



## THE PASTOR'S DESK

November 15, 2009 - *The Last Judgment*

### Dear Parishioners,

Today, we finish the brief review of the "Last Things" as found in the Catechism. Read and reflect upon the Church's belief in the Last Judgment and the Hope of the New Heaven and the New Earth:

### THE LAST JUDGMENT

**1038** The resurrection of all the dead, "of both the just and the unjust," will precede the Last Judgment. This will be "the hour when all who are in the tombs will hear [the Son of man's] voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment." Then Christ will come "in his glory, and all the angels with him .... Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.... And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

**1039** In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare. The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life:

*All that the wicked do is recorded, and they do not know. When "our God comes, he does not keep silence." . . . he will turn towards those at his left hand: . . . "I placed my poor little ones on earth for you. I as their head was seated in heaven at the right hand of my Father - but on earth my members were suffering, my members on earth were in need. If you gave anything to my members, what you gave would reach their Head. Would that you had known that my little ones were in need when I placed them on earth for you and appointed them your stewards to bring your good works into my treasury. But you have placed nothing in their hands; therefore you have found nothing in my presence." [From a Sermon by St. Augustine].*

**1040** The Last Judgment will come when Christ returns in glory. Only the Father knows the day and the hour; only he determines the moment of its coming. Then through his Son Jesus Christ he will pronounce the final word on all history. We shall know the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation and of the entire economy of salvation and understand the marvelous ways by which his Providence led everything towards its final end. The Last Judgment will reveal that God's justice triumphs over all the injustices committed by his creatures and that God's love is stronger than death.

**1041** The message of the Last Judgment calls men to conversion while God is still giving them "the acceptable time, . . . the day of salvation." It inspires a holy fear of God and commits them to the justice of the Kingdom of God. It proclaims the "blessed hope" of the Lord's return, when he will come "to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all who have believed."

### THE HOPE OF THE NEW HEAVEN and THE NEW EARTH

**1042** At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. After the universal judgment, the righteous will reign for ever with Christ, glorified in body and soul. The universe itself will be renewed:

*The Church . . . will receive her perfection only in the glory of heaven, when will come the time of the renewal of all things. At that time, together with the human race, the universe itself, which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ. [Lumen Gentium 48].*

**1043** Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, "new heavens and a new earth." It will be the definitive realization of God's plan to bring under a single head "all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth."

**1044** In this new universe, the heavenly Jerusalem, God will have his dwelling among men. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

**1045** *For man*, this consummation will be the final realization of the unity of the human race, which God willed from creation and of which the pilgrim Church has been "in the nature of sacrament." Those who are united with Christ will form the community of the redeemed, "the holy city" of God, "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." She will not be wounded any longer by sin, stains, self-love, that destroy or wound the earthly community. The beatific vision, in which God opens himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion.

**1046** *For the cosmos*, Revelation affirms the profound common destiny of the material world and man:

*For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God . . . in hope because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay.... We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. [Romans 8:19-23].*

**1047** The visible universe, then, is itself destined to be transformed, "so that the world itself, restored to its original state, facing no further obstacles, should be at the service of the just," sharing their glorification in the risen Jesus Christ.

**1048** "We know neither the moment of the consummation of the earth and of man, nor the way in which the universe will be transformed. The form of this world, distorted by sin, is passing away, and we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling and a new earth in which righteousness dwells, in which happiness will fill and surpass all the desires of peace arising in the hearts of men."

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