

Eschatology

- From the Greek word *eschaton*, meaning “last”. Eschatology refers to the area of Christian faith which is concerned about “the last things”, and the coming of Jesus on “the last day”: our human destiny, death, judgment, resurrection of the body, heaven, purgatory, and hell – all of which are contained in the final articles of the Creed (CCC 1001, 1020-1050; cf. 2771).
- Chastisement – Before Christ’s second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers (CCC 675-677).

Four Last Things

1. Death

- End of the world (individually)

2. Judgment (Particular Judgment)

- The eternal retribution received by each soul at the moment of death, in accordance with that person’s faith and works (CCC 1021-2).
- Thumbs up (heaven)
- Thumbs down (hell)

3. Heaven

- Eternal life with God; communion of life and love with the Trinity and all the blessed. Heaven is the state of supreme and definitive happiness, the goal of the deepest longings of humanity (CCC 1023)
- Purgatory – A state of final purification after death and before entrance into heaven for those who died in God’s friendship, but were only imperfectly purified; a final cleansing of human imperfection before one is able to enter the joy of heaven (CCC 1031; cf. 1472).

4. Hell

- The state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed, reserved for those who refuse by their own free choice to believe and be converted from sin, even to the end of their lives (CCC 1033).

Second Coming (Parousia)

- The glorious return and appearance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as judge of the living and the dead, at the end of time; the second coming of Christ, when history and all creation will achieve their fulfillment (CCC 1001; cf. 668, 673).

Resurrection of the Dead

- The raising of the righteous, who will live forever with the risen Christ, on the last day. The eleventh article of the Christian creed states, “I believe in the resurrection of the body.” The resurrection of the body means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our “mortal bodies” (Rom 8:11) will come to life again (CCC 988).

General Judgment

- The “Last Judgment” is God’s triumph over the revolt of evil, after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world. Preceded by the resurrection of the dead, it will coincide with the second coming of Christ in glory at the end of time, disclose good and evil, and reveal the meaning of salvation history and the providence of God by which justice has triumphed over evil (CCC 677-9, 1021, 1038).

End of the World

- God’s triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world.

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.” (Revelations 20:12)

“..waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Peter 3:12-13)

Conclusion

Each one of us will encounter our own personal “End of the World” at some point in our life.

When that moment comes there will only be the Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell.

Every revelation about the end of the world is clothed in mystery. Do not concern yourselves with trying to determine the exact time of the Parousia or the specific details of the Chastisement. Whether it is at the end of the entire world or the end of our own existence in this world, death is approaching each one of us one day at a time. Always be prepared, especially spiritually, for the moment of death.

“But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Mark 13:32)

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” (Matthew 24:36)