

## KEY TERMS

**Eschatology** is the study of what happens at the end of time

**Sanctity of Life:** All life is precious and holy because it was given by God.

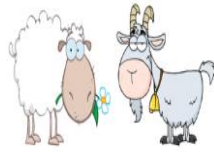
**Euthanasia:** Killing someone painlessly and with compassion in order to end their suffering.

**Paschal Candle:** The Easter Candle representing the risen Christ.

**Cosmic Reconciliation:** At the end of time the whole of creation will be brought together in harmony with God.

Funerals are carried out to worship Jesus, to thank God for his mercy, to renew our own faith and to pray for the person who has died. The actions of the funeral include, bringing the coffin into the church, sprinkling holy water on the coffin to remind of baptism and wafting incense over it to make it holy. The prayers include the celebration of Mass, **the Lord's Prayer** and a prayer for the mourners.

Because of the sanctity of life, only God can give life and so only God can take life away. We are all made in God's image and likeness. For this reason, Catholics are against Euthanasia. People have a duty to give the ill and elderly all the care and support they need so they can maintain their dignity until they die. Murder is always wrong "**Thou shalt not kill**" and suffering is often seen by Christians as a way to share in the suffering of Jesus on the cross.



## CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY: ESCHATOLOGY

The four last things are **death, judgement, heaven and hell**. Death is the transition from this life to the next, judgement is where our sins are weighed up by God. Heaven is eternity in God's presence and hell is an eternal absence from God.

Memorials for the dead are ways of expression to help us remember loved ones who have died. **Monuments** are statues of the dead built to remember someone important. **Tombstones** mark where the earthly remains of a person are buried. They usually contain religious messages such as RIP. **Remembrance gardens** are quiet places of reflection and mirror the beauty of heaven.

Catholics believe in Particular judgement. This is when a person dies they are taken into the presence of God and judged on a personal basis. They will go to heaven, hell or purgatory. Final judgement is when Christ will come in glory at the end of time and the whole of creation will be judged. Those who accepted God will remain with him forever in glory. This will be the completion of a new creation when **God will make everything perfect**. Some Christians believe in either particular or final judgement, while Catholics believe in both.

In I Corinthians, St Paul compares the relationship between the earthly body and the resurrected body to the relationship between a seed and the plant that grows from it. **In some ways, they are the same thing, but they are also different from each other.** "What is sown is *perishable*, what is raised is *imperishable*."

The story of the rich man and Lazarus tells us that we must help others and share our wealth and our rewards will be in heaven. Once you are in hell you cannot leave. Jesus came to warn people of this and they still didn't listen – even though he came back from the dead!

The *Paschal* candle is the *Easter* candle – first lit on Easter **Saturday**. It contains 5 grains of incense which represent the wounds of Jesus. It also has the symbols Alpha and Omega. The light represents the **risen Christ**. It is lit outside the Church and then passed around between the people to share in Jesus' light.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican council issued a document called *Lumen Gentium*. In it, it discusses the following about eschatology; we do not know when final judgement will happen so we must be constantly ready for it. When we die we hope to be at the heavenly banquet and at final judgement the human race will be perfect again. The Catechism tells us that God does not pre destine anyone to hell rather those who turn away from God **persistently** will go to hell. Committing mortal sins results in hell.

**Lesson 1** – The Paschal Candle

**Lesson 2** – Michelangelo's Last Judgement

**Lesson 3** – Memorials for the dead

**Lesson 4** – Catholic Eschatology & The 4 last things

**Lesson 5** – Particular and Final judgement

**Lesson 6** – Vatican II

**Lesson 7** – The Last Rites and the Funeral Rite

**Lesson 8** – Care of the dying and Euthanasia

**Lesson 9** - Revision

Purgatory is a **cleansing process** in which the effects of sins are removed so that the person can feel happy in the full presence of God. **All those who are in purgatory are on their way to heaven**. Those in purgatory **need the support and the prayers** of other people so that the cleansing process might be completed quickly. When Peter cried it was a feeling like being in purgatory. When we die, **the Lord looks at us full of love – and we experience burning shame and painful remorse** over our wicked or 'merely' unloving behaviour"

The Last Rites refers to both the anointing of the sick and the commendation of the dying. The anointing of the sick is one of the sacraments in which the person is anointed with oil on the forehead and hands and they will confess their sins to the priest who will forgive them. The commendation of the dying is a short service where the dying person receives their last Holy Communion. They may hold a crucifix and repeat their baptismal promises. Both of these services bring about healing, reconciliation and hope for the person.

Michelangelo's painting of the Last Judgement shows several Catholic ideas about eschatology. The bottom right shows those who are **dammed being pushed into hell** while the left side shows those who are **righteous and going to heaven**. It is representative of the parable of the **sheep and the goats**. There are **7 angels blowing trumpets** to awaken the dead from their graves. This is outlined in the book of revelation. Hell is depicted as total darkness where God's light can no longer reach. **Jesus and Mary are the central, dominant figures** of the painting. Mary can no longer intercede for us to her son. The saints are depicted with perfect bodies no longer showing signs of torture. This shows that in resurrection our bodies are renewed.

Cosmic revelation means that at the end of time the whole of creation will be brought to perfection with God. Jesus' death and resurrection started this for us. Julian of Norwich said "**all will be well**".