

**Review last meditation:**

**Topic:** Considering the reality of hell

**Preparatory Prayer [46]:** I will beg God our Lord for grace that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of His Divine Majesty.

**Mental Representation [65]:** Here it will be to see in imagination the length, breadth, and depth of hell.

**Grace:** I will ask God for what I desire: Here it will be to beg for a deep sense of the pain which the lost suffer, that if because of my faults I forget the love of the eternal Lord, at least the fear of these punishments will keep me from falling into sin.

**Points [66-70]:**

1. *This will be to see in imagination the vast fires, and the souls enclosed, as it were, in bodies of fire.*
2. *To hear the wailing, the howling, cries, and blasphemies against Christ our Lord and against His saints.*
3. *With the sense of smell to perceive the smoke, the sulphur, the filth, and corruption.*
4. *To taste the bitterness of tears, sadness, and remorse of conscience.*
5. *With the sense of touch to feel the flames which envelop and burn the souls.*

**Additional points to consider:**

The Church Fathers spoke about hell. Saint Augustine, for instance, considered it “The Great Thought”. Saint Ambrose said, “Into this or that I must fall.” It is certainly a place -- a place that modern man might wish to ignore. Consider the gentle but strong words of Christ, “*Depart from me.*” How often we implore Mary to help us “at the hour of our death” in the rosary?

**Scripture:**

Ps 68: “Let God arise, let his foes be scattered. Let those who hate him flee before him. As smoke is blown away so will they be blown away like wax that melts before the fire.”

Ps 74: “A senseless people insults your name. How long, O God, is the enemy to scoff? Is the foe to insult your name forever?” Ps 74

**The gentle Christ, who also spoke of hell:**

“Behold your king comes to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey” (Mt 21.5) and “Do not think I have come to bring peace on Earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword” (Mt 10.34).

“When he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, ‘Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace!’” (Lk 19.41) and “It would be better if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin” (Lk 17.2). “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his soul” (Mk 8.36).

“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way easy that leads to destruction.” (Mt 7.13)

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father.” (Mt 7.21).

“Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Mt 19.26

**Council of Trent on the goodness of Holy Fear:** Although perfect love casts aside all fear, it is licit and encouraged for man to think often of the pains of hell. If anyone says that it is wrong for a man to use the pains of hell in order to deter him from sinning further or in order to better perceive the mercy of God -- let one be anathema.

### **Saint Francis of Sales on Holy Fear (Treatise on Divine Love; Bk 11 - Ch17)**

“In this life where our charity will never be so perfect as to be free from danger, we always have need of fear. Even though a soul be in the state of grace, still it often sees itself attacked by severe temptations. The human heart, which is changeable and subject to rebellious passions, uses holy fear in the struggle and makes use of it to drive back the enemy.

### **Fatima: a vision of hell given to Lucia (1917)**

Mary opened Her hands once more, as she had done the two previous months. The rays of light appeared to penetrate the earth, and we saw, as it were, a vast sea of fire. Plunged in this fire, we saw the demons and the souls [of the damned]. The damned were like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, having human forms. They were floating and raised into the air by the flames which issued from within themselves...amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair.

### **Saint Faustina:**

The Apostle of Divine Mercy, canonized by Pope John Paul II, 30 April 2000. Faustina also had a vision of hell.

*I, Sister Faustina Kowalska, by the order of God, have visited the Abysses of Hell so that I might tell souls about it and testify to its existence...the devils were full of hatred for me, but they had to obey me at the command of God, What I have written is but a pale shadow of the things I saw. But I noticed one thing: That most of the souls there are those who disbelieved that there is a hell." (Diary 741)*

It is a place of great torture; how awesomely large and extensive it is! The kinds of tortures I saw:

The loss of God.

Perpetual remorse of conscience.

That one's condition will never change.

That fire that will penetrate the soul without destroying it. A terrible suffering since it is a purely spiritual fire, lit by God's anger.

Continual darkness and a terrible suffocating smell, and despite the darkness, the devils and the souls of the damned see each other and all the evil, both of others and their own.

The constant company of Satan.

Horrible despair, hatred of God, vile words, curses and blasphemies.

*"These are the tortures suffered by all the damned together, but that is not the end of the sufferings. There are special tortures destined for particular souls. These are the torments of the senses. Each soul undergoes terrible and indescribable sufferings related to the manner in which it has sinned. How terribly souls suffer there! Consequently, I pray even more fervently for the conversion of sinners. I incessantly plead God's mercy upon them. O My Jesus, I would rather be in agony until the end of the world, amidst the greatest sufferings, than offend you by the least sin." (Diary 741)*

### **Colloquy:**

*Enter into conversation with Christ our Lord. Recall to memory that of those who are in hell, some came there because they did not believe in the coming of Christ; others, though they believed, because they did not keep the Commandments. Divide them all into three classes:*

*Those who were lost before the coming of Christ*

*Those who were lost during His lifetime*

*Those who were lost after His life here on Earth*

*Thereupon, I will give thanks to God our Lord that He has not put an end to my life and permitted me to fall into any of these three classes.*

*I shall thank Him for this, that up to this very moment He has shown Himself so loving and merciful to me.*

*Close with an Our Father*

