

Four Last Things

December 1, 2018

Introduction – What are the “Four Last Things”?

- The “Four Last Things” summarize the Church’s teaching regarding the sequence of events at the end of earthly life and the eternal destiny of each human person: Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell
- Nearly all cultures, religions and societies throughout history have believed in some form of “life after death”, and many of them distinguish between the fate of the “good” and the “bad”
- The idea of being punished or rewarded and facing justice for our deeds is innate to the human person

Death

- According to Church teaching, the essence of the human person is to be comprised of physical body and an immortal, immaterial soul. Neither the body or soul alone constitutes the entirety of our being.
- As a result of Original Sin, human beings are subject to the “dis-integration” of body and soul known as death.
- At death, the integration of soul and body is severed
- The body decays and returns to dust, while the soul is eternal and immortal and proceeds immediately to judgement and either Heaven or Hell based on the outcome of the Particular Judgement.
- At the Final Judgement, all human beings will be reunited (reintegrated) with their physical bodies, at which point they will proceed body and soul to their final punishment or reward.

Judgement

- Immediately after death, the soul proceeds to its “Particular Judgement”, wherein the person stands before Christ and renders an account of their life and works – the good and the bad.
- We only take with us our merit (good works performed in the state of sanctifying grace) and our virtues and vices.
- At the particular judgement we will render an account for all sins we’ve committed, including those which we have confessed but have not made reparation for
- We will not see the full consequences of our sins until the Final Judgement, nor are our sins made known to others
- Following the Particular Judgement, the soul will proceed either to Hell, Purgatory or directly to Heaven.

Judgement

- At the conclusion of history and the end of time, Jesus Christ will return to judge the living and the dead in the Final Judgement
- At this time, everyone's particular judgement will be made public
- We will be made to know the full impact and consequence of every sin we have ever committed
- We will know, and others will know how our sins impacted them and their own salvation or damnation.

Hell

- People who die in a state of mortal sin (i.e. not in the state of sanctifying grace) receive damnation – that is, an eternal existence completely isolated from the love and presence of God
- Our Lord speaks often and in detail about the reality and horror of Hell
- Saints and approved visionaries such as Sr. Faustina and the Fatima children have seen and written about Hell
- According to Our Lord and traditional Church teaching, few are saved – that is to say, most souls go to Hell.
- According to Sr. Faustina, most souls there disbelieved there was a Hell.

Heaven

- Heaven is the “eternal rest” of ultimate Communion with the Holy Trinity reserved for those who die in God’s friendship
- Very few souls, if any, enter directly into Heaven
- Most souls need to be purified of disordered attachments caused by sin or to satisfy Divine Justice by making reparation for their sins – the Church calls this process Purgatory.
- Souls in heaven comprise the “Communion of Saints” and make up what is known as the “Church Triumphant”.
- Only those who die in a state of grace and who have been purified of all stain of sin so as to “be holy as God is holy” may enter heaven.

Fr. Chad Ripperger

- Catholic priest ordained in 1997 for the Diocese of Lincoln Nebraska
- Served as the exorcist for the Diocese of Tulsa Oklahoma for several years
- Founded the Doloran Fathers, a religious order of exorcist priests who practice the Old Rite of Exorcism
- Currently stationed and active in the Archdiocese of Denver, under the episcopal authority of Archbishop Samuel Aquila
- Expert and prolific speaker on topics of exorcism, demonic and occult, spirituality, spiritual warfare and general Catholic Tradition, teaching and practice

Fr. Chad Ripperger – Four Last Things

- Part I: Death - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xSKzw6D29M>
- Part II: Judgement - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH-7RYtS-VQ>
- Part III: Hell - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3p5krCDgEj8>
- Part IV: Heaven - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ckTq5ewixY>

References

- Link to the complete text of the sermon of St. Alphonsus Liguori referenced by Fr. Ripperger:
https://www.olrl.org/snt_docs/num_sins.shtml

Concluding Thoughts

- Death is inevitable for everyone and we do not know the day or the hour
- Repent now, because we are not promised tomorrow – and never sin gravely and deliberately presuming on God’s mercy because you may die on the way to Confession!
- We should always be prepared by frequent confession, making every effort to remain in the state of grace and working to overcome our spiritual imperfections, examining our consciences regularly
- A number of Saints, including St. John Vianney commented that a large number of Catholic adults go to Hell (if not the majority)!
- Coming to a real understanding and acceptance of our death and the fact that we will render an account is serious business and not to be deferred or taken lightly.
- In the end, there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ, who is the only Way. As Catholics, we must not only trust in His infinite mercy, but also avail ourselves of the surest and most fruitful means of sanctification and salvation he has made available to us in His Church.

The Testimony of Archbishop Vigano

“To bear witness to corruption in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church was a painful decision for me, and remains so. But I am an old man, one who knows he must soon give an accounting to the Judge for his actions and omissions, one who fears Him who can cast body and soul into hell. A Judge who, even in his infinite mercy, will render to every person salvation or damnation according to what he has deserved. Anticipating the dreadful question from that Judge -- "How could you, who had knowledge of the truth, keep silent in the midst of falsehood and depravity?" -- what answer could I give?

... In closing, I wish to repeat my appeal to my brother bishops and priests who know that my statements are true and who can so testify, or who have access to documents that can put the matter beyond doubt. You too are faced with a choice. You can choose to withdraw from the battle, to prop up the conspiracy of silence and avert your eyes from the spreading of corruption. You can make excuses, compromises and justification that put off the day of reckoning. You can console yourselves with the falsehood and the delusion that it will be easier to tell the truth tomorrow, and then the following day, and so on.

On the other hand, you can choose to speak. You can trust Him who told us, "the truth will set you free." I do not say it will be easy to decide between silence and speaking. I urge you to consider which choice-- on your deathbed, and then before the just Judge -- you will not regret having made.”

-- Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, Letter in Response to Cardinal Ouillet, October 7, 2018

Our Lady of Akita

“The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against bishops. The priests who venerate me will be scorned and opposed by their confreres... churches and altars sacked; the Church will be full of those who accept compromises and the demon will press many priests and consecrated souls to leave the service of the Lord.

The demon will be especially implacable against souls consecrated to God. The thought of the loss of so many souls is the cause of my sorrow. ***If sins increase in number and gravity, there will be no longer pardon for them.***”

Our Lady of Akita

- More literally: “If the atmosphere of sin increases, the forgiveness of sins will disappear” – she is referring to the loss of the sense of sin that we are experiencing today even within the Church
- Sins against the Holy Spirit – the “unforgivable sin”: Despair, final impenitence, presumption, obstinance in sin, rejection of God’s mercy
- What would result in more final impenitence and obstinance in sin than to be taught and to believe that gravely sinful acts are natural, healthy, or a fundamental human right – acts such as abortion, sodomy, etc.?
- Today, souls are truly being lost at an unprecedented rate