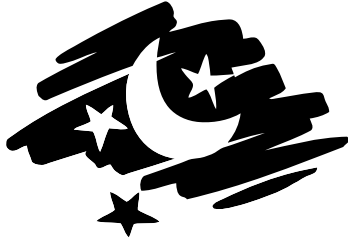


Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
 Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • November 15, 2015



*God of the universe,
 you spoke and
 creation sprang into being.
 Though the sun
 may be darkened
 and the moon fail
 to give light,
 you will continue to speak
 through your Son,
 your eternal, living Word
 who sustains us
 in good times and in bad.*

Sunday Word

Daniel 12:1–3
 Psalm 16:5, 8–11
 Hebrews 10:11–14, 18
 Mark 13:24–32

Distress and Deliverance

There are days, months, and years when it seems as if our world is coming apart at the seams, torn by violence and beset by uncertainty and evil. It may feel as if we are hemmed in by terrible circumstances with no way out.

Wisdom will enlighten those who cling to God in faith. Their splendor shall shine. They will, indeed, “lead many to righteousness” (Daniel 12:3). For our inheritance and our protection rests in God himself.

Chaos and Consecration

In uncertain or difficult times, some will react with hardness of heart. They will turn a deaf ear to the needs of the poor, the marginalized, the hurting. Others will respond with openness, reconciliation, and self-sacrifice. Through the offering of Christ, believers will be consecrated for authentic living.

Tribulation and Surety

On the day when the Son of Man comes to judge all, the sleek and powerful will be shaken, but God’s elect will stand firm.

There is a lesson hidden in the natural order. Things grow from hidden seeds and buds blossom after winter. Learn from this and know that when the time is right, God’s judgment will be upon us and bear the fruit with the fullness of the kingdom.

Catholic Doctrine: Final Judgment

Jesus Christ is our Savior. He alone redeems us from sin and saves us from eternal death. He is the epitome of God’s love and stands at the pinnacle of creation. His heavenly Father bestows upon him complete authority over everyone and all creation itself. From this exalted position, Christ judges individuals and he will judge the whole cosmos.

The Final Judgment at the end of time is distinguished from the personal, or particular judgment that everyone undergoes

immediately after death. This personal judgment clarifies the meaning of a person's life—whether the individual has lived morally in concert with God or not. In other words, Christ will judge whether an individual has lived a life fundamentally cooperating with divine grace or rejecting it. This judgment reveals whether a person merits Heaven, Purgatory, or hell.

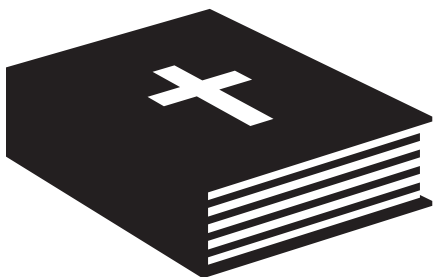
The Final Judgment, in contrast to one's individual judgment, concerns all of human history. History will not stop or creation cease without resulting in God's definitive action. Final Judgment implies that what has happened and is now happening will culminate in the Second Coming of Christ when all the dead will rise and the meaning of Salvation History will be completely revealed. The Last, or Final Judgment will manifest God's total triumph over evil.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

Just as Christ's person and mission exercise significance in the lives of individuals, so too does the reign of Jesus as Lord and Savior shape and inform the journey of the whole world. History is given meaning, purpose, and direction in the kingdom he inaugurates.

The kingdom is mysteriously present on Earth in the Church—in spite of the reality of evil. While evil resists the Lord, it has been defeated by his suffering, Death, and Resurrection. With the Ascension of the Lord, we believe we are in the last days, the final age. Yet the Final Judgment cannot be pinpointed, precisely because we are not in charge . . . God is.

Scriptural descriptions with apocalyptic imagery are not to be read literally. We read these descriptions with eyes of faith, understanding that our destiny and our hope, our anchor through rough personal and historic times, can only be found in Christ, our light and our life.



Key Terms

APOCALYPSE

From the Greek *apokalupsis* meaning “to uncover, to reveal.” It has come to mean the end times when Christ will render final judgment on all creation and all of human history within that creation. Some artists depict the Final Judgment as terrifying simply to show God's total mastery of and power over all creation, including us, his creatures (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 677).

FOUR LAST THINGS

They are: death, judgment, Heaven, and hell. The first two are mechanisms by which we enter the next life beyond this world, either Heaven as an eternal reward for living a life fundamentally in concert with God's grace, or hell as an eternal punishment for fundamentally turning our back on God's grace through a life of sin (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1020–1037).

RECAPITULATION

Term (from the Greek *anakephalaiosis* meaning “summed up”) used by Saint Paul in Romans 13:9 to express how the old Law is summed up or fulfilled in Christ. He also uses it in Ephesians 1:10 as an image for the end times when the cosmic Christ will sum up or draw into himself all things according to God's plan of Salvation (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 671).

Voices of Faith

In customary usage, *recapitulation* is a concise expression of a longer, more detailed recitation. That is what will happen here. By divine providence, the ordering that has taken place over a long period of time, the Son will recapitulate. Everything is summed up in him.

—Saint John Chrysostom

Christ takes on our human nature while sharing the Father's divine substance. Being free from sin, he unites our nature to his. Otherwise, the human race would still be held captive under Satan. The Conqueror's victory would hold no profit for us if the battle had been fought outside our human condition.

—Pope Leo I (Saint Leo the Great)

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 668 (human history fulfilled in Christ), 682 (Final Judgment and triumph of good over evil), 1040 (time of Final Judgment unknowable to us)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 13 (Our Eternal Destiny), especially the section entitled “The Last Judgment,” pages 156–157

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 51 (all creation culminates in Christ), 134 (the end times)