

On Death I

Steps in the process of our final reconciliation of; whom and what we are and our concerns.

When someone in the family is approaching death, what should the good Catholic do to prepare? As Catholics we do not believe that death is the end; on the contrary we believe that it is the door to larger life. We believe that it is the transition point between the earthly life and the life that fulfills that earthly state. Thus we do not approach death with a gloomy attitude. Still most experience the natural anxiety that surrounds anything unknown, although with death being so irreversible in the natural human estate, the anxiety can be considerable. Often illness accompanies the last chapter of a person's life, so that health care decisions need to be made. [More about this in subsequent articles] Catholics who are given the opportunity to prepare for death will want to talk with those whom they love and trust about the final disposition of their bodies and their goods. It is likely that a person preparing for death will want to talk to a priest, not only for confession and the sacrament of the sick [what we used to call "last rites" -- more about that in a subsequent article] but also to get some good information about what is the best way to deal with all the loose ends that need to be tied up before resting comfortably in the Lord. Perhaps there are concerns such as the need to reconcile with members of the family with whom the dying person is at odds; perhaps there are financial decisions that need to be made, and plans that need to be put in order. Those who die suddenly do not have this opportunity, but for the majority, beginning to think about this before it happens can relieve much anxiety.

IHM Pray for us.

Fr. Jerry