

Tibetan Buddhists believe that at the moment of death, one's soul migrates into another living being, and so one lives on.

That might sound attractive: you know; those things we've failed to do in this life can be done in the next reincarnation... and the next, and the next, and the next....

But, if you think about it, it means none of us is unique; loved from all eternity by the Lord, and brought to life, and upheld, by His: "Compassion and unfailing love." Ps. 25: 6

This belief in reincarnation is vitally important when the spiritual leader of Tibet, the Dali Lama, dies.

At the very moment the Dali Lama dies, a search is begun for the boy his soul's migrated into and, when he's found, the boy's taken off to be brought up as Dali Lama.

He has no choice in the matter; this is his destiny; he's the Dali Lama until death.

That sounds very alien to the Western mind – even more so to us Catholics now – who assumed our spiritual leader went on until death: that is, until Pope Benedict retired.

Of course, the Pope; the Bishop of Rome; the successor of St Peter, isn't a god as Buddhists believe the Dali Lama is.

There is only One God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: and God, the Son, took our frail flesh.

Some may, in the not too distant past, have looked upon the Pope as 'god-like;' and yet, he too, is frail and fallen in nature as we all are.

Along with him, we all stand in need of the Lord's forgiveness, and His mercy.

And we know, as he does, that: "God is so rich in mercy, and saved [us] by his grace when [we] believed." Eph. 2: 4 & 8

Pope Emeritus Benedict, Pope Francis, each and every Saint, each one of us, equally, have been saved by His grace and mercy.

So, we're all: "God's masterpiece." Eph. 2: 10 Called by the Lord to serve Him in His Church in whatever way He thinks is best for us, using the gifts and talents He's gifted to us.

You know, faith isn't a family heirloom that's just passed down to us, which we put away in a cupboard and, occasionally, get it out to dust it off.

Even if you're a 'Cradle Catholic,' I believe that Jesus, at some moment in each of our lives, will ask us, as He asked the Disciples: "Who do YOU say I am?" Mt. 16: 15

So that, like Peter, we will say for ourselves: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Mt. 16: 16

Because, as Paul wrote to the Romans: "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Rm. 10: 9

The world is experiencing 'Paradise Lost,' because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden: but, there, the Lord made a promise that we would know 'Paradise Regained.'

The promise of salvation, that, through: "The sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many.

But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through the one man, Jesus Christ." Rm. 5: 15

We can't save ourselves; this salvation can't be bought and sold; it's given as a gift, it's free: "For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen." Rm. 11: 36

For His salvation to enter into us, the Lord desires to soften our hearts; for us to have a more human heart, closer to God; not so proud, not so self- sufficient.

And who is our model on this journey of salvation?

God Himself; His Son: "Who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." Phil. 2: 6 – 8

To hear Jesus asking me if I believe in Him as my Saviour, then I must be prepared to gentle and humble of heart, as He is.

When Peter put his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Lord told Peter that He was blessed because: "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."

Mt. 16: 17

But, as we know, Peter was a weak, fallible person as, indeed, all of us are: and he denied he knew Jesus, when His Lord needed him most.

Don't we all, in big or small ways, deny Jesus too?

But Jesus is always rich in mercy: He forgave Peter; He will forgive us if we turn back to Him with all our hearts.

'Let us remember this: God judges us by loving us. If I embrace His love, then I am saved; if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by Him, but by my own self, because God never condemns; He only loves and saves." Pope Francis: World Youth Day July 26 2013

So let's fix; "Our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who endured the cross, scorning its shame." Heb. 12: 2

Then, like Peter after the Resurrection of Jesus, take to heart these words of the Lord: "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me." Mt. 16: 24