



Since time immemorial, humanity has lived with the certainty that life is not an end in itself but a journey toward something greater—a definitive reality that transcends time and matter. The Catholic Church, based on Sacred Scripture and Tradition, teaches us that at the end of our earthly life, we will face **the Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.**

Speaking about these topics is not popular today. Modernity, with its relativism and materialism, has led us to avoid reflecting on the eternal destiny of the soul. However, what could be more important than our eternity? Understanding these truths not only helps us live well but also prepares us to die in God's grace.

1. Death: The Gateway to Eternity

Death is the greatest certainty of our existence. No matter how much we fight against it, sooner or later, it will come. Saint Francis of Assisi called it "Sister Death" because he understood that for a soul in God's grace, death is not the end but the beginning of true life.

Sacred Scripture reminds us:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Death is a consequence of original sin (Genesis 3:19), but Christ has conquered it through His Resurrection. For the Christian, to die means to meet God, and therefore, preparation is essential. The Church exhorts us to live in a state of grace, to receive the sacraments, and to not postpone our conversion.

How Can We Prepare for Death?

1. **Live each day as if it were the last**, in God's presence.
2. **Frequent confession and the Eucharist.**
3. **Practice charity and love for others.**
4. **Always keep the Last Things in mind**, as the saints recommended.

2. Judgment: The Moment of Truth

The Church teaches that there are two judgments: **the particular judgment** (at the



moment of death) and **the final judgment** (at the end of time).

The **particular judgment** happens immediately after our death. At that moment, God will reveal our entire life with absolute clarity. There will be no excuses, self-deception, or distractions. Saint John of the Cross stated:

“At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love.”

The soul will be judged based on its faith and works. Depending on its state, it will receive its eternal destiny:

- If it died in **mortal sin**, it will go to **Hell**.
- If it died in **a state of grace but with imperfections**, it will pass through **Purgatory** before entering Heaven.
- If it died in **perfect friendship with God**, it will go directly to **Heaven**.

The **final judgment**, on the other hand, will take place at the end of time when Christ returns in glory. At that moment, all will resurrect, and our bodies will reunite with our souls to receive either eternal reward or punishment.

3. Hell: The Reality No One Wants to Believe In

Hell is the eternal separation from God. It is not an arbitrary punishment but the logical consequence of a life without God. Jesus spoke of it clearly:

“Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

The Church teaches that Hell is real and eternal. It is the destiny of those who die in mortal sin without repentance. There, the soul suffers due to:

- The **pain of loss**: the deprivation of God, its Supreme Good.
- The **pain of sense**: the torments described in the Bible (fire, darkness, despair).

The saints have had terrifying visions of Hell. Saint Faustina Kowalska described souls



lamenting for having rejected God's mercy. Our Lady of Fatima showed Hell to the three shepherd children, leaving them deeply shaken.

But the most terrifying aspect of Hell is not the fire but the absence of love and the certainty that there will never be an escape.

4. Heaven: The Inconceivable Glory

If Hell is the absence of God, Heaven is full communion with Him. Saint Paul expressed it this way:

“Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered the human heart what God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Heaven is the destiny for which we were created. There, we will enjoy the **beatific vision**, contemplating God face to face. Joy will be perfect, with no suffering or pain.

The saints have left us testimonies of heavenly happiness. After a vision of Heaven, Saint Teresa of Ávila exclaimed: *“How little everything costs when one gains so much!”*

How Can We Secure Heaven?

1. **Seek God above all things.**
2. **Reject sin and live in grace.**
3. **Practice charity and humility.**
4. **Pray and trust in divine mercy.**

Conclusion: The Great Decision Is in Our Hands

The Four Last Things are neither a story nor a metaphor. They are eternal realities. Our culture avoids talking about death, judgment, or Hell, but ignoring them will not make them disappear. Now is the time to decide our eternal destiny.

Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori said:



“If you wish to be saved, act as if your salvation depended entirely on you, but trust as if it depended entirely on God.”

May this article inspire us to live with our eyes fixed on eternity. In the end, there are only two paths: with God or without Him. **The choice is ours.**