

## *From the Deacon's Wife . . . .*

**W**hat do you think heaven will be like? We often talk about getting to heaven, but do we ever imagine how our existence will be once we are there? A group of Deacons and their wives recently had a discussion about heaven. Even in that group, the focus kept getting hung up on what it takes to get to heaven, and the role of purgatory, and who will or will not make it to heaven. For example, can it be heaven if someone you hate is there? Can you be in heaven if you hate? What about someone who had committed murder and repented – how does this affect the victim and the family of the victim if they see the murderer in heaven?

See what I mean! We kept getting hung up on issues that only God can know and judge. So forget about those issues. Try to imagine what heaven will be like after the first few days – since you'll be there for a long, long, long time – forever in fact! Some people say: "Well, if it's just going to be sitting around on a cloud, playing a harp, I'd rather go to hell." Do you have an image of heaven in your head that makes you long to go there? What do you really know about what it will be like?

A few weeks ago, Father Frank said that in heaven, nothing will be private. What we think, everyone will know as if we had spoken the words. That sounds kind of scary – to have everyone know your thoughts. But you will also "know" everyone else's thoughts, too. Is that positive or negative in your mind? I think the real point is that heaven is such a loving place that there are no negative, petty, or mean thoughts or words.

**What we know of heaven is so limited.** The bible tells us that "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, what God has ready for those who love Him." The promise is that it is sooo good, we cannot possibly imagine it. We need to create for ourselves a vision of heaven that is so enticing, so wonderful, that we would do anything to get there. Think of the most perfect day you could possibly have. Think of things you have always dreamed of being able to do. Think of what gives you the most joy in life. Think how it would be to have all of them become an eternal reality. If we can do this, we will have a powerful motivator to love God, to follow His commandments, and basically to live our lives in such a way that we will be welcomed into heaven one day.

As evidenced by the discussion among Deacons I mentioned earlier, this is not easy to do – perhaps especially for adults. Children naturally have vivid imaginations. I encourage you to ask your kids (or any kids) what they think heaven will be like. They often have no inhibitions; no sense of what is practical or possible. They are not bound by reality. You may be surprised and delighted by what they say!

Of course, none of this will answer the question: "What is heaven like?" but it may help us to focus on why we bother with practicing our Catholic faith. **We do it to get to heaven.** We want our spouses and children to get there, too. That's why we pass-on our faith to them. That's why we support our Catholic school. Anything that can help us stay focused on our ultimate goal of heaven is a good thing!

May God bless your efforts to help others get to heaven.