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One of our booklets on display in our CTS stand at the back is entitled 'the four last things'. As we approach the end of the Liturgical year, the Church invites us to focus our minds on the same - Death, judgement, heaven and hell.

Judgement after death which is one of those last things, *may conjure up images of us standing before a rather grim faced judge who goes on berating us for all sorts of offences we've committed in this life. We're scared stiff judgement could go either way.*

Well, I can't see that being the case. First the cards are stacked firmly in our favour because God is a merciful judge beyond compare. St Theresa said that the sum-total of our confessed sins can be compared to a spoon of water dropped into a blazing furnace – the furnace of God's mercy, It is well known that Saint Augustine, quite wayward in his youth, had first-hand experience of that mercy mainly due to the prayers of his mother, Monica. However, in his writings he is quoted as saying that 'he would rather be judged by God than his own mother' even though when he turned his back on God, she never gave up on him. Her prayers were answered when in due course he turned his life around.

Unlike us, when God forgives, He suffers from total amnesia. Psalm 103 says it all: 'as far as the East is from the West, so far does He remove our sins'. Scripture reassures us that when we repent of our sins, God will never drag them up again, like we do sometimes. On the day of judgement, before him on his desk there will be a '*tabula rasa*' - a blank sheet. And even if our CV appears to have some shady areas whereby judgement could go either way, my reading of scripture is that God will be looking for any loopholes He can find to offer us a reprieve.

When St Paul was speaking about the nature of true love he said: 'love takes no pleasure in other peoples sins but is always

ready to excuse.' Now, if we, **mere humans**, are expected to make allowances for the mistakes of others, then how much more will God, the author of love. He knows us inside-out and when we appear before His judgement seat, He will have taken into account the times when our judgement was clouded and our ability to act as free human agents somewhat impaired.

We know that one of the sure ways to escape a harsh judgement is us not sitting in judgement on others. Jesus said: 'blessed are the merciful, they shall have mercy shown them'. The amount of mercy you measure out is the amount you will be given back in return. Judge no and you will not be judged.

The merciful need have no fear of judgement. On the Day of reckoning the Lord will take their part. Their names will be written in the Book of Life.