

April 2, 2017 – 5th Sunday in Lent, Year A
Three Perspectives on Death

May I have a show of hands?

How many here have had a career in Accounting or in Engineering?

I ask that because I have a question about numbers.

How many times in today's Scriptures did you hear the words about death ... the words: die, died, dies, death, dead? ... an estimate?

By my count those words were used 15 times, a lot for any concept in a set of Scripture readings for a weekend.

Those words caught my attention possibly because they were used so often and perhaps because I am in my 70's and death and dying is getting a little closer to a reality for me.

One perspective on death is from a very selfish perspective.

It comes from someone who is very self-centered, is very materially oriented, and is very un-godly.

I would call such a person: "IIAme", that is, "It is all about me!"

In this life it would be about:

- What would feel good?
- What would make me richest?
- What is in it for me?
- Couldn't care less about you or anybody else.

If I were to make a chart about somebody like this it would have

- **Life** on the left
- **Death** as a vertical line in the middle
- And **Afterlife** on the right half

Since this is an ungodly person they would not care about an afterlife and so their view would simply be:

- Who cares!
- I'll be dead!

That is pretty blunt!

A second perspective would be about a person who is a little less self-centered but is concerned about what other people think.

This person could be called: "IIAA my neighbor" ... It Is All About my neighbor ... yet in a rather selfish way.

So, using the same kind of chart this person would care a lot about what people thought about them in the afterlife, namely:

- What would my reputation be after I die?
- How wealthy would people think I was?
- What would my tomb stone say about me?
- What would be my legacy?

Ah yes, what will my friends say about me after I am gone?

As you can well imagine, the third perspective would be that of a believer in God, a believer in an afterlife.

This person could be called: "IIAAYL" ... "It is all about you, Lord".

For this person the afterlife would be a life in heaven.

Their chart would show the afterlife as:

- An eternity spent with God
- An eternity that would be shared with others - family, friends and billions of others
- At eternity of smiles, joys, satisfaction, and awe!

Three perspectives.

Three over-simplified perspectives.

Over-simplified? YES!

In this life we do have to care for all three:

- Me
- My neighbor
- My Lord

Yes, I do have to brush my own teeth, dress myself, do some work around the house, run some errands.

Yes, I must also have concern about my family, my friends, my close neighbors and even the suffering neighbors around the world.

No, it is not what they think about me!

Yes, I certainly should go to Mass on Sundays ... and pray each day, and ask the Lord for guidance and inspiration on my actions, and thank the Lord for all the many blessings that I have received.

This Lenten season provides a great opportunity for self-reflection about how I am balancing me, my neighbor and the Lord in my life.

Self-reflection is an excellent exercise in general.

It is an even better exercise in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation which we have scheduled twice for this week, on Monday evening and the morning of next Saturday.

So, how do I mesh, how do I manage, how budget my time for myself, my time for my neighbor and my time for my loving Lord?

Can I let the Lord help me manage my efforts for all three?

Perhaps a little thought about the afterlife might cause us to make a little adjustment to our routines.

Try it.

It will make the merciful Lord grin from ear to ear!

LIFE

AFTERLIFE

IIAA
me

Who Cares!
I'll be dead!

LIFE

AFTERLIFE

IIAA
my neighbor

Reputation
Wealth
Tomb Stone

LIFE

AFTERLIFE

IIAA
You, Lord!

Eternity
with God
& Others