

HOPE TO DIE

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you read *Hope to Die*, consider these questions:

1. How much do you hope for heaven versus fear hell?
2. What do you think about when you think of heaven?

Introduction

1. The Catechism states that, for a Christian, the day of death is the end of the sacramental life and the fulfillment of our new birth at Baptism. With this in mind: Where is your hope? What in your life takes time, energy, and passion away from the Lord?
2. Have you considered the reality that your body will be raised to life in Christ forever in heaven? Have you struggled with the idea of the resurrection?
3. Do reflections on the body as a sacrament make you rethink your body and life? If so, how?

Chapter 1

1. When God created man, he knew his Only Son would take on our likeness. What does Christ taking on human form say about our human image and likeness to God?
2. Biblically speaking, there are two types of life: *bios* and *zoe*. How are they different?
3. If there are two kinds of life in the Bible, what are the two kinds of death? In today's society, do you think most people are aware that there are two kinds of death? What evidence do you see?

Chapter 2

1. Have you been close to a loved one who passed away? If so, how did Scott's experience of being near his father as he died relate to your experience? How did his reflection of being near something sacred impact you?
2. What ways do you see God's goodness reflected in your own body?
3. Immortality, integrity, and infused knowledge were gifts bestowed on Adam and Eve by God. How would these gifts change your relationship with God?

Chapter 3

1. The Old Testament patriarchs knew that where a body was buried was important. People often don't feel one's burial place is significant today. What are your thoughts after reading this chapter?

2. Do you see any relationship between how the ancient Israelites viewed burial and what the Church holds?
3. What do you think of when you are near or drive past a place of burial? Does the physical setting of cemeteries influence your thoughts on death and burial?

Chapter 4

1. People in antiquity easily saw God in creation. They saw the beauty of nature as God's revelation of himself. Today it seems that we mostly just see stuff. How can you take time to see God in creation?
2. What does Tobit's example in Scripture say to us about the care for the dead? Today, it's unlikely you would be killed for burying bodies properly. But we can still emulate Tobit's example. How can we better practice this Corporal Work of Mercy?
3. What are some earthly things that you are attached to? How might your time and focus change if you diligently prepared for a better country?

Chapter 5

1. In the Gospels, Jesus is intentional in stating his desire to have you resurrected with him forever. How does this influence your relationship with him?
2. Reflect on St. Peter's "first sermon." Do you think Scripture's teaching on the Resurrection makes a compelling argument?
3. Sacraments are one way that we receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls. Have you considered the power of the sacraments in your life? How have they strengthened you or aided you?

Chapter 6

1. We read, "In Holy Communion, Christ enters into our mortal bodies so that we, in turn, can enter into his immortal, glorified body." Normally, when we eat food, we absorb it into our body. But in the Eucharist our physical body is able to be united with the true Body of Christ. Does this change the way you think of the Eucharist? If so, how?
2. How does Jesus' sacrifice change how you think about your participation in the Eucharist?
3. In John 6:54 Jesus says, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." Do you believe in Jesus' words, or do you find this statement difficult to accept?

Chapter 7

1. We read that "Jesus knows every drop of grace offered to us and every circumstance that might have inhibited us from choosing grace. He knows the deepest and truest desires of our heart." Take some time to reflect on your life. How can you improve your walk with Jesus? Does it comfort you to know that our Divine Judge knows you so intimately?
2. What is the eschaton? How will it change our bodies and souls?
3. Do you think it is important to reflect on particular judgment?

Chapter 8

1. What are the five things the Catechism teaches will happen to us when our bodies are resurrected?
2. What physical age do you think your glorified body will resemble when you're in heaven?
3. Who are the people you most look forward to seeing in heaven besides Jesus and the Holy Family?

Chapter 9

1. We read, "in heaven we are going to see how others affected, shaped, and blessed us, helping us along to the Father in ways we never guessed or imagined." Who do you think might be responsible for praying for you and affecting your life positively? What are some ways you might be able to help others more, either spiritually or materially?
2. What questions would you like to have answered in heaven?
3. Does contemplating heaven put into focus your earthy decisions?

Chapter 10

1. Trivia: What are the seven Corporal Works of Mercy?
2. Isn't it interesting that so many of our major Churches, including St. Peter's Basilica, are built on grave sites? Why do you think these amazing Churches are often built on the same places we buried the greatest saints?
3. What does the Church teach on burial and cremation? What are the legitimate reasons according to the Church for cremation, and what aren't good reasons to cremate?

Conclusion

1. Has this book changed the way you think about death and the resurrection?
2. What are ways we can show our hope in the resurrection? How can we communicate to others that we look forward to the resurrection in praying for the dead? (For example: writing a letter to close family and friends on why we desire traditional burial.)
3. How can the Church help ensure that bodies are treated with dignity in death?