



**ON JUDGMENT DAY WILL THE SINS THAT WERE ALREADY FORGIVEN DURING OUR LIVES BE RE-ADJUDICATED, OR JUST THOSE SINS THAT WERE ON OUR SOULS WHEN WE DIE? IF THE FORMER, WILL OUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES HEAR ALL OF EACH OTHERS SINS? WILL WE BE REUNITED WITH THESE PEOPLE?**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC #1022, #1030, #1051) teaches that at the very moment of death, each person comes before God and is judged individually on the merits and failings of his or her own life in what is known as the *particular judgment*. It is at this judgment that the soul receives its eternal reward and enters into heaven, purgatory, or hell. Those who die in God's grace and friendship, but who are still not fully purified, are assured of their eternal salvation but must still undergo a process of purification in order to attain the holiness needed to enter heaven.

Sins that have already been forgiven do not need to be "re-forgiven", but because the true nature and extent of the effects of our sins is unknown to us, there may still be an attachment to sinfulness or *temporal punishment* for our sins that may not have achieved full satisfaction before God during our earthly lives. Since nothing imperfect or impure can enter into the presence of God, this temporal punishment and attachment to sin must be "cleaned up" before we can enter heaven. The church calls this process of purification *Purgatory*. Our pastor Fr. Jim Holland often refers to it as heaven's "mud room", where we get cleaned up before entering God's home. We should pray and have Masses offered for the souls in purgatory that they may soon be with God in heaven.

With regard to Judgment Day, the Catechism (CCC #1038, #1039, #1040) teaches that the resurrection of all the dead, both the just and the unjust, will precede the *Last, or General, Judgment*. At the end of time all will be assembled before God in the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, and the truth of their relationships to God will be made public. The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or has failed to do during his or her earthly life. The Last Judgment will take place when Christ returns in glory, at which time God will pronounce the final word on all history through His Son Jesus Christ. We shall then learn the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation and of the entire economy of salvation, and understand the marvelous ways by which God's Providence led everything toward its final end. 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.

In our *Professions of Faith* (the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed), we profess our belief in the *Communion of Saints*, which the Catechism (CCC #960, #961, #962) refers to as "holy persons" in Christ and "holy things", above all the Eucharist, by which the unity of believers who form one body in Christ (the Church) is both represented and brought about. This Communion of Saints includes the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the blessed in heaven. In this Communion of Saints, the merciful love of God and His saints (all the blessed in heaven, not just those to whom the title of "Saint" has been bestowed by the Church) is always attentive to our prayers for one another here on earth and for the souls of the faithful departed in purgatory.

The Church does not explicitly teach in what way we will all be reunited with one another after the Last Judgment, but the Communion of Saints reveals that death does not separate those of us still living from those who have died. We are all still united with one another in the Communion of Saints, a mystery which has not yet been fully revealed by God, but which we can have faith will continue in some manner for all eternity.