

OUR ETERNAL DESTINY

LAST THINGS: RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, DEATH, PARTICULAR JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, PURGATORY, HELL, LAST JUDGMENT, NEW HEAVENS, AND NEW EARTH —CCC, NOS. 988-1065

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN DEATH

Lord, for your faithful people, life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death, we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven. —Preface of Christian Death I, Roman Missal; CCC, no. 1012

The final article of the Creed proclaims our belief in everlasting life. At the Catholic Rite of Commendation of the Dying we sometimes hear this prayer: “Go forth, Christian soul, from this world. . . . May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God in Zion, may you see your redeemer face to face” (Prayer of Commendation of the Dying, no. 220). Death is the natural and inevitable end of life on earth. “[There is] a time to be born, and a time to die” (Eccl 3:2). We change, we grow old, and even death seems appropriate after a full life. “And the dust returns to earth as it once was, / and the life breath returns to God who gave it” (Eccl 12:7).

But the reality of death and its finality give an urgency to our lives. “Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ” (CCC, no. 1021). This teaching recognizes that the death of a person marks an end to our earthly journey with its sorrows and joys, its sinful failures, and the triumphs of Christ’s saving grace and help.

The Church teaches that “each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment” (CCC, no. 1022). St. John of the Cross (1542-1591) wrote, “At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love” (Dichos, no. 64). Perfect love will make possible entrance into heaven, imperfect love will require purification, and a total lack of love will mean eternal separation from God.

“Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness” (CCC, no. 1024). This will be brought about by a perfect communion with the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Mother, the angels and saints. Jesus Christ opened heaven to us by his death and Resurrection.

What is heaven like? Scripture uses a variety of pictures to help us understand heaven, such as a wedding party, a banquet, the Father’s house, a state of unending happiness. But the real heaven is beyond any picture we can paint of it. “What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, / and what has not entered the human heart, / what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9). Seeing God face to face in all his glory is the essential aspect of heaven. This is called the beatific vision. To make this possible God must reveal himself and give us the capacity to behold him.

How great will your glory and happiness be, to be allowed to see God, to be honored with sharing the joy of salvation and eternal light with Christ your Lord and God, . . . to delight in the joy of immortality in the Kingdom of Heaven with the righteous and God’s friends. (St. Cyprian, Letter 58, 10, 1)

“The Church gives the name Purgatory to [the] final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned” (CCC, no. 1031). Those who die in the state of friendship with God but who are not fully purified and perfected are assured of their eternal salvation. However, they must undergo a purification to obtain the perfection of love and holiness needed to enter heaven, where they have a heart that is totally open to him. This process is called Purgatory.

It is impossible for us to imagine what Purgatory is. Traditionally, it has been described as a purifying fire. Since the human soul cannot be touched by earthly flames, the image serves to recall that perfect love is achieved by a gradual and painful spiritual detachment from selfishness and self-centeredness. The Church assists those in Purgatory through prayer and especially the Eucharist in their final process of purification. Offering Masses for the deceased is a most powerful way of aiding them. November 2 of each year, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day), is a day for special remembrance and prayer for the dead.

“The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God” (CCC, no. 1035). It is impossible for us to be united with God if we refuse to love him. When we sin seriously against God, neighbor, or self, we have failed to love God. Persistence in a state of serious sin reflects a choice to reject God’s love and an intention to separate ourselves from him. Freely chosen eternal separation from communion with God is called hell. While images of fire have been used traditionally to picture hell, for example in the Scriptures, the reality exceeds our ability to describe the pain of isolation that comes from rejecting God’s love.

Scripture and the teaching of the Church regarding heaven and hell emphasize a call to personal responsibility by which we use our freedom, aided by divine grace, to respond completely to God’s love. There is always an urgent call to conversion and repentance. “God predestines no one to go to hell” (CCC, no. 1037).

Heaven is Fullness of Communion with God

Heaven as the fullness of communion with God was the theme of the Holy Father's catechesis at the General Audience of 21 July 1999. Heaven "is neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is our meeting with the Father which takes place in the risen Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit," the Pope said.

1. When the form of this world has passed away, those who have welcomed God into their lives and have sincerely opened themselves to his love, at least at the moment of death, will enjoy that fullness of communion with God which is the goal of human life.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, "this perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed is called "heaven'. Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness" (n.1024).

Today we will try to understand the biblical meaning of "heaven", in order to have a better understanding of the reality to which this expression refers.

2. In biblical language "heaven", when it is joined to the "earth", indicates part of the universe. Scripture says about creation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gn 1:1).

Heaven is the transcendent dwelling-place of the living God

Metaphorically speaking, heaven is understood as the dwelling-place of God, who is thus distinguished from human beings (cf. Ps 104:2f.; 115:16; Is 66:1). He sees and judges from the heights of heaven (cf. Ps 113:4-9) and comes down when he is called upon (cf. Ps 18:9, 10; 144:5). However the biblical metaphor makes it clear that God does not identify himself with heaven, nor

can he be contained in it (cf. 1 Kgs 8:27); and this is true, even though in some passages of the First Book of the Maccabees "Heaven" is simply one of God's names (1 Mc 3:18, 19, 50, 60; 4:24, 55).

The depiction of heaven as the transcendent dwelling-place of the living God is joined with that of the place to which believers, through grace, can also ascend, as we see in the Old Testament accounts of Enoch (cf. Gn 5:24) and Elijah (cf. 2 Kgs 2:11). Thus heaven becomes an image of life in God. In this sense Jesus speaks of a "reward in heaven" (Mt 5:12) and urges people to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (ibid., 6:20; cf. 19:21).

3. The New Testament amplifies the idea of heaven in relation to the mystery of Christ. To show that the Redeemer's sacrifice acquires perfect and definitive value, the Letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus "passed through the heavens" (Heb 4:14), and "entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself" (ibid., 9:24). Since believers are loved in a special way by the Father, they are raised with Christ and made citizens of heaven. It is worthwhile listening to what the Apostle Paul tells us about this in a very powerful text: "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:4-7). The fatherhood of God, who is rich in mercy, is experienced by creatures through the love of God's crucified and risen Son, who sits in heaven on the right hand of the Father as Lord.

4. After the course of our earthly life, participation in complete intimacy with the Father thus comes through our insertion into Christ's paschal mystery. St Paul emphasizes our meeting with Christ in heaven at the end of time with a vivid spatial image: "Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thes 4:17-18).

Sacramental life is anticipation of heaven

In the context of Revelation, we know that the "heaven" or "happiness" in which we will find ourselves is neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is our meeting with the Father which takes place in the risen Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit.

It is always necessary to maintain a certain restraint in describing these "ultimate realities" since their depiction is always unsatisfactory. Today, personalist language is better suited to describing the state of happiness and peace we will enjoy in our definitive communion with God.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sums up the Church's teaching on this truth: "By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has 'opened' heaven to us. The life of the blessed consists in the full and perfect possession of the fruits of the redemption accomplished by Christ. He makes partners in his heavenly glorification those who have believed in him and remained faithful to his will. Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ" (n. 1026).

5. This final state, however, can be anticipated in some way today in sacramental life, whose centre is the Eucharist, and in the gift of self through fraternal charity. If we are able to enjoy properly the good things that the Lord showers upon us every day, we will already have begun to experience that joy and peace which one day will be completely ours. We know that on this earth everything is subject to limits, but the thought of the "ultimate" realities helps us to live better the "penultimate" realities. We know that as we pass through this world we are called to seek "the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1), in order to be with him in the eschatological fulfilment, when the Spirit will fully reconcile with the Father "all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Col 1:20).

Hell is the State of Those who Reject God

At the General Audience of Wednesday, 28 July 1999, the Holy Father reflected on hell as the definitive rejection of God. In his catechesis, the Pope said that care should be taken to interpret correctly the images of hell in Sacred Scripture, and explained that "hell is the ultimate consequence of sin itself... Rather than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy".

1. God is the infinitely good and merciful Father. But man, called to respond to him freely, can unfortunately choose to reject his love and forgiveness once and for all, thus separating himself for ever from joyful communion with him. It is precisely this tragic situation that Christian doctrine explains when it speaks of eternal damnation or hell. It is not a punishment imposed externally by God but a development of premises already set by people in this life. The very dimension of unhappiness which this obscure condition brings can in a certain way be sensed in the light of some of the terrible experiences we have suffered which, as is commonly said, make life "hell".

In a theological sense however, hell is something else: it is the ultimate consequence of sin itself, which turns against the person who committed it. It is the state of those who definitively reject the Father's mercy, even at the last moment of their life.

Hell is a state of eternal damnation

2. To describe this reality Sacred Scripture uses a symbolical language which will gradually be explained. In the Old Testament the condition of the dead had not yet been fully disclosed by Revelation. Moreover it was thought that the dead were amassed in Sheol, a land of darkness (cf. Ez. 28:8; 31:14; Jb. 10:21f.; 38:17; Ps 30:10; 88:7, 13), a pit from which one cannot reascend (cf. Jb. 7:9), a place in which it is impossible to praise God (cf. Is 38:18; Ps 6:6).

The New Testament sheds new light on the condition of the dead, proclaiming above all that Christ by his Resurrection conquered death and extended his liberating power to the kingdom of the dead.

Redemption nevertheless remains an offer of salvation which it is up to people to accept freely. This is why they will all be judged "by what they [have done]" (Rv 20:13). By using images, the New Testament presents the place destined for evildoers as a fiery furnace, where people will "weep and gnash their teeth" (Mt 13:42; cf. 25:30, 41), or like Gehenna with its "unquenchable fire" (Mk 9:43). All this is narrated in the parable of the rich man, which explains that hell is a

place of eternal suffering, with no possibility of return, nor of the alleviation of pain (cf. Lk. 16:19-31).

The Book of Revelation also figuratively portrays in a "pool of fire" those who exclude themselves from the book of life, thus meeting with a "second death" (Rv. 20:13f.). Whoever continues to be closed to the Gospel is therefore preparing for 'eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thes 1:9).

3. The images of hell that Sacred Scripture presents to us must be correctly interpreted. They show the complete frustration and emptiness of life without God. [Rather*](#) than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy. This is how the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* summarizes the truths of faith on this subject: "To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called 'hell'" (n. 1033).

"Eternal damnation", therefore, is not attributed to God's initiative because in his merciful love he can only desire the salvation of the beings he created. In reality, it is the creature who closes himself to his love. Damnation consists precisely in definitive separation from God, freely chosen by the human person and confirmed with death that seals his choice for ever. God's judgement ratifies this state.

We are saved from going to hell by Jesus who conquered Satan

4. Christian faith teaches that in taking the risk of saying "yes" or "no", which marks the human creature's freedom, some have already said no. They are the spiritual creatures that rebelled against God's love and are called demons (*cf. Fourth Lateran Council, DS 800-801*). What happened to them is a warning to us: it is a continuous call to avoid the tragedy which leads to sin and to conform our life to that of Jesus who lived his life with a "yes" to God.

Eternal damnation remains a real possibility, but we are not granted, without special divine revelation, the knowledge of whether or which human beings are effectively involved in it. The thought of hell — and even less the improper use of biblical images — must not create anxiety or despair, but is a necessary and healthy reminder of freedom within the proclamation that the risen Jesus has conquered Satan, giving us the, Spirit of God who makes us cry "Abba, Father!" (Rm. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

This prospect, rich in hope, prevails in Christian proclamation. It is effectively reflected in the liturgical tradition of the Church, as the words of the *Roman Canon* attest: "Father, accept this offering from your whole family ... save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen".

Purgatory Is Necessary Purification

Before we enter into full communion with God, every trace of sin within us must be eliminated and every imperfection in our soul must be corrected

At the General Audience of Wednesday, 4 August 1999, following his catecheses on heaven and hell, the Holy Father reflected on Purgatory. He explained that physical integrity is necessary to enter into perfect communion with God therefore "the term purgatory does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence", where Christ "removes ... the remnants of imperfection".

1. As we have seen in the previous two catecheses, on the basis of the definitive option for or against God, the human being finds he faces one of these alternatives: either to live with the Lord in eternal beatitude, or to remain far from his presence.

For those who find themselves in a condition of being open to God, but still imperfectly, the journey towards full beatitude requires a purification, which the faith of the Church illustrates in the doctrine of "Purgatory" (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1030-1032).

To share in divine life we must be totally purified

2. In Sacred Scripture, we can grasp certain elements that help us to understand the meaning of this doctrine, even if it is not formally described. They express the belief that we cannot approach God without undergoing some kind of purification.

According to Old Testament religious law, what is destined for God must be perfect. As a result, physical integrity is also specifically required for the realities which come into contact with God at the *sacrificial* level such as, for example, sacrificial animals (cf. Lv 22: 22) or at the *institutional* level, as in the case of priests or ministers of worship (cf. Lv 21: 17-23). Total dedication to the God of the Covenant, along the lines of the great teachings found in Deuteronomy (cf. 6: 5), and which must correspond to this physical integrity, is required of individuals and society as a whole (cf. 1 Kgs 8: 61). It is a matter of loving God with all one's being, with purity of heart and the witness of deeds (cf. *ibid.*, 10: 12f.)

The need for integrity obviously becomes necessary after death, for entering into perfect and complete communion with God. Those who do not possess this integrity must undergo purification. This is suggested by a text of St Paul. The Apostle speaks of the value of each person's work which will be revealed on the day of judgement and says: "If the work which any man has built on the foundation [which is Christ] survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor 3: 14-15).

3. At times, to reach a state of perfect integrity a person's intercession or mediation is needed. For example, Moses obtains pardon for the people with a prayer in which he recalls the saving work done by God in the past, and prays for God's fidelity to the oath made to his ancestors (cf. Ex 32: 30, 11-13). The figure of the Servant of the Lord, outlined in the Book of Isaiah, is also portrayed by his role of intercession and expiation for many; at the end of his suffering he "will see the light" and "will justify many", bearing their iniquities (cf. Is 52: 13-53, 12, especially vv. 53: 11).

Psalm 51 can be considered, according to the perspective of the Old Testament, as a synthesis of the process of reintegration: the sinner confesses and recognizes his guilt (v. 3), asking insistently to be purified or "cleansed" (vv. 2, 9, 10, 17) so as to proclaim the divine praise (v. 15).

Purgatory is not a place but a condition of existence

4. In the New Testament Christ is presented as the intercessor who assumes the functions of high priest on the day of expiation (cf. Heb 5: 7; 7: 25). But in him the priesthood is presented in a new and definitive form. He enters the heavenly shrine once and for all, to intercede with God on our behalf (cf. Heb 9: 23-26, especially, v. 24). He is both priest and "victim of expiation" for the sins of the whole world (cf. 1 Jn 2: 2).

Jesus, as the great intercessor who atones for us, will fully reveal himself at the end of our life when he will express himself with the offer of mercy, but also with the inevitable judgement for those who refuse the Father's love and forgiveness.

This offer of mercy does not exclude the duty to present ourselves to God, pure and whole, rich in that love which Paul calls a "[bond] of perfect harmony" (Col 3: 14).

5. In following the Gospel exhortation to be perfect like the heavenly Father (cf. Mt 5: 48) during our earthly life, we are called to grow in love, to be sound and flawless before God the Father "at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (1 Thes 3: 12f.). Moreover, we are invited to "cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit" (2 Cor 7: 1; cf. 1 Jn 3: 3), because the encounter with God requires absolute purity.

Every trace of attachment to evil must be eliminated, every imperfection of the soul corrected. Purification must be complete, and indeed this is precisely what is meant by the Church's teaching on *purgatory*. The term does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence. Those who, after death, exist in a state of purification, are already in the love of Christ who removes from them the remnants of imperfection (cf. Ecumenical Council of Florence, *Decretum pro Graecis*: DS 1304; Ecumenical Council of Trent, *Decretum de iustificatione*: DS 1580; *Decretum de purgatorio*: DS 1820).

It is necessary to explain that the state of purification is not a prolongation of the earthly condition, almost as if after death one were given another possibility to change one's destiny. The Church's teaching in this regard is unequivocal and was reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council which teaches: "Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the *single course of our earthly life* is completed (cf. Heb 9: 27), we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed, and not, like the wicked and slothful servants, be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth" (Mt 22: 13 and 25: 30)" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 48).

6. One last important aspect which the Church's tradition has always pointed out should be reposed today: the *dimension of "communio"*. Those, in fact, who find themselves in the state of purification are united both with the blessed who already enjoy the fullness of eternal life, and with us on this earth on our way towards the Father's house (cf. CCC, n. 1032).

Just as in their earthly life believers are united in the one Mystical Body, so after death those who live in a state of purification experience the same ecclesial solidarity which works through prayer,

prayers for suffrage and love for their other brothers and sisters in the faith. Purification is lived in the essential bond created between those who live in this world and those who enjoy eternal beatitude.

INDULGENCES

Every sin has consequences. It disrupts our communion with God and the Church, weakens our ability to resist temptation, and hurts others. The necessity of healing these consequences, once the sin itself has been forgiven, is called temporal punishment. Prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other works of charity can take away entirely or diminish this temporal punishment. Because of the fullness of redemption obtained for us by Christ, the Church attaches to certain prayers and actions an indulgence or pardon, that is, the full or partial remission of temporal punishment due to sin. Christ, acting through the Church, brings about the healing of the consequences of sin when an individual uses such a prayer or engages in such an action.

Partial Indulgence - A partial remission

Plenary Indulgence – A full remission

The Enchiridion of Indulgences

Issued by the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary, 1968

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This is a digest of the works and prayers listed in the Enchiridion of Indulgences. The Enchiridion recites each indulgenced prayer in full. Because most are recognizable they will only be listed by name. The un-translated Enchiridion lists each work and prayer in alphabetical order by their Latin names. The order shall remain the same in this listing. The descriptions of the works and details regarding obtaining the indulgence will be edited and abbreviated in this listing. The following is not represented to be an exact reprint of the Enchiridion but an accurate digest of what constitutes an approved indulgenced work by the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary.

In all but the plenary indulgence of In Articulo Mortis, at the moment of death, a plenary indulgence mentioned below **MUST** be accompanied by the three prerequisites of a plenary indulgence.

1. Sacramental Confession,
2. Communion, and
3. Prayer for the intention of the Holy Father, all to be performed within days of each other if not at the same time.

Thus the formula for obtaining a plenary indulgence are the three constants mentioned above plus any one of the variable works mentioned below as being worthy of a plenary indulgence.

1. Direct, we beg you, O Lord.(Prayer from Roman Ritual) Partial indulgence.
2. Acts of the Theological Virtues and of Contrition. A partial indulgence is granted to those who devoutly recite, according to any legitimate formula, the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition.
3. ADORATION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who visit the Most Blessed Sacrament for at least one half hour (together with the three prerequisites (constants) of a plenary indulgence. A partial indulgence is granted to those who visit and adore the Most Blessed Sacrament without the three constants or for any period less than one half hour.
4. Hidden God (Adoro te devote) -- hymn, partial indulgence.
5. We have come (Adsumus) -- prayer, partial indulgence.
6. To you, O blessed Joseph (Ad te, beate Ioseph) --- prayer, partial indulgence.
7. We Give You Thanks ---- prayer from Roman Breviary, partial indulgence
8. Angel Of God --- prayer, partial indulgence.
9. The Angel Of The Lord --- prayer, partial indulgence.
- 10.Soul of Christ (Anima Christi) --- prayer, partial indulgence.
- 11.Visit to the Patriarchal Basilicas in Rome. A PLENARY INDULGENCE to those who devoutly visit one of the Patriarchal Basilicas in Rome and recite one Our Father and the Creed,
 - A. On the titular feast of the Basilica;
 - B. On any Holy Day of Obligation;
 - C. Once a year on any other day of one's choice. (Remember the three constants are also required to obtain ANY plenary indulgence.)
- 12.PAPAL BLESSING. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who "piously and devoutly" receive, even by radio, the Blessing of the Pope when imparted to Rome and the world (Urbi et Orbi). (3 constants.)
- 13.Visit to a Cemetery. Only applicable to the souls in Purgatory when one devoutly visits and prays for the departed. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is bestowed for this work each day between November 1 and November 8.

14. Visit to a "Catacomb" (early Christian cemetery.) Partial indulgence.
15. Act of spiritual Communion according to any pious formula -- partial indulgence.
16. Recitation of the Apostles Creed or the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed -- partial indulgence.
17. ADORATION OF THE CROSS. A PLENARY INDULGENCE to those who in solemn liturgical action of Good Friday devoutly assist in at the adoration of the Cross and kiss it.
18. Office of the dead. A partial indulgence to those who devoutly recite Lauds or Vespers of the Office of the Dead.
19. "Out of the Depths" (De profundis). Psalm 129. Partial indulgence to those who recite.
20. Christian Doctrine. Partial indulgence to those who take part in teaching or learning christian doctrine.
21. "Lord God Almighty." (Roman Breviary.) Partial indulgence.
22. "Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus." "Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus, while before your face I humbly kneel, and with burning soul pray and beseech you to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity, true contrition for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment, while I contemplate with great love and tender pity your five wounds, pondering over them within me, calling to mind the words which David, your prophet, said of you, my good Jesus: "They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones." PLENARY INDULGENCE when recited on a Friday in Lent and Passiontide, when recited after Communion before an image of Christ crucified. On any other day the indulgence is partial.
23. Eucharistic Congress. PLENARY INDULGENCE to those who devoutly participate in the customary solemn eucharistic rite at the close of a Eucharistic Congress.
24. "Hear Us" (Roman Ritual) -- partial indulgence.
25. RETREAT. (Exercitia spiritualia). PLENARY INDULGENCE to those who spend at least three (3) whole days in the spiritual excercises of a retreat.
26. "Most sweet Jesus --Act of Reparation" PLENARY INDULGENCE when this prayer is publicly recited on the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Otherwise the indulgence is partial.
27. "Most sweet Jesus, Redeemer -- Act of Dedication of the Human Race to Jesus Christ King." PLENARY INDULGENCE when this prayer is publicly recited on the feast of our Lord

Jesus Christ King. Otherwise the indulgence is partial.

28. The Moment of Death (In articulo mortis). **PLENARY INDULGENCE. EXCEPTION TO THE THREE CONSTANTS.** (Verbatim recitation of the grant follows:) "To the faithful in danger of death, who cannot be assisted by a priest to bring them the sacraments and impart the Apostolic Blessing with its plenary indulgence (see can. 468, Sec.2 of Code of Canon Law), Holy Mother Church nevertheless grants a plenary indulgence to be acquired at the point of death, provided they are properly disposed and have been in the habit of reciting some prayers during their lifetime. The use of a crucifix or a cross to gain this indulgence is praiseworthy." The condition: 'provided they have been in the habit of reciting some prayers during their lifetime' supplies in such cases for the three usual conditions required for the gaining of a plenary indulgence." The plenary indulgence at the point of death can be acquired by the faithful, even if they have already obtained another plenary indulgence on the same day."
29. Litanies. Partial indulgence to those who recite the following litanies: the litany of the Most Holy Name of Jesus; The litany of The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus; The litany of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ; The litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary; The litany of St. Joseph; and the litany of All Saints.
30. "The Magnificat". Partial indulgence.
31. "Mary, Mother of Grace." (Roman Ritual) Partial indulgence.
32. "The Memorare." (Remember, O Most gracious Virgin Mary.) Partial Indulgence.
33. "The Miserere" (Have mercy of me.) Psalm 50. Partial indulgence.
34. Novena Devotions. Partial indulgence to those who participate in a public novena before the feast of Christmas or Pentecost, or the Immaculate Conception.
35. Use of Articles of Devotion. (Verbatim follows:) "The faithful, who devoutly use an article of devotion (crucifix or cross, rosary, scapular or medal) properly blessed by any priest, obtain a partial indulgence. "But if the article of devotion has been blessed by the Sovereign Pontiff or by any Bishop, the faithful, using it, can also gain a **PLENARY INDULGENCE** on the feast of the Holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, provided they also make a profession of faith according to any legitimate formula."
36. Little Offices. The following Little Offices are each enriched with a partial indulgence: the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph.
37. Prayer for Sacerdotal or Religious Vocations. Partial indulgence is granted to those who recite a prayer approved by ecclesiastical Authority for the above intention.

38. Mental Prayer. Partial indulgence to those who spend some time in pious mental prayer.
39. "Let us pray for our Sovereign Pontiff" (Roman Breviary) Partial Indulgence.
40. "O Sacred Banquet" (Roman Breviary) Partial indulgence.
41. Assistance as Sacred Preaching. PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who attend a Mission, hear some of the sermons and are present for the solemn close of the Mission. A partial indulgence is granted to those who assist with devotion and attention at the sacred preaching of the Word of God.
42. FIRST COMMUNION. PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who receive Communion for the first time or to those who ASSIST at the sacred ceremonies of a First Communion.
43. First Mass of a Newly Ordained Priest. PLENARY INDULGENCE granted to the priest and to the faithful who devoutly assist at the same Mass.
44. "Prayer for Unity of the Church." Partial indulgence.
45. Monthly Recollection. Partial indulgence to those who take part in a monthly retreat.
46. "Eternal Rest." A partial indulgence only to the souls in purgatory. "Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let the perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace."
47. "May it Please you, O Lord." Partial indulgence. "May it please you, O Lord, to reward with eternal life all those who do good to us for your Name's sake. Amen."
48. RECITATION OF THE MARIAN ROSARY. (The following is verbatim.) "A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted, if the Rosary is recited IN A CHURCH OR PUBLIC ORATORY OR IN A FAMILY GROUP, A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY OR PIOUS ASSOCIATION; a partial indulgence is granted in other circumstances. "Now the Rosary is a certain formula of prayer, which is made up of fifteen decades of 'Hail Marys' with an 'Our Father' before each decade, and in which the recitation of each decade is accompanied by pious meditation on a particular mystery of our Redemption. "The name 'Rosary,' however, is commonly used in reference to only a third of the fifteen decades. "The gaining of the plenary indulgence is regulated by the following norms: "
- A. The recitation of a third part only of the Rosary suffices; but the five decades must be recited continuously. "
 - B. The vocal recitation MUST be accompanied by pious meditation on the mysteries. "
 - C. In public recitation the mysteries must be announced in the manner customary in the place; for private recitation, however, it suffices if the vocal recitation is accompanied by meditation on the mysteries. "
 - D. For those belonging to the Oriental rites, amongst whom this devotion is not practiced, the Patriarchs can determine some other prayers in honor of the Blessed

Virgin Mary (for those of the Byzantine rite, for example, the Hymn 'Akathistos' or the Office 'Paraclisis'); to the prayers thus determined are accorded the same indulgences as for the Rosary."

49. Jubilees of Sacerdotal Ordination. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to a priest on the 25th, 50th and 60th anniversaries of his ordination when he renews before God his resolve to faithfully fulfill the duties of his vocation. If the priest celebrates a jubilee Mass, the faithful who assist at it can acquire a Plenary Indulgence.
50. READING OF SACRED SCRIPTURE. While a partial indulgence is granted to those who read from Sacred Scripture with the veneration which the divine word is due, a PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who read for at least one half an hour.
51. "Hail Holy Queen." (Roman Breviary.) Partial indulgence.
52. "Holy Mary, help the helpless." (Roman Breviary.) Partial indulgence.
53. "Holy Apostles Peter and Paul." (Roman Missal.) Partial indulgence.
54. Veneration of the Saints. Partial indulgence granted to those who on the feast of any Saint recite in his honor the oration of the Missal or any other approved by legitimate Authority.
55. Sign of the Cross. Partial indulgence.
56. A Visit to the Stational Churches of Rome. A partial indulgence is granted to those who on the day indicated in the Roman Missal devoutly visit the stational church in Rome named for that day' but if they also assist at the sacred functions celebrated in the morning or evening, a PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted.
57. "We fly to your Patronage." Partial indulgence.
58. Diocesan Synod. PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who during the time of a diocesan Synod, devoutly visit the church in which it is being held and there recite one Our Father and the Creed.
59. "Down in Adoration Falling" (Tantum ergo) (Roman Breviary) PLENARY INDULGENCE when recited on Holy Thursday and the feast of Corpus Christi. Otherwise a partial indulgence is granted for recitation.
60. The Te Deum. PLENARY INDULGENCE when recited publicly on the last day of the year. Otherwise a partial indulgence is granted to those who recite the Te Deum in thanksgiving.
61. "Come, Holy Spirit, Creator Blest." PLENARY INDULGENCE if recited on the first of January or on the feast of the Pentecost. Otherwise, a partial indulgence is granted to those who recite it.

62. "Come, Holy Spirit" Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. (Roman Missal) Partial indulgence.
63. EXERCISE OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS. PLENARY INDULGENCE. A Plenary indulgence is granted to those who piously make the Way of the Cross. The gaining of the indulgence is regulated by the following rules:
- A. Must be done before stations of the cross legitimately erected.
 - B. 14 stations are required. Although it is customary for the icons to represent pictures or images, 14 simple crosses will suffice.
 - C. The common practice consists of fourteen pious readings to which some vocal prayers are added.. However, nothing more is required than a pious meditation on the Passion and Death of the Lord, which need not be a particular consideration of the individual mysteries of the stations.
 - D. A movement from one station to the next is required. But if the stations are made publicly and it is not possible for everyone taking part to go from station to station, it suffices if at least the one conducting the exercise goes from station to station, the others remaining in their places.
 - E. Those who are "impeded" can gain the same indulgence if they spend at least one half and hour in pious reading and meditation on the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - F. For those belonging to the Oriental rites, amongst whom this pious exercise is not practiced, the respective Patriarchs can determine some other pious exercise in memory of the Passion and Death for the gaining of this indulgence.
64. "Visit, we beg you, O Lord." (Roman Breviary) Partial Indulgence.
65. Visit to the Parochial Church. PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who devoutly visit the parochial church either on its titular feast or on the 2nd of August when the indulgence of the "Portiuncula" occurs. In visiting the church IT IS REQUIRED that one Our Father and the Creed be recited. Both indulgences can be acquired either on the day designated above or on some other day designated by the Ordinary (bishop) for the benefit of the faithful. The same indulgences apply to the Cathedral church and, where there is one, to a Co-Cathedral church, even if they are not parochial churches; they apply to quasi-parochial churches also.
66. Visit to a Church or an Altar on the day of its consecration. PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who visit a church or an altar on the day itself of its consecration, and there recite on Our Father and the Creed.
67. Visit to a Church or Oratory on All Souls Day. PLENARY INDULGENCE. A plenary indulgence, applicable ONLY to the souls in purgatory, may be obtained by those who, on All Souls Day, piously visit a church, public oratory, or -for those entitled to use it, a semi public oratory. It may be acquired either on the day designated as All Souls Day or, with the consent of the bishop, on the preceding or following Sunday or the feast of All Saints. On

visiting the church or oratory it is required that one Our Father and the Creed be recited.

68. Visit to a Church or Oratory of Religious on the Feast of the Holy Founder. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted to those who piously visit a church or oratory of a religious order on the feastday of its canonized founder, and there recite one Our Father and the Creed.
69. Pastoral Visitation. Partial indulgence to those who visit a church during the time that a pastoral visitation is being held. But a PLENARY INDULGENCE, to be gained only once during the visitation, is granted if during the time of the visitation they assist at a sacred function at which the Visitor presides.
70. Renewal of Baptismal Promises. A partial indulgence is granted to those who renew their baptismal promises according to any formula in use; but a PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted if this is done in celebration of the Paschal Vigil or on the anniversary of one's baptism.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

The profession of our faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit . . . culminates in the proclamation of the resurrection of the dead on the last day and in life everlasting. —CCC, no. 988

Faith in the resurrection of our bodies is inseparable from our faith in the Resurrection of Christ's body from the dead. He rose as our head, as the pattern of our rising, and as the life-giving source of our new life. "If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you" (Rom 8:11).

Belief in the resurrection of the body already existed in Christ's time among the Pharisees. Jesus performed miracles of raising the dead to life as symbols of his future Resurrection, and he associated these events with himself: "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25).

Christ, "the first-born from the dead" (Col 1:18), is the principle of our own resurrection, even now by the justification of our souls (cf. Rom 6:4), and one day by the new life he will impart to our bodies (cf. Rom 8:11). (CCC, no. 658)

All the dead will rise when Jesus comes again to judge the living and the dead. In the final resurrection, our bodies will be transformed, though we do not know precisely how. The manner of our resurrection exceeds our understanding and imagination and is accessible only to our faith.

But someone may say, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come back?" You fool! What you sow is not brought to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel of wheat, perhaps or of some other kind. . . . It is sown corruptible, it is raised incorruptible. . . . The dead will be raised incorruptible. . . . For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. (1 Cor 15:35-37, 42, 52, 53)

Every time we attend a funeral vigil or Mass, view a deceased body at a wake, or pass by a cemetery, we are reminded of this simple and profound article of the Creed, the belief in the resurrection of the body. It is a sobering belief, because it reminds us of the judgment yet to come, and at the same time it is a joyful belief that heralds life everlasting with God.

THE LAST JUDGMENT

The Last Judgment will come when Christ returns in glory. —CCC, no. 1040 Immediately after death, each person comes before God and is judged individually (the particular judgment) and enters heaven, Purgatory, or hell. Yet at the end of time when Christ returns in glory, a final judgment will occur when all are raised from the dead and assembled before God; then their relationship to him is made public (the general judgment).

The judgment scene in the Gospel of Matthew is perhaps the most accessible way to appreciate the Last Judgment. “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Mt 25:31-32). The sheep will inherit the Kingdom of God. The goats will be sent to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. In this parable, the criteria for being saved are described as whether one fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, and visited the prisoners. In each of these cases, it is Jesus himself who is thus treated. “Whatever you did for these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40). If we care for Jesus in these ways, we will receive the Kingdom. If we do not, we will be separated from him forever.

The Last Judgment will come when Christ returns in glory. Only the Father knows the day and the hour. . . . Christ . . . will pronounce the final word on all history [making clear] the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation and of the entire economy of salvation. . . . 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. (CCC, no. 1040)

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

God is preparing a new dwelling and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. —CCC, no. 1048, citing GS, no. 39

Once the Kingdom of God arrives in its fullness at the end of time there will be a renewal of the universe in Christ. Scripture uses many images to describe this mysterious reality. There will be a new heaven and a new earth:

“Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay” (cf. Rom 8:19-23). The holy city of Jerusalem will descend from heaven to earth (cf. Rev 21:10). We do not know when or how this will happen. But we do know that God will make this happen. At the end of time, “The universe itself, which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ.” (LG, no. 48)

CHRISTIAN DEATH

We do not like to think about death. There is much in our culture that distracts us from reflection about our final destiny. We are encouraged to think only about the present moment and to fulfill today’s needs. But the Christian embraces the total reality of life and God’s call to the fullness of life after death. Thus, for example, Christians assist those whose earthly journey is coming to an end. “The dying should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace. They will be helped by the prayer of their relatives, who must see to it that the sick receive at the proper time the sacraments that prepare them to meet the living God” (CCC, no. 2299).

Not only do we care for the dying to help them pass their final moments in dignity and peace, but we also maintain reverence for their bodies once they are deceased. “The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and in the hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy [cf. Tb 1:16-18]; it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit” (CCC, no. 2300). The rituals accompanying respect for the dead include the funeral vigil (wake), the funeral itself, and the burial of the body or the cremated remains of the deceased at the cemetery.

Participation in these rites enables friends and others to demonstrate reverence for the deceased, to pray together for the eternal repose of the deceased, and to give the family of the deceased prayerful support.

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

The Christian funeral liturgy tells us that life is changed, not ended. Funerals are acts of faith. In the dialogue between Martha and Jesus just before the raising of Lazarus, Jesus tells her, “Your brother will rise again.” She replies, “I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus then identifies himself as the Resurrection and the Life, and asks her, “Do you believe this?” She responds, “Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God” (cf. Jn 11:17-27). We express this same belief at Christian funerals. Jesus, who walks with us through all our other events in life, is present at our funerals, the liturgy of the passage from death to eternal life. Arrangements for a funeral need to include a Mass and burial in a Catholic cemetery whenever possible.

It is preferable that the body be buried in a Catholic cemetery or columbarium (repository for cremated remains) consecrated for this purpose. We bury the body or the cremated remains of a person once washed with baptismal water, anointed with the oils of Confirmation and the Sacrament of the Sick, and nourished by the Eucharist.

The Church prefers the burial of the body but does allow cremation. “The Church permits cremation, provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body” (CCC, no. 2301). In cases where cremation is planned, the Church urges that if at all possible, the body be present for the funeral Mass with cremation taking place afterwards. However, if for some reason cremation takes place before the funeral Mass, the diocesan bishop can permit the practice in his diocese of allowing cremated remains to be brought into the Church for the funeral rites.¹² Whenever a Catholic is cremated, the remains are to be buried, not scattered.

Closing Prayer

Maranatha!

Come, Lord, to establish your kingdom in full glory and power!

Come, Lord, to overthrow Satan’s dominion and all the evil in the world!

Come, Lord, to free us each from the bondage of our sin, and to share with us the gift of Your eternal life!

Come, Lord, to save us!

Come, Lord, to reveal to all Your rightful place as King, Lord, and Master over the entire universe!

Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!