



# Boston Catholic Journal

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editor@boston-catholic-journal.com

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"The rich man also died and was buried and from the netherworld, where he was in torment ... I am suffering torment in these flames.' ... warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment."

Saint Luke 16:19-31



## A HELL OF A SITUATION

**I**t is frighteningly odd. We no longer hear of Hell ... although we see it leaching into the lives of the destitute everywhere – and even find it crouching, lurking, in some obscure corner of our lives that shrinks from the light.

Contrary to progressive theological speculation, Hell has not been abolished ... it has not even abated. Look around you.

Like children fearing to invoke the very evil we fear through uttering it, we tell ourselves that if we resolutely ignore Hell, it will go away. But still, we whistle in the dark. Odd. Very odd.

Ask yourself: have you **ever** been to a funeral Mass where the bereaved are **not** told, assured,

*indisputably*, that their dead (who apparently had never sinned, unlike the rest of the congregation) are already in Heaven looking down benignly on our obsequies even as we utter them?

Has the question, let alone the concern, ever *once* so much as arisen?

Dives, the rich man, as we see, as Jesus Himself tells us, would have a decidedly different opinion on the matter – were he present to offer it, but he is being ... detained. Indefinitely. Even eternally.

"Go to my brother", he would importune us, as he did Abraham. Unfortunately, we would tell him very much what Abraham told him:

"It's of no avail.

***They think you're in Heaven!***

The priest *told* them so; he *assured* them ... .. remember?

They think that you are looking **down** on them, man!

They haven't a clue that all you can see are the soles of their shoes!

It's a hell of a situation: Priest, Rabbi, Minister, even his psychologist, are all of one accord. No such.

The hell there isn't.

Ah, the price of instant gratification. Yes, such lies console the bereaved, but are a definite disservice to the dead who stand much in need of prayer and, could they tell you, would be unspeakably grateful for it.

But even if they did, you would not believe them ...

Sounds familiar. ...



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