

# **How to Talk to Our Kids About Death, Heaven, and Hell**

**How do you talk to your kids about difficult or heavy subjects?**

**Vanessa 11.05.2025**

# Parenting is hard

## Here are some ground rules...

- This is a safe space to be wrong, it's not possible for us to always be right
- We don't know what we don't know
- Of course we try our best, but our kids don't need our perfection, they need to see us try, mess up, and try again
- Being a parent means endless chances to try again
- One of the most important things we can teach our kids is how to be wrong
  - challenging ourselves, accepting it, embracing it, admitting it
  - "I'm open to being wrong..."
  - "I'm open to changing my mind..."
- "I never thought of it that way"
- "I don't know, let's look it up"
- "I feel like the answer is... but I could be wrong, let me confirm and get back to you"
- "I thought this...but learned/read/heard... and that changed my mind"
- "That's a good question, what do you think?"
- Developmentally, kids' brains are very literal, very black and white so we need to guide them:
  - Embracing the gray area
  - ...and... vs ...but...
- Have the hard conversations
- We have no control, all we can do is prepare

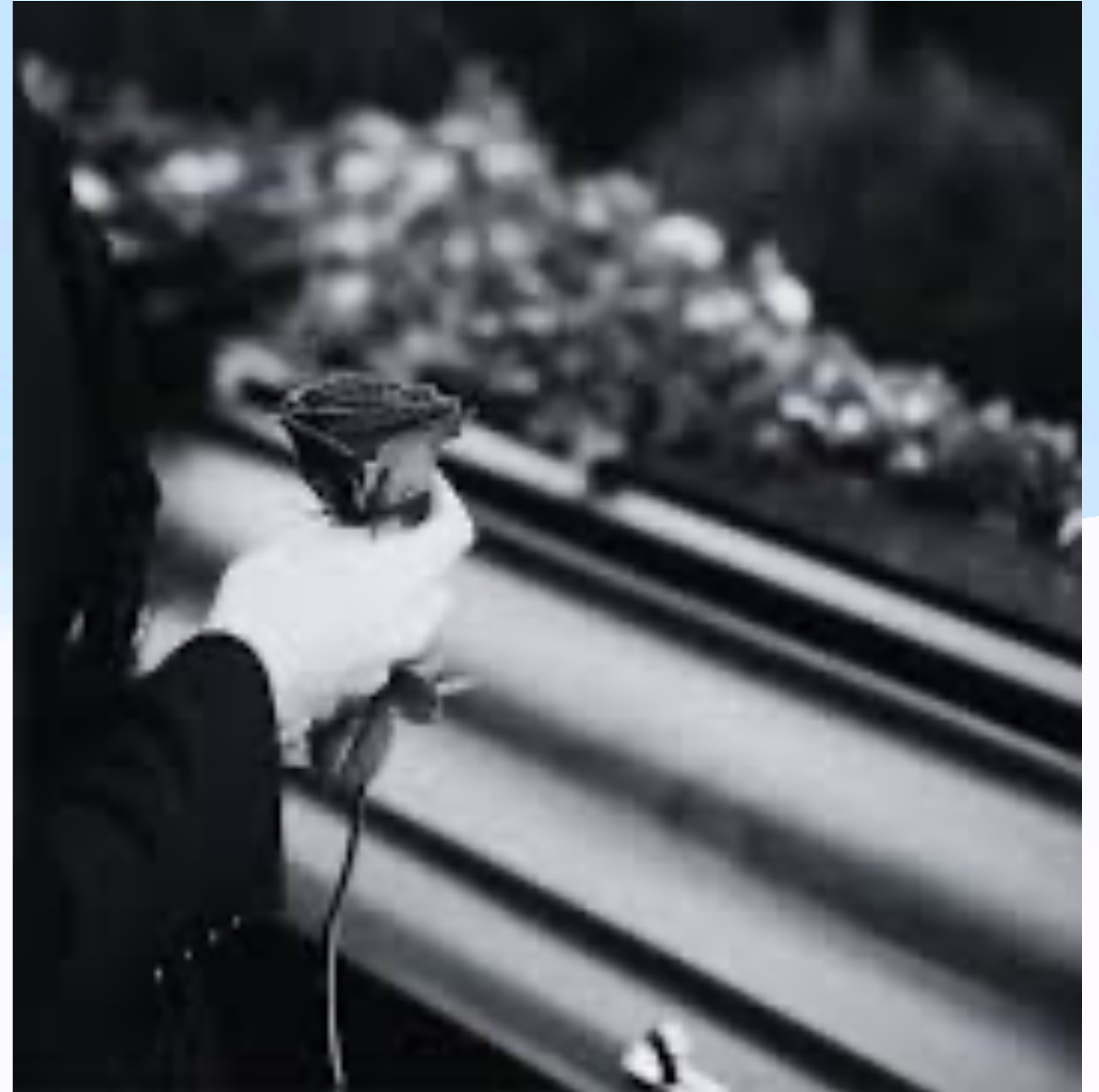
# Suffering and Punishment

- Kids' biggest question is usually why does God punish people and allow them to suffer
- God does not punish us. Ever.
  - Old Testament vs. New Testament
- God created us out of love and only has love for us, it is unconditional; nothing we do can change how God feels about us
- And God gave us Free Will
- These are incorrect:
  - “That makes Jesus mad or sad”
  - “God is mad at them”
  - “This is happening because they did something bad and God is punishing them”
- God does not want us to suffer AND suffering is part of the human condition
- We suffer as a result of our own actions or the actions of others
- God did not create suffering and death, humans did
- And while God can bring grace and good things from suffering and pain, God does not want suffering and pain just to get those good things
- Suffering is such a part of being human that Jesus, who is both God and man, suffered and endured tremendous pain



# Death

- Because Jesus sacrificed Himself, we are able to return to God
- We can turn away from God, but God never leaves us
- God always loves, forever
- God's love is what holds everything in being
- God does not force us to do anything
- God does not force us to choose God when we die. Free will gives us the power to not choose God/Heaven when we die
- In that final moment when we see the face of God, who knows what people choose
- Does this mean that our life on Earth is unimportant and that our bad deeds don't matter?
- We spend our life trying to continually turn back to God so that we recognize God at this moment and accept His mercy
- It's not like 'The Good Place' where some cosmic being is keeping a tally of all our faults

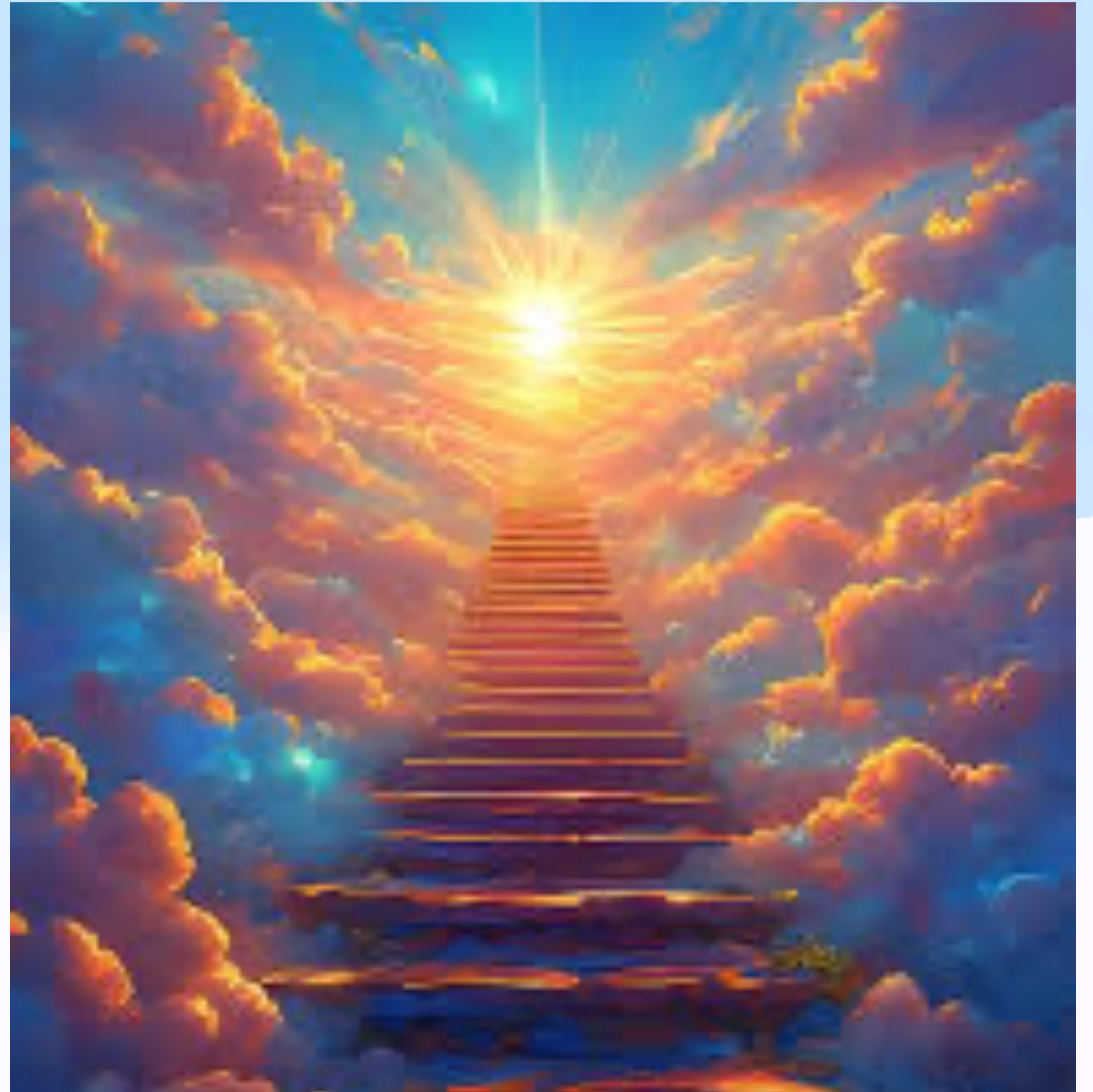




# Heaven and Purgatory

- “Death puts an end to human life as a time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ”
- “Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ”
- “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation.”

-CCC





**“It is not easy to entrust oneself to God’s mercy, because it is an abyss beyond our comprehension. But we must! ‘Oh, I am a great sinner!’ All the better! Go to Jesus; He likes you to tell him these things! He forgets, He has a very special capacity for forgetting. He forgets, He kisses you, He embraces you, and He simply says to you, “Neither do I condemn you; go, sin no more.””**

**Pope Francis**

**“You cannot conceive, nor can I,  
the appalling strangeness of the  
mercy of God”**

**Graham Greene**



# Hell

- “We cannot be united with God unless we choose to freely love Him.”
- “To die in mortal sin without repenting or accepting God’s merciful love means remaining separated from Him forever by our own free choice.”
- “The state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell.’”





