

Heaven

Heaven is the fullness of life with God. Those who die in God's grace and friendship, and who are perfectly purified, live forever with Christ. What we now know through faith and hope will one day be seen directly. In heaven, we come to see God "face to face" and share in his life without end (cf. 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 22:4).

Heaven is best understood as communion. It is the perfect sharing in the life and love of the Most Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—together with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, and all the saints. This communion of love is what the Church calls heaven: the ultimate fulfillment of the deepest desires of the human heart and the state of complete, lasting happiness.

To live in heaven is to be with Christ. Those who are "in Christ" are not absorbed or lost, but rather brought to their fullness. In heaven, each person comes to their true identity in God and is known and loved in a way that is complete and eternal.

As St. Ambrose reminds us, "Where Christ is, there is life; there is the kingdom." Heaven, then, is not simply a reward added at the end of life, but the fulfillment of what life is meant to be from the beginning: life in full communion with God, lived forever in love.