

## TALK 3 – Heaven – brief outline

Why are we talking about heaven?

What is heaven?

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev 21:4)

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” (1Co 13:12)

The hereafter

‘It is also credible that this may occur sometimes to the damned, and that for man's instruction and intimidation they be permitted to appear to the living; or again in order to seek our suffrages, as to those who are detained in purgatory...’<sup>1</sup>

“The ‘beatific vision’, in which God opens himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing wellspring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion.”<sup>2</sup>

The glorified body

In heaven, the Church will reach its full perfection when all things will undergo a restoration.<sup>3</sup>

There will be a new heaven and a new earth all under the rule of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

When that has been completed, Christ will present to his father ‘a kingdom eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.’<sup>5</sup>

‘It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous.’<sup>6</sup>

Saint Teresa of Avila describes a vision she had in which the Lord appeared to her in his glorified body, that is the appearance of his body after resurrection:

‘... if there were nothing else to provide delight for one’s vision in heaven than the exalted beauty of glorified bodies, this vision would be very great glory, especially the vision of the humanity of Jesus Christ, our Lord... The splendor is not one that dazzles; it has a soft whiteness, and infused, gives the most intense delight to the sight, and doesn’t tire it; neither does the brilliance, in which is seen the vision of so divine a beauty, tire it.’<sup>7</sup>

‘I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.’ (2 Cor 12:2-4)

‘So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated.’ (2 Cor 12:7)

---

1 Ibid, article 3.

2 Catechism of the Catholic Church 1045

3 Lumen gentium, 48

4 Catechism of the Catholic Church 1043

5 Preface of the Feast of Christ the King

6 St. Irenaeus, ‘Against Heresies’, Book 5, Chapter 32, Article 1

7 ‘The collected works of St. Teresa of Avila’, vol one, pg 182-183, tr. Kavanaugh & Rodriguez/ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington DC, 1976

## TALK 3 – Heaven – brief outline

### Our hope of glory

‘Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.’ (Rom 8:24-25)

‘... the father said to his servants, “Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”’ (Lk 15:22-24)

*‘The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are in peace. If they experienced punishment as men see it, their hope was rich with immortality; slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be. God has put them to the test and proved them worthy to be with Him; he has tested them like gold in a furnace, and accepted them as a holocaust. When the time comes for his visitation they will shine out; as sparks run through the stubble, so will they. They shall judge nations, rule over peoples, and the Lord will be their king for ever. They who trust in him will understand the truth, those who are faithful will live with him in love; for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.’* (Wis 3: 1-9)

### The longing for heaven

‘For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling... For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened – not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.’ (2 Cor 5:2-5)

‘The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself.’<sup>8</sup>

‘Hope, O my soul, hope,’ St. Teresa of Avila exhorts, ‘You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one. Dream that the more you struggle, the more you prove the love that you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end.’<sup>9</sup>

‘Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"’ (1 Cor 15:51-55)

### How do we get there?

“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.”

---

<sup>8</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church 27.

<sup>9</sup> St. Teresa of Jesus, Poesias 30, in The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila, vol. III, tr. K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1985), 386 no. 9, tr. by John Wall, Exclamations of a Soul to God. 15.3