

THE FOUR LAST THINGS

Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan. 12:2)

Death: An Event Shrouded in Mystery

- Adam and Eve, seduced by the serpent who told them that God had lied to them (see Gen. 3:4), ate the forbidden fruit and, as a result, death entered the world: “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19).
- “For those who die in friendship with God, death is but the doorway or the gateway to Eternal Life. Jesus said to Martha: “I am the Resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me, even if he die shall live”.

The Last Judgment the Particular Judgment

- The parable of the Last Judgement is described in the gospel of Matthew (Matt. 25:31-46). On the last day, Jesus will return as this parable describes and all the dead will be raised, “those who have done good to the

resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment” (Jn. 5:29).

- This event is called the Last Judgment and will mark the end of time and the coming of the Kingdom of God in its fullness. All those who have died in Christ will be given back their own bodies transformed and glorified, and will enter into the fullness of God’s Life in Heaven.
- Jesus not only speaks about the Last Judgment but also about the judgment that immediately follows death. He tells a story about the rich man who, when he died, was punished for his lack of charity toward the poor man Lazarus (see Lk. 16:19-31). This story illustrates that at death our lives will be laid bare and we will be judged on our love or lack of it

Heaven: Life in Pure Love

- “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (Jn. 14:2-3).
- God created us out of his great love so that we might share in His life forever. Entrance into Heaven will be the experience of entering into the perfect love that exists between the Persons of the Trinity.
- While it is true that every human being was created to spend eternity in Heaven, not everyone goes there.

Only a person who dies in God's grace, free from Mortal Sin is able to go to Heaven.

choice, will have lost God who is perfect peace, love, and joy—and this loss will cause everlasting torment.

Hell: Eternal Separation from the Trinity

- “The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his Kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:41-43). God loves us and desires us to spend life everlasting with him in Heaven, but he does not force us to love him in return. The choice is ours.
- We have the chance to turn to Jesus while we are alive, but at the moment of death, our choice is frozen, suspended forever in time (see CCC 1021).
- Hell is the dwelling place of Satan, the fallen angels (called demons), and all those who have rebelled against God.
- The greatest suffering that the souls in Hell experience is the pain of being eternally separated from God (see 2 Thess. 1:9).
- The Church has traditionally called this punishment the “pain of loss. The person in Hell, through his or her own