

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

In the Creed, we proclaim that Jesus Christ "will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead..." and "to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him" (Hebrews 9:28).

At His Second Coming, the good and the evil alike will be **raised from the dead and judged by Christ**: "...those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement" (John 5:29).

HEAVEN AND HELL

While we believe in the existence of **heaven and hell**, we do not look upon them as *physical places*. The Holy Fathers teach us that

- **for those who love God**, heaven is **eternal existence in His loving presence**. God is their *ultimate desire* and, consequently, their *reward as well*.
- **for those who hate God**, hell is *also* **eternal existence in His loving presence** but, according to Saint Isaac of Syria, they "will be chastized with the source of love. How cruel and bitter this torment of love will be. The sorrow which takes hold of the heart which has sinned against love is more piercing than any other pain." For the evil, "eternity in hell" is *not* the deprivation of the love or presence of God but rather **the torment of eternal existence in the presence of a Love which is unwanted, rejected and despised**.

THE CRITERION UPON WHICH CHRIST WILL JUDGE US IS LOVE!

Our capacity to **love others** is based on **our acceptance of God's love**, for He is **Love Itself**. Christ commanded us to love God *above all else and to share God's love with others*. **Upon this we will be judged**.

God's all consuming love, then, acts in two ways. It is

- the **eternal fulfillment and joy** of the blessed as well as
- the **eternal suffering and condemnation** of the wicked.



CHRIST'S ASCENSION

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus Christ "was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19), thereby

- **glorifying** human nature;
- **restoring** the likeness of God to humanity; and
- **preparing** an eternal place for His People.

THE SECOND COMING

Oh, what a day that will be when the Lord presents us with the reward of faith and devotion! What will be that glory, and how great will be the joy of being admitted to the sight of God! To be so honored as to receive the joy of eternal light and salvation in the presence of Christ the Lord, your God; To greet Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs, apostles, prophets and martyrs...in the delight of the immortality that will be given! To receive there what eye has not seen nor ear heard, what has not entered into the heart of man!

—Saint Cyprian of Carthage

WHEN WILL CHRIST COME AGAIN?

Jesus never revealed the *time* of His Second Coming to us. He taught us rather to be **vigilant** and in a constant state of **readiness**. By faith we know that Christ's Second Coming—and *our own resurrection*—are **certainties**.