Vatican

Francis, the comic strip



A circular rainbow is seen in Santiago, Chile, Dec. 18, 2017. Pope Francis said during his homily at Domus Sanctae Marthae April 27 that heaven is not an eternally dull existence, but rather the completion of a journey toward a promised encounter with the Lord. (CNS/Mario Ruiz, EPA)

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Heaven is not an eternally dull existence but rather the completion of a journey toward a promised encounter with the Lord, Pope Francis said.

Although Christians may know full well that their goal is to go to heaven, "we begin to slip" when asked, "What is heaven," the pope said in his homily April 27 during Mass at Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"Many times, we think of an abstract heaven, a faraway heaven, a heaven that we say 'yes, its fine.' But some may think: 'Isn't it a little boring being there for all eternity?' No, that is not heaven," he said.

Francis' homily focused on the day's first reading from the Acts of the Apostle, in which St. Paul proclaims "that what God promised our fathers he has brought to fulfillment" through Jesus' resurrection.

Trusting God to fulfill his promises, he said, puts Christians on a path "toward an encounter, the definitive encounter with Jesus. Heaven is the encounter with Jesus."

Francis said that during this journey, Jesus "isn't sitting there waiting for me but, as the Gospel says, he works for us. He himself said, 'Have faith in me' and 'I will prepare a place for you.'"

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Jesus prays for all who embark on this path toward heaven. However, the pope said, Christians must continue to remind themselves that "he is faithful" and that he will fulfill his promise.

"Heaven will be that encounter, an encounter with the Lord who has gone there to prepare the place, the encounter with each one of us. And this gives us confidence;

it makes trust grow," he said.

"May the Lord give us this awareness of being on a journey with this promise. May the Lord give us this grace: to look up and think: 'The Lord is praying for me,'" Francis said.