

Living Eternally Through Death and Dying:

a bulletin insert series informing and inspiring the faithful in
the truths surrounding death and dying

The following is the first in a series of articles on death and dying. Future inserts will address: care for the caregiver; the purpose and significance of the Church's liturgical rites for the dead (Wake services, Funeral Mass, Cremation); Communion of Saints, living wills, bequeaths, and Memorial Masses for our loved ones who have gone before us.

As much as we don't like to dwell on death, it is a real part of our lives. Our faith faces the reality of death and the anguish of grief and trusts confidently that the power of sin and death has been vanquished by Christ. The faith of the community in the resurrection of the dead brings support and strength to those who suffer the loss of those whom they love. Reflecting God's Love, the Church calls each member to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn. (Order of Christian Funerals)

"It is in the face of death that the riddle of human existence becomes most acute. Not only is man tormented by pain and by the advancing deterioration of his body, but even more so by a dread of perpetual extinction. He rightly follows the intuition of his heart when he abhors and repudiates the absolute ruin and total disappearance of his own person.

Man rebels against death because he bears in himself an eternal seed which cannot be reduced to sheer matter. All the endeavors of technology, though useful in the extreme, cannot calm his anxiety. . .

The Church has been taught by divine revelation, and herself firmly teaches, that man has been created by God for a blissful purpose beyond the reach of earthly misery. In addition, that bodily death from which man would have been immune had he not sinned will be vanquished." (Most Reverend James T. McHugh Bishop of Camden)