



Every Sunday, millions of Christians recite the Creed almost from memory. The words come naturally from their lips: *“and He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead...”* Yet few phrases in the Creed generate today as much discomfort, confusion, or even silence as this one.

Speaking about God’s judgment seems, to many people, outdated. We live in an age that tolerates almost anything except the idea that there is an ultimate truth about good and evil. People speak constantly about self-esteem, emotional well-being, or personal growth, but very little about moral responsibility, eternity, or judgment.

And yet, the Church has never stopped teaching this fundamental truth: Jesus Christ will return in glory at the end of time and will judge all humanity.

This is not a threat invented to frighten consciences. Nor is it a medieval image designed to control people. The Last Judgment belongs to the very core of the Christian faith. It is found in the Gospel, in apostolic preaching, in the Fathers of the Church, and in the Creed professed for centuries.

The seventh article of the Creed forces us to look at life from a perspective far greater than the immediate present. It reminds us that history has meaning, that evil will not triumph forever, that injustice will not have the final word, and that every human act carries eternal weight.

Christ Will Return: A Forgotten Truth

The traditional Catechism teaches:

“At the end of the world Jesus Christ, full of glory and majesty, will come from heaven to judge all men, both good and evil, and to give each one the reward or punishment he has deserved.”

This teaching is grounded directly in the words of Christ:



“They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with
great power and glory” (Mt 24:30).

Christ’s first coming was humble. He was born in a manger, lived hidden for many years, and died nailed to a cross. Many despised Him, mocked Him, and condemned Him unjustly.

But the second coming will be completely different.

He will come as universal King.
He will come as Lord of history.
He will come as Judge.

Christian tradition calls this event the **Parousia**, meaning the glorious manifestation of Christ at the end of time.

Today the world lives as if Jesus Christ were never going to return. Modern culture is obsessed with the present: consuming, producing, entertaining itself, distracting itself. Eternity disappears from the mental horizon. Contemporary man often organizes his entire life as if he would never have to give an account before anyone.

But the Creed shatters that illusion.

Human history is not moving toward emptiness. It is moving toward a definitive encounter with Christ.

The Particular Judgment and the Universal Judgment

At this point, an important question arises, one that the traditional Catechism answers clearly:



If every soul is judged at death, why will there also be a universal judgment?

The Church teaches two judgments:

1. The Particular Judgment

It occurs immediately after death.

The soul appears before Christ and receives its eternal destiny:

- heaven,
- purgatory,
- or hell.

There is no reincarnation.

There is no “second chance” after death.

There is no dissolution of the soul into some cosmic energy.

This present life is the time of decision.

As the Letter to the Hebrews teaches:

“It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Heb 9:27).

2. The Universal Judgment

It will occur at the end of the world, when Christ returns in glory.

Then all mankind will appear publicly before Him.

Not because God needs more information — God already knows every soul perfectly — but because this judgment will have a universal, visible, and definitive dimension.

The Catechism points out five profound reasons for this final judgment.



1. The Universal Judgment Will Manifest the Glory of God

We live in a world where injustice often seems to reign.

The corrupt prosper.
The violent succeed.
Liars are admired.
The impure are celebrated.
The faithful are ridiculed.

Many people ask:
“Where is the justice of God?”

Precisely the Last Judgment will reveal that God never lost control of history.

Then it will become clear:

- why He allowed certain sufferings,
- how grace acted secretly,
- what real consequences our decisions had,
- and how His justice was perfect even when it seemed silent.

How often the saints were persecuted while the wicked were praised. Let us think of so many martyrs, religious men and women, sacrificial mothers, faithful priests, or hidden Christians who never received human recognition.

The Last Judgment will be the public revelation of the complete truth.

Nothing will remain hidden.

Christ Himself said:

“*Nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed*” (Lk 8:17).



2. The Universal Judgment Will Manifest the Glory of Jesus Christ

This part is deeply moving.

Jesus Christ was judged by men.

The innocent One was treated as guilty.
Truth itself was condemned.
The Author of life was executed.

Before Pilate He seemed defeated.
Before Herod He seemed ridiculous.
Before the crowd He appeared to be a failure.

But the universal judgment will completely reverse the scene.

That humiliated Christ will appear as the sovereign Judge of the universe.

The same One who was spat upon will be adored.
The same One crowned with thorns will be crowned with glory.
The same One condemned by human tribunals will judge all humanity.

There is a very current lesson here.

Our culture constantly tries to “judge” Christ:

- it judges His morality,
- it judges His Church,
- it judges His commandments,
- it judges the Gospel.

Modern man wants to sit on God’s throne and decide what is right and wrong.

But the Creed reminds us of something essential:
it is not we who ultimately judge Christ; it is Christ who will judge us.



3. The Universal Judgment Will Manifest the Glory of the Saints

Many saints died misunderstood.

Some were considered insane.

Others fanatics.

Others useless.

Others failures.

The world rarely understands true holiness.

Think of so many:

- hidden monks,
- self-sacrificing mothers,
- elderly people who offered their sufferings,
- young people who defended purity,
- persecuted priests,
- Christians mocked for remaining faithful.

Today social media rewards appearance, ego, and constant self-display. But God looks at something else: silent fidelity.

The universal judgment will reveal the true value of those hidden lives.

Then many who seemed insignificant will shine with immense glory.

And many who seemed important will be exposed.

Christ already warned us:

“Many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Mt 19:30).



4. The Universal Judgment Will Bring the Confusion of the Wicked

This point is especially uncomfortable for the contemporary mentality, but it is part of Christian doctrine.

The Catechism teaches that the confusion of the wicked will be immense, especially for those who:

- oppressed the righteous,
- pretended to be virtuous,
- manipulated others,
- or hid gravely sinful lives beneath respectable appearances.

We live in a culture deeply obsessed with image.

Many people build carefully designed public identities:

- appearances of goodness,
- moralistic speeches,
- superficial activism,
- aesthetic spirituality,
- virtue displayed for social approval.

But God sees the heart.

The universal judgment will destroy every mask.

There will be no personal marketing.

There will be no propaganda.

There will be no media manipulation.

There will be no way to hide the truth.

This should not provoke neurotic fear in us, but rather a sincere call to authenticity.



Holiness does not consist in appearing good.
It consists in truly being transformed by grace.

5. The Body Will Also Share in Reward or Punishment

This truth is profoundly Christian and very important.

We are not souls trapped in bodies, as some ancient philosophies believed. The human being is a unity of soul and body.

For that reason, at the end of time, the resurrection of the dead will also take place.

Bodies will rise again:

- for eternal glory,
- or for eternal condemnation.

Here we understand something decisive:
what we do with the body matters.

In an age marked by:

- the trivialization of sexuality,
- the cult of pleasure,
- pornography,
- gender ideology,
- the exploitation of the human body,
- and the loss of the sense of bodily dignity,

Christian doctrine reminds us that the body is destined for eternity.

Christianity does not despise the body.
It elevates it.

That is why the saints cared about purity, modesty, sacrifice, and bodily discipline. They



knew that the body is not a toy nor an object of consumption: it is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Should We Fear the Last Judgment?

The answer depends on how we live.

For the person who stubbornly rejects God, judgment is terrifying because it means finally facing the truth.

But for the person who sincerely loves Christ, judgment is also hope.

We live in a world full of unresolved injustices:

- victims who never received justice,
- forgotten innocents,
- hidden sufferings,
- ignored sacrifices.

The Last Judgment means that God will establish perfect justice.

No good deed will remain unrewarded.

No tear offered in love will be useless.

No act of fidelity will be forgotten.

The problem is that we often want a Savior Christ, but not a Judge Christ.

We want mercy without conversion.

Comfort without repentance.

Heaven without the Cross.

Yet authentic mercy does not eliminate truth. It presupposes it.



The Last Judgment and Everyday Life

This doctrine might seem to belong only to the realm of eschatology or theological treatises. But it has very concrete consequences for daily life.

1. It Helps Us Live Responsibly

Every action has eternal value.

Every decision matters.

Today’s culture repeats:

“Do whatever you want.”

But the Gospel teaches:

“Live with eternity in mind.”

2. It Frees Us from Cynicism

Many people lose hope when they see so much corruption or evil.

The Last Judgment reminds us that evil will not ultimately prevail.

Christ will have the final word.

3. It Calls Us to Conversion

Thinking about judgment should not produce despair, but spiritual awakening.

The Church has always recommended meditating on the Four Last Things:

- death,
- judgment,
- hell,



- eternal glory.

Not to live obsessed by fear, but to learn how to live wisely.

4. It Invites Us to Authenticity

God does not look at appearances.

We may deceive the world.

We may even deceive those close to us.

But we cannot deceive Christ.

An Urgent Call for Our Time

Perhaps one of the great spiritual tragedies of our age is the loss of the sense of eternity.

Many baptized Christians live practically like pagans:

- without prayer,
- without the sacraments,
- without examination of conscience,
- without ever thinking about God’s judgment.

And yet the Creed continues to be proclaimed every Sunday.

Christ will return.

We do not know when.

We do not know exactly what that day will be like.

But we know with certainty that it will come.

And then only one thing will remain:

whether we lived united with God or separated from Him.



Conclusion: Living Prepared

The seventh article of the Creed is not an announcement of terror. It is a proclamation of truth and hope.

Human history does not end in chaos.
Suffering is not meaningless.
Injustice will not have the final victory.
Christ reigns.
And Christ will return.

That is why the Christian does not live terrified, but vigilant.

As so many saints taught:
we must live every day in such a way that we may look upon Christ without shame when He comes.

The best preparation for the Last Judgment is not fear, but friendship with Jesus:

- going to confession,
- living in a state of grace,
- practicing charity,
- persevering in prayer,
- remaining faithful to the truth,
- and loving God above all things.

Because the Judge who will come at the end of time is the same One who died on the Cross for us.

And for the person who has tried to live united to Him, the Last Judgment will not be the encounter with a stranger, but the definitive embrace of the Lord.