

Ask, Father James:

“What’s the difference between belief in reincarnation and resurrection?”

Belief in the resurrection of the dead has been an essential element of the Christian faith from its beginnings. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in the Creed, we profess that we look forward to the resurrection of the dead and life to come... Jesus preached the resurrection of the dead in opposition to the Sadducees and some others who do not believe it [Mark 12:18-27]. Jesus, talking about the resurrection says; ‘everyone who lives and believes in me, though they die, they shall live’ [John 11:25-26].

However, there are people who would rather believe in Reincarnation or the doctrine of transmigration - the notion that a soul or a spirit or a shade lingers after death in some kind of place or condition where it can be more or less happy (taking on a new, completely different body (human, animal, plant, spirit, etc.). Adherents of reincarnation say that when a person dies, there is the possibility that their souls transmigrate into others persons, if the person's conduct deserved it or they could reincarnate as lower animals or even insects. Such people can often be heard telling of their experiences of a sudden feeling of, "I have been here before," or "done that before" in my past life. Such are the doctrinal beliefs of adherents of some eastern religions (doctrine of karma). that the soul is a discreet karmic unit incarnating over and over. Also adherents of new age movements like scientology or Kabbalah, also share reincarnation doctrines.

As Christians, we do not believe in reincarnation. In the Book of Genesis, God tells us; "we are dust and unto dust the body returns" (Genesis 3:19) but the soul returns to God. As Christians, we believe in the general resurrection of the dead. Jesus preached the resurrection of the dead. He says; ‘an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement’ [John 5:28-29]. After his own resurrection from the dead, he told Thomas; “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have," (Luke 24:39). Our belief in the resurrection is further strengthened by the fact that Jesus returned to life after having been dead and buried (1 Corinthians 15:4). Jesus thus encourages us when he says; "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). The soul came from God and will be reunited in a dialogical relationship with God.



Our Lady of Peace Parish



425 Broad Street North
Regina, SK S4R 2X8



306.543.5355



frjowolagba@gmail.com



www.ourladyofpeaceregina.com

