



**COMPENDIUM**  
OF THE  
**CATECHISM**  
OF THE  
**CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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***“DEATH – AND THE LAST THINGS”***

**205. What happens to our body and our soul after death?** 992-1004, 1016-1018

After death, which is the separation of the body and the soul, the body becomes corrupt while the soul, which is immortal, goes to meet the judgment of God and awaits its reunion with the body when it will rise transformed at the time of the return of the Lord. *How* the resurrection of the body will come about exceeds the possibilities of our imagination and understanding.

**207. What is life everlasting?** 1020, 1051

Eternal life is that life which begins immediately after death. It will have no end. It will be preceded for each person by a particular judgment at the hands of Christ who is the Judge of the living and the dead. This particular judgement will be confirmed in the final judgment.

**208. What is the particular judgment?** 1021-1022, 1051

It is the judgment of immediate retribution which each one after death will receive from God in his immortal soul in accord with his faith and his works. This retribution consists in entrance into the happiness of heaven, immediately or after an appropriate purification, or entry into the eternal damnation of hell.

**209. What is meant by the term “heaven”?** 1023-1026, 1053

By “heaven” is meant the state of supreme and definitive happiness. Those who die in the grace of God and have no need of further purification are gathered around Jesus and Mary, the angels and the saints. They thus form the Church of heaven, where they see God “face to face” (*1 Corinthians* 13:12). They live in a communion of love with the Most Blessed Trinity and they intercede for us.

*“True and subsistent life consists in this: the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, pouring out his heavenly gifts on all things without exception. Thanks to his mercy, we too, men that we are, have received the inalienable promise of eternal life.”* (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem)

**210. What is purgatory?**

1030-1031, 1054

Purgatory is the state of those who die in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, but who still have need of purification to enter into the happiness of heaven.

**211. How can we help the souls being purified in purgatory?**

1032

Because of the communion of saints, the faithful who are still pilgrims on earth are able to help the souls in purgatory by offering prayers in suffrage for them, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice. They also help them by almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance.

**212. In what does hell consist?**

1033-1035, 1056-1057

Hell consists in the eternal damnation of those who die in mortal sin through their own free choice. The principal suffering of hell is eternal separation from God in whom alone we can have the life and happiness for which we were created and for which we long. Christ proclaimed this reality with the words, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire" (*Matthew 25:41*).

**213. How can one reconcile the existence of hell with the infinite goodness of God?**

1036-1037

God, while desiring "all to come to repentance" (*2 Peter 3:9*), nevertheless has created the human person to be free and responsible; and he respects our decisions. Therefore, it is the human person who freely excludes himself from communion with God if at the moment of death he persists in mortal sin and refuses the merciful love of God.

**214. In what does the final judgment consist?**

1038-1041, 1058-1059

The final or universal judgment consists in a sentence of happiness or eternal condemnation, which the Lord Jesus will issue in regard to the "just and the unjust" (*Acts 24:15*) when he returns as the Judge of the living and the dead. After the last judgment, the resurrected body will share in the retribution which the soul received at the particular judgment.

**215. When will this judgment occur?**

1040

This judgment will come at the end of the world and only God knows the day and the hour.

**216. What is the hope of the new heavens and the new earth?**

1042-1050, 1060

After the final judgment the universe itself, freed from its bondage to decay, will share in the glory of Christ with the beginning of "the new heavens" and a "new earth" (*2 Peter 3:13*). Thus, the fullness of the Kingdom of God will come about, that is to say, the definitive realization of the salvific plan of God to "unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth" (*Ephesians 1:10*). God will then be "all in all" (*1 Corinthians 15:28*) in eternal life.