

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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[1] CCC Glossary, pg. 877

[2] Dreams of Gerontius, 7th Phase

Quick Connect

What is the Gospel saying? Mark 13:24-32 — Pg. 1

What is the Church saying Past and Present? Pages 1-3

What is God saying to you through this passage? Page 4

Gospel Reading – Mark 13:24-32 – Roman Missal

Jesus said to his disciples: "In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. "And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky. "Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings

From a discourse on the Psalms by Saint Augustine, bishop
Let us not resist the first coming, so that we may not dread the second
All the trees of the forest will exult before the face of the Lord, for he has come, he has come to judge the earth. He has come the first time, and he will come again. At his first coming, his own voice declared in the gospel: Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds. What does he mean by hereafter? Does he not mean that the Lord will come at a future time when all the nations of the earth will be striking their breasts in grief? Previously he came through his preachers, and he filled the whole world. Let us not resist his first coming, so that we may not dread the second. What then should the Christian do? He ought to use the world, not become its slave. And what does this mean? It means having, as though not having. So says the Apostle: My brethren, the appointed time is short: from now on let those who have wives live as though they had none; and those who mourn as though they were not mourning; and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing; and those who buy as though they had no goods; and those who deal with this world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away. But I wish you to be without anxiety. He who is without anxiety waits without fear until his Lord comes. For what sort of love of Christ is it to fear his coming? Brothers, do we not have to blush for shame? We love him, yet we fear his coming. Are we really certain that we love him? Or do we love our sins more? Therefore let us hate our sins and love him who will exact punishment for them. He will

come whether we wish it or not. Do not think that because he is not coming just now, he will not come at all. He will come, you know not when; and provided he finds you prepared, your ignorance of the time of his coming will not be held against you. All the trees of the forest will exult. He has come the first time, and he will come again to judge the earth; he will find those rejoicing who believed in his first coming, for he has come. He will judge the world with equity and the peoples in his truth. What are equity and truth? He will gather together with him for the judgment his chosen ones, but the others he will set apart; for he will place some on his right, others on his left. What is more equitable, what more true than that they should not themselves expect mercy from the judge, who themselves were unwilling to show mercy before the judge's coming. Those, however, who were willing to show mercy will be judged with mercy. For it will be said to those placed on his right: Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world. And he reckons to their account their works of mercy: For I was hungry and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. What is imputed to those placed on his left side? That they refused to show mercy. And where will they go? Depart into the everlasting fire. The hearing of this condemnation will cause much wailing. But what has another psalm said? The just man will be held in everlasting remembrance; he will not fear the evil report. What is the evil report? Depart into the everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. Whoever rejoices to hear the good report will not fear the bad. This is equity, this is truth. Or do you, because you are unjust, expect the judge not to be just? Or because you are a liar, will the truthful one not be true? Rather, if you wish to receive mercy, be merciful before he comes; forgive whatever has been done against you; give of your abundance. Of whose possessions do you give, if not from his? If you were to give of your own, it would be largess; but since you give of his, it is restitution. For what do you have, that you have not received? These are the sacrifices most pleasing to God: mercy, humility, praise, peace, charity. Such as these, then, let us bring and, free from fear, we shall await the coming of the judge who will judge the world in equity and the peoples in his truth.

Eschatology: Introduction – Lesson and Discussion

“Heaven and earth will pass away”

Saint Junipero Serra once said, “Of all the things of life, a happy death is our principal concern. For if we attain that, it matters little if we lose all the rest. But if we do not attain that, nothing else is of any value.” Death is one of the few things that unites every human being. There is a natural fear of death, the fear of the unknown. We do not know people who have died and tell about what truly happens afterwards. Yet, the Catholic Church definitively states that there is much after our eternal rest.

What is “eschatology”? First, we must start with the word “eschatology”. It is not a term that is used or heard often in common culture. The word comes from the Greek “eschaton” which means “last”. We learn in grade school that anything ending in “ology” means “the study of” so eschatology means the study of the last things. More specifically, in Christianity it focuses on our human destiny: death, judgment, heaven, hell, the second coming of Jesus, and the resurrection of our bodies.[1]

How can the Catholic Church claim such things as death, judgment, heaven, hell, and purgatory? It is because the one living example who suffered, died, and came back to life, Jesus Christ, is at the head of the Catholic Church. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” (Jn. 11:25) As Catholics, we believe that there is more after death and more importantly, we have nothing to fear after death. Death is not final, but a transition to eternity.

Why should we learn about eschatology? G.K. Chesterton once said that the oldest things should be taught to the youngest. Young or old, we all have a duty to know and share what the Catholic Church teaches about eschatology: death, judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory; also known as the last things.

A fitting conclusion for this introduction on eschatology is a quote from the great poem “Dreams of Gerontius” by Cardinal John Henry Newman. The poem is about a man named Gerontius who is on his deathbed and takes the reader through his death, judgment, demons, glimpses of heaven, and finally his placement in purgatory. The angel accompanying him closes the poem with the beautiful words, “Farewell, but not forever! Brother dear, Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow; Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here, And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.”[2] We should not fear death and judgment for Christ is always with us even at the moment of our death. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4) While many do not want to discuss the last things, we should actively pray and recollect our final things for we need to think of the last things first.