



TASTE Reflection Questions
12 February 2026

**If You Don't Know the Bad News,
the Good News is No News**

Msgr. Charles Pope

Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry. ~ Padre Pio



1. What did you find most interesting about this talk?

2. Msgr. Pope gave the analogy of a cure of a deadly disease being “great news” to the one who knew they had the deadly disease, but “no news” to the one who was unaware they had the same disease.

- How did this analogy relate to us and our Church?
- Do you think most people do not understand how bad a situation we are in and how much we need Jesus as our Savior to save us from hell? What has been the result?
- Given that Jesus and His Apostles emphasized this much, why do you think it has been downplayed?
- What do you think the result would be if the Church emphasized this more?
- How might you encourage your pastor to provide the bad news?

3. Msgr. Pope posed the question, “What is the problem with the practical denial of hell and saying God is nice and people are nice and only those who are genocidal murderers would go to hell.

- How has the presumption that everyone is going to Heaven entered into your belief, the belief of your family members or friends?
- How has this presumption caused family members or friends to stop attending church and/or not accept a relationship with Jesus?
- How could either sharing Msgr. Pope’s book/talk or your own testimony help loved ones see the Truth?
- Did Jesus’ words in Mt 7:13-1 surprise you that most people will not go to heaven?
 (“Try to strive to enter through the narrow gate. Many, I tell you, will not be able. For wide is the road that leads to damnation, and many follow it. How narrow is the road to salvation and how few there are who find it.”)
- How can reading the Bible on a daily basis keep you from wrong presumptions that most will go to heaven?
- What do you feel inspired or encouraged to do differently as it relates to people you love?

4. Msgr. Pope explained that the modern worldly definition of Love is reduced to “kindness” but does NOT include correction, rebuking, or discipline.

- How do you feel about 1 Corinthians 13 where it says “Love does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.”
- Can you think of a situation where you may have inadvertently “affirmed” what was actually harmful to someone?
- If you had to do it over again, what might you say or do?
- When have you not corrected or rebuked someone thinking that it would be unloving?

If you don't know the bad news, the good news is no news	• A deadly diagnosis makes the news of a cure great news! • But if you don't know you are sick, news of the same cure is meaningless. • Spiritually: If people do not understand sin, judgment, & hell, salvation sounds optional. Their presumption may be ("almost nobody goes to hell") and this empties churches. • If everyone is automatically saved: Why go to Mass? Receive Communion? Go to Confession? • Soft-pedaling sin and ignoring controversial moral issues breed indifference.
The Apostolic Pattern: Diagnose Before You Heal	• In the sermons recorded in Acts of the Apostles: Humanity is in serious spiritual danger. We are responsible for sin. Repentance is urgent. Jesus is Lord and Savior. • The pattern: You are wounded. There is a Divine Physician. Surrender to Him and be healed. • Announcing the spiritual bad news makes the corresponding Good News truly great news.
Jesus Spoke Frequently About Judgment	• Jesus did not mention hell once or twice — it was a consistent theme throughout the Gospel. • Examples from His teaching: Narrow gate vs. wide road to destruction, Sheep and goats. Wheat and weeds, Wise and foolish virgins, Wedding banquet with invited guests who refuse. • It is so important that of the 38 parables, 21 of them concern judgment and separation. • In John 3: The Light has come. Many prefer darkness. Judgment reveals what we truly love.
Why Hell Exists	• Hell exists not because God is hateful, vengeful, or "mean." Rather, hell exists because: Love requires freedom. Freedom requires real choice which includes the possibility of refusal. • God will not coerce us — He desires freely chosen love. Even angels freely rejected Him. • Heaven is offered. Separation is permitted. God respects our decision, even when it grieves Him.
What Is Love?	• Mistaken modern reduction — Love = kindness or affirmation. • Biblical love also includes: Encouragement, Correction, Rebuke, and Discipline • Affirming what harms someone is not love. It leaves them trapped in sin & can mislead them to spiritual destruction. • God's "wrath": is not emotional anger in God. It is our experience of divine holiness while unhealed. It is like bright light to eyes accustomed to darkness — the light did not change; we did.
Do People Really Want Heaven?	• Many want a "designer heaven" on their own terms. • But Heaven is — God's kingdom. God's values. Loving what God loves. Loving even enemies. • Questions to consider — Would we accept Heaven if our enemy were there? If we were the elder son in the Prodigal Son story, would we enter the feast? • True Heaven requires — Conversion. Alignment with God's will. Acceptance of His standards.
Why Many Choose the Wide Road	• Concupiscence — Strong inclination toward sin as a result of original sin, Attraction to what harms us, Weak attraction to prayer, scripture, and holiness • Hard hearts and stubborn wills — Resistance to correction. Lack of teachability (docility) • Distraction & cultural conformity — Endless media consumption. Everyone is doing it., Moral norms shaped by culture, not God. • Disordered passions — Darkened intellect. Pride, selfishness, impurity, greed, anger, envy, laziness, arrogance, lukewarmness. • We prefer certain sins — If I follow Christ, I may have to give this up. So we delay or refuse.
We Are Spiritually Wounded — and Given Medicine	• Humanity is deeply sick spiritually and morally. • Christ provides remedies — Sacraments, Liturgy, Scripture, Prayer and Adoration, Holy fellowship • These are not optional extras — they are medicine. • We must — Take the medicine consistently, Allow ourselves to be conformed to Christ.
What Happens If We Deny Hell?	• Undermines salvation theology: What are we saved from? Why do we need a Savior? • Trivializes — Sacraments, Church attendance, Scripture, Moral seriousness • Weakens missionary zeal — If no one is in danger, why evangelize? • Encourages presumption (a sin against hope). • Diminishes joy — If there is no real danger, rescue is unimpressive. • Undermines human dignity — Freedom becomes meaningless if outcomes are guaranteed.
The Right Response	• Fear of the Lord — Is not terror, but is Reverent seriousness. • Reject — Presumption and Despair; Choose the Light of Christ • Pray for perseverance — Lord, keep me faithful to the end. • Rejoice — The danger is real. The cure is offered. The Physician is present. Eternal life is possible.
Conclusion	• Hell is not about divine anger. It is about human freedom. • The Good News is glorious precisely because the danger is so real. • Christ has come. The cure is offered; Respond and rejoice.