

We are pleased to announce



Open House Dates for Catholic Schools Week 2018

We are St. Paul Strong, dedicated to a sustained viability



Sunday Jan 28th 1pm to 3pm

Tuesday Jan 30th 1pm - 2:45 pm

Thursday February 1st 6:30 to 8pm

Pre-school Only

February 1st 9:30 to 11:00

Parents and children are invited to a special class snack

Join us for tours, enrollment options (Pre K 3 & 4 year old through 8th grade) & meet and greet opportunities with our students, parents, teachers & principal



St. Paul School
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**Celebrate
Catholic Schools
Week 2018**
January 28 - February 3

CSW18

What is the Church's Teaching on Ghosts?

Question #1

What is the Church's teaching on ghosts? My kids watch a show on the SyFy channel called *Ghost Hunters* and the kids tell me "See...ghosts do exist." But I tell them that it is impossible because our faith tells us that once a person dies, their soul goes in front of Jesus for judgment. I do not believe there are such things as souls that cannot find their way, or souls that do not want to "cross over." How should I go about explaining this to my kids?

Answer #1

You are correct that once a person dies, that person's soul is immediately judged. You are also correct that there are not "lost souls," in the sense that there are not souls that are caught between death and eternity unable to "cross over to the other side." After death, a soul is judged and is either saved or damned. A damned soul is in hell; a saved soul is either in heaven or in purgatory.

That said, it may be that purgatory might in some way involve the life one lived here on earth. It is not incompatible with a belief in purgatory to believe that our purgation might include "revisiting" places that were significant during our earthly lives. It may be that occasionally God allows people to see such souls in order to inspire prayers for them or in some way to teach a lesson to the people who see them.

In any case, what you can tell your kids is this: Although Church teaching does not rule out the possibility of ghosts, and although it also does not rule out the possibility that God might allow us to see ghosts on occasion, the Church *does* forbid us from attempting to initiate occult contact with departed souls.

[Answered by Michelle Arnold, Catholic Answers Apologist Courtesy of Catholic Answers, <http://forums.catholic.com/>]

Question #2

Do ghosts really exist? And if so, how should Catholics think about them?

Answer #2

The prolific Catholic Dr. Peter Kreeft, professor of philosophy at Boston College, gives a resounding 'yes' to the first question and a great explanation to the second.

"Even without our action or invitation, the dead often do appear to the living," Kreeft asserts. "There is enormous evidence of 'ghosts' in all cultures."

The first thing Catholics should know about ghosts, Kreeft explains, is that we should not try to contact or communicate with them. Any kind of participation in the occult or spiritism is sinful. "We are out of our depth," Kreeft explains, and there is "danger of deception by evil spirits." This is why, when it comes to supernatural things, we should stick exclusively with God, his revelation, and his Church.

But how does the existence of ghosts fit into our faith?

Kreeft suggests there are three kinds of ghosts, one kind from each of the places of the afterlife:

1) Ghosts from hell

"There are malicious and deceptive spirits," Kreeft explains, "and since they are deceptive, they hardly ever appear malicious. These are probably the ones who respond to conjurings at séances. They probably come from Hell. Even the chance of that happening should be sufficient to terrify away all temptation to necromancy."

2) Ghosts from purgatory

This is "the most familiar kind: the sad ones, the wispy ones," Kreeft explains. "They seem to be working out some unfinished earthly business, or suffering some purgatorial purification until released from their earthly business. These ghosts would seem to be the ones who just barely made it to purgatory, who feel little or no joy yet and who need to learn many painful lessons about their past lives on earth."

3) Ghosts from heaven

Lastly, "there are the bright, happy spirits of dead friends and family, especially spouses, who appear unbidden, at God's will, not ours, with messages of hope and love. They seem to come from Heaven. Unlike the purgatorial ghosts who come back primarily for their own sakes, these bright spirits come back for the sake of us the living, to tell us all is well."

[byChurchPOP Editor-October 27, 2017; Susan Ackeridge, Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0]