

## Death and the Particular Judgment

### Death

- Death is the separation of body and soul.  
The body will die and decompose.  
The soul has eternal life.
- Death is a consequence of original sin.
- Death is the gateway to eternal life with God.  
We do not know the time of our death.

### Preparing for Death

- We should prepare ourselves for death.  
The best preparation is to live our lives according to God's will, developing ourselves spiritually, morally, and sacramentally.
- Mary can pray for us at the hour of our death.
- We should receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick when we are seriously ill or dying.

### Particular Judgment

- At the moment of death, we will receive particular judgment.  
We will be judged on what we thought, said, did, and failed to do.
- **Hell** is the just reward of those who have died in the state of mortal sin, rejecting God.  
**Purgatory** is a transitional state of purification leading to heaven.  
**Heaven** is the eternal reward of those who have died and are prepared to see God face to face.

### Beatific Vision

- Heaven is the end for which we were made.  
We should long for heaven and live in hope of this reward.
- We should pray for the grace of a happy death.

## **Catechism Questions**

### **What is the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?**

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is given to Christians who are gravely ill for their spiritual and bodily strengthening (CCC 1499).

### **Who is the minister of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?**

The minister of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is a priest: the pastor of the parish or another priest who has his permission (CCC 1519).

### **How does the priest administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?**

The priest administers the Anointing of the Sick by anointing the forehead and the hands of the sick person with the oil blessed by the bishop or priest and by saying: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen. May the Lord, who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up. Amen." (CCC 1517-19).

### **When can the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick be given?**

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick can be given whenever a person is in a dangerous condition of health, either on account of an illness serious in itself, a serious injury, or on account of old age (CCC 1514).

### **What happens to each of us at the end of life?**

At the end of life each of us will die, our body and soul will be separated, and we will face a particular judgment (CCC 1005, 1022).

### **On what will Jesus Christ judge us?**

Jesus Christ will judge us on the good and evil that we have done in life, including our thoughts, and things we failed to do in response to God's grace (CCC 1021).

### **What happens to each man after the particular judgment?**

After the particular judgment, those who love God and are perfectly holy go immediately to heaven to be with him. Those who love God but still need purification go to purgatory until they are ready to be with God in heaven. Those who have rejected God through dying in mortal sin go to hell (CCC 1022).

### **What is hell?**

Hell is the eternal suffering of separation from God (CCC 1033-35).

### **How long will heaven and hell last?**

Heaven and hell will last forever (CCC 1022, 1033).

CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church

## Handout

### SAINT THOMAS MORE ON DEATH

The following quotations are from the play *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt about the life and martyrdom of Saint Thomas More. Although it is a play, it is historically accurate. Some of the dialogue from the play's trial comes from official records of the real trial.

"Death comes for us all, my lords, yes, even for kings he comes, to whom amidst all their royalty and brute strength he will neither kneel nor make them any reverence nor pleasantly desire them to come forth, but roughly grasp them by the very breast and rattle them until they be stark dead! So causing their bodies to be buried in a pit and sending them to judgment... whereof at their death their success is uncertain."

- Saint Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons*

"For our own deaths... dare we for shame enter the kingdom with ease when Our Lord himself entered with so much pain?"

- Saint Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons*

"Death comes for us all; even at our birth, death does but stand aside a little. And every day he looks towards us and muses to himself whether that day or the next he will draw nigh. It is the law of nature and the will of God."

- Saint Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons*

### SAINT JOSEPH, PATRON OF A HAPPY DEATH

Saint Joseph, husband of Mary and foster-father of Jesus, is the patron of the Universal Church and of a happy death. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that Joseph was "a just man" (Matthew 1:19). It also tells us of Joseph's love for Mary and that he travelled all the way to Egypt at the word of an angel to protect Jesus. There is a tradition in the East that Jesus and Mary were both present at Joseph's death. With that company, his death must have been a happy one. Although we cannot have Mary and Jesus Physically with us, we can receive Jesus in *viaticum* and, through the other sacraments, our prayers, and the intercession of Saint Joseph and Mary, we, too, can have a happy death.

### PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH FOR A HAPPY DEATH

Sweet Saint Joseph be thou near me,  
when my soul is called away,  
from this earth so dark and dreary,  
to the bright eternal day.

Bring with thee my dearest Jesus,  
in whose wounds I fain would hide,  
and with Mary my sweet mother,  
come dear father to my side.

## Handout

### THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

“The Dream of Gerontius” by Venerable John Henry Newman, is a short play which portrays a soul on its way to judgment. Throughout the play the soul walks with his guardian angel and speaks impatiently of the coming vision of God. However, once the soul sees God, he sees all his imperfections and cries to the angel, “Take me away.” The play is broken down into five parts:

- I. *Reality of Death*
- II. *The Difference between Earthly Time and Eternal Time*
- III. *No fear at Judgment for a Holy Soul*
- IV. *Christ’s Piercing Look at the Particular Judgment*
- V. *The Encounter with Christ at the Particular Judgment*

### MARY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH: OUR ESCHATOLOGICAL ICON

“Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, loud noises, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery... She brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne.” (Revelation 11:19-12:5)

### INTERPRETATION

The images of the ark and the woman have traditionally been understood in two ways. Christ dwells within the Church as the ark, and the Church brings Christ forth into the world as the woman in labor. So both the ark and the woman represent the Church. According to another interpretation, they represent Mary, in whom Christ dwelt (the Litany of Loreto refers to Mary as “Ark of the Covenant”), and Mary, of course, bore Christ for the world. However, these two interpretations are not contradictory, for Mary herself is often seen as an image of the Church. This is an example of the many layers of meaning in Scripture.