamb of God.

Today's Gospel reminds us that being a disciple of Jesus means that we are to grow in faith and become witnesses for Him.

Bearing witness to Christ is an active rather than a passive enterprise. Knowing Jesus is a matter of experience. One could know the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—all 700 pages of it, by heart—and still not know Jesus.

Bearing witness to Christ, then, demands that we should have personal and first-hand experience of Jesus.

We get this personal experience of Jesus in our daily lives—through the meditative reading and study of the Bible, through personal and family prayers, and through the Sacraments—especially by participation in the Eucharistic celebration.

Once we have experienced the personal presence of Jesus in our daily lives, we will start sharing with others the Good News of love, peace, justice, tolerance, mercy, and forgiveness preached and lived by Jesus.

The essence of our witness-bearing is to state what we have seen, heard, experienced, and believed, and then to invite others to "come and see." Other people will see Jesus in our lives when we love, forgive, and spend time doing good.

A dynamic and living experience of Jesus will also enable us to invite and encourage people to come and participate in our Church activities.

January—Month of the Holy Name of Jesus

- **Tuesday, January 16th—Knight of Columbus, at 7 p.m., in the Parish Hall.**
- **Monday, January 22nd—Youth Group Formation Planning, at 6 p.m., in the Parish Hall.**

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ACTS Bible Study

We have started a new series, "Catholicism, The Pivotal Players" by **Bishop Robert Barron, on Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m.** This series is about the Church's most influential people. We will study a new person every week, and everyone is welcome to join us in the Parish Hall, Rm. 2.

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Holy Hour

Join **Bishop Cary** for a **Holy Hour for Life on Thursday, January 18th, from 8 to 9 p.m. (PT)** at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Bend or via "Livestream" by going to DioceseOfBaker.org. Bishops across America will be leading hours of prayer before our Lord in the Holy Eucharist **throughout the night of the 18th** as part of the 2024 National Prayer Vigil for Life. We hope you can join us in this important time of prayer.

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Cathedral Conservation Collection

There will be a special 2nd Collection for the Baker City Cathedral Conservation **next weekend, January 21st/January 22nd.**

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Pro Life Rosary

The "Pro-Life Community" will come together to pray a rosary in front of the Bend Planned Parenthood Clinic, 2330 NE Division St., on **Monday, January 22nd, from 11 a.m. to 12 noon**, in observance of the annual "National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children."

Please join us in appealing to Our Lady for her support in the elimination of this stain on our nation's morality. Some pro-life signs will be provided until the supply is exhausted. This event is intended to be a peaceful witness on the sidewalk (only) in front of the Clinic.

For questions, call **Christine Simone**, head of the St. Francis Respect for Life Ministry at (541) 639-8235.

Marriage Saving—the Post Session Phase

The post-weekend phase of Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi with a long i) is as crucial to the healing of a troubled marriage as the initial weekend experience.

During the post-weekend sessions, the weekend technique is further developed and combined with additional tools to explore other areas of the marriage relationship. Come **Friday, January 26th, through January 28th**, at Our Lady of Peace Retreat Center in Beaverton, Oregon

For confidential information about or to register for the program call 1 (503) 225-9191 or email: portland@retrouvaille.org or visit www.helpourmarriage.org.

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Inviting Young Adults, 18–39: Diocesan Lenten Retreat

"Sacrificial Love; The Redemption of Suffering"
February 17–18, 2024*

Come begin your Lenten journey with engaging speakers (including **Bishop Liam Cary, Sr. Ignacia Carrillo, FMA, Fr. Caleb Cunningham**), Eucharistic Adoration with an opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance (with **Bishop Cary, Fr. Mena, or Fr. Cunningham**), time for personal prayer and reflection, small group fellowship, and Sunday Mass celebrated by **Bishop Cary** at the beautiful, peaceful Cascade View Retreat Center, Powell Butte. For more information, or to register, please visit DioceseofBaker.org.

*early/late arrival/departure available by request.

(Supported by the Bishop's Annual Appeal.)

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Rachel's Vineyard Retreat

For some, it seems like their abortion is an event totally left in the past, yet vast evidence and personal testimonies show that abortion has long-lasting, life-altering affects in the lives of women and men who have experienced it. To feel, deal, and heal from abortion(s), attend a life-changing Rachel's Vineyard Retreat. For the **February 17/19** Portland Retreat, please contact **Karen** at (541) 350-8126 or Portland@project-aurora.org.

Please Pray for Those on Our Prayer List:

David Leonard ♦ Steve Forrester ♦ Carl Johnson ♦ Dolores Koivisto ♦ Anita Marquez
Ben Guyger ♦ Georgia Fitzgerald ♦ Lloyd Rodgers ♦ Pierre Jones ♦ Sammi Pedersen
Steven Clifton ♦ Jordan Ortega ♦ Chuck Renwick ♦ John Huthmacher
Ed McNamara ♦ Duncan Osgood ♦ Doni Bachand ♦ Karen Evans ♦ Ellen Suing