

The Third Kingdom

Introduction: The Final Test

Mankind needs to know about the hidden “trap”; yes the “snare” called the Final Test. *Well hidden is this terrible event since no one knows about it.* But yet God spoke to Saint Catherine of Siena about this event, yes the happenings after death over 600 years ago. From the “Dialogue”, the following account of a man’s death is given.

The Final Test: Those That Lived Virtuously

God the Father speaks to Saint Catherine and said,

I want you to know, then, that the will is the seat of all the pain people suffer, for if the will is fully in accord with My will there is no pain in suffering. Not that the soul is relieved of all burdens, but to the will that carries them willingly for love of Me they are not painful because there is gladness in carrying what is seen to be My will. Because of the holy contempt such souls have for themselves, they have declared war on the world, the devil, and their selfish sensuality. (Dopamine) So when they come to the moment of death they die in peace because they have conquered their lifelong enemies. The world cannot accuse them because they recognized its deceitfulness and therefore renounced the world and all its pleasures. Their frail sensuality and body do not accuse them because they treated it as a servant under the

restraint of reason, making their flesh pliable with penance and vigils and constant humble prayer. Their selfish will they slew with hatred and contempt for sin and love for virtue. They totally destroyed the tender loving bond between body and soul that naturally makes death seem hard and fearsome.

The virtue of the just goes beyond nature, for this natural fear is extinguished in them. Their holy contempt and their desire to return to their goal is so strong that this natural tenderness cannot do battle against them, and their conscience is quiet because during their lifetime it was a good watchdog, barking whenever enemies came by with a will to capture the city of the soul. Just as a dog stationed at the gate barks when it sees enemies, and by its barking wakes up the guards, so this dog of conscience would wake up the guard of reason, and reason together with free choice would discern by the light of understanding who was a friend and who an enemy. To friends, that is, the virtues and holy thoughts of the heart, they would give warm affectionate love by exercising them with great care. To enemies, that is, vice and perverse thoughts, they would deal out hatred and contempt, striking them down with the sword of hatred and love by reason's light and free choice's hand. So at the moment of death their

conscience does not gnaw but rests peacefully because it has been a good watchdog.

It is true that the soul, in humility and because at the time of death she better appreciates the value of time and the precious gems of virtue, reproaches herself because it seems to her that she has made poor use of her time. But this is not a distressing pain but one that fattens the soul, for it makes her gather everything together within her, putting herself in the presence of the Blood of the humble spotless Lamb, My Son. She does not turn back to look at her past virtues because she does not want to place her trust in them but only in the Blood wherein My mercy is to be found. And just as she lived mindful of the Blood, so in death she is immersed and inebriated in the Blood. The devils cannot reproach her for sin because in her lifetime she conquered their malice with wisdom, but now they come around to see whether they can still make some small gain. *So they come in horrible forms to frighten her with their hideously foul appearance and with all sorts of fantasies.* But because there is none of sin's venom in the soul, their appearance does not frighten her as it would someone else who had lived sinfully in the world.

When the devils see that the soul has entered into the Blood ablaze with charity, they cannot bear it, but from far off they keep shooting their arrows. But their fighting and screaming does no harm to that soul,

for she has already begun to taste eternal life. Her mind's eye with its pupil of most holy faith sees Me, her infinite eternal reward whom she is waiting to possess- not because she deserves it but as a gift of My grace in the Blood of Christ My Son. So she stretches out her arms of hope and reaches out for it with the hands of love, entering into possession even before she is actually there. And as soon as she has passed through the narrow gate of the Word, immersed in His Blood, she comes to Me, the sea of peace. For we are joined as one: I the sea with Him the gate, because I and My Truth, My only-begotten Son, are one and the same thing.

What happiness it is to the soul to see herself so gently brought to this passing! For she tastes the joy of the Angels, and because she has lived in charity for her neighbors, she shares the joy of all those who are truly joyful in loving one another. Such is the reward of those who so gently pass over. But it is even greater for My ministers (Priests) who have lived like Angels. For they lived in this life with deeper knowledge and more intense hunger for My honor and the salvation of souls. I am not speaking simply of the light of virtue, which everyone in general can have. These, once they had attained the light of virtuous living, which is a light beyond nature, went on to attain the light of learning by which they came to know more of My Truth. *Now those who know more love more,* and those who love more receive more. *What you deserve is*

meted out to you according to the measure of your love.

And if you should ask Me whether others who are not learned can attain this degree of love, [I would answer that] although it is possible, exceptional cases do not dictate the general rule, and I am speaking to you in generalities. In fact, their dignity is greater in virtue of their priesthood because I have directly entrusted to them the task of eating souls for My honor. Although all of you have the duty of warmly loving your neighbors, to My priests is entrusted the ministry of the Blood and the care of souls, and if they do this conscientiously (Governed by or conforming to the dictates of conscience.) with love for virtue they receive more than others do.

Oh, how blissful are their souls when they reach the moment of death! Because they proclaimed and defended the faith for their neighbors, it has become incarnate (made manifest or comprehensible) for them in the center of their souls. It is with this faith that they see their place in Me. They lived in hope, trusting in My providence and not at all in themselves or in their own knowledge. And because they ceased trusting in themselves they were not inordinately attached to any created person or thing and so lived in voluntary poverty. Therefore [at the moment of death], this hope of theirs reaches out toward Me with great joy.

Their hearts were vessels of affection that carried My Name. They proclaimed it with burning love, both by the example of their good and holy living and by their teaching of the word to their neighbors. So now this heart of theirs rises up with unspeakable love and with this thrust of love seizes Me, its goal. It brings to Me the pearl of Justice, which it had always kept in sight by being just to everyone and doing its duty with discernment. Therefore it offers Me the justice of true humility and glory and praise for My Name in thanks to Me for the grace to have run its course with a pure and holy conscience. But to itself it offers indignation, considering itself unworthy to have received and still be receiving such grace.

Their conscience bears them good witness to Me, and in justice I reward it with the crown of justice adorned with pearls of virtue, that is, the fruit their charity has drawn from the virtues.

O earthly angel! Blessed are you that you have not been ungrateful for the benefits you have received from Me, and that you have not been guilty of negligence or foolishness. With true light you kept your eyes on your subjects, and as a faithful, courageous shepherd you followed the teaching of the true good shepherd, the gentle Christ Jesus My only-begotten Son. This is why you are now passing through Him [the gate] so majestic, immersed and bathed in His Blood, with your herd of little sheep. For by

your holy teaching and life you have led many of them to everlasting life, preserved many of them in grace.

O dearest daughter, the sight of the devils cannot harm these souls. Because of the sight of Me, which they see in faith and possess in love, and because there is none of the venom of sin in them, this darksome terror can neither harm nor frighten them. They have no heavy fear but only holy fear. So they are not afraid of the devils' delusions; because of the supernatural light of grace and the light of Holy Scripture" *they recognize them for what they are* and they suffer neither darkness nor spiritual distress from them. Thus gloriously they pass, bathed in the Blood, hungry for the salvation of souls, all ablaze with charity for their neighbors, coming through the gate of the Word and entering into Me. And My goodness assigns them their places, measuring out to all according to the measure of loving charity they have brought to Me.

The Final Test: Those That Lived In Sin

O dearest daughter, it does not go nearly so well with those other miserable wretches of whom I have told you. How dark some and terrifying is their death! At the moment of death the demons accuse them with such terrifying and darksome faces- and you know how horrible they are- that a person would

choose any suffering that can be endured in this life rather than endure this sight. Even the sting of their conscience is reawakened and gnaws away at them pitilessly. *They had made their selfish sensuality and perverse pleasures lord over their reason,* and now these miserably accuse them. *For now they know the truth about what they did not discern before, and they are deeply confounded over their error.* They lived their lives like pagans, unfaithful to Me, because their selfish love had covered over that pupil which is the light of most holy faith. And now the devil taunts them with their unfaithfulness in order to lead them to despair.

Oh how hard this struggle is for them! For it finds them unarmed, without the weapon of loving charity. As members of the devils, they have completely lost it. So they have neither the supernatural light of grace nor that of learning. *They never understood learning because the horns of pride kept them from tasting its sweet center.* And now in these great struggles they do not know what to do. They were never nourished in hope because they put their trust not in Me or, in the Blood whose steward I had made them, but only in themselves and in worldly honors and pleasures. They did not see, these wretched devils incarnate, that everything was theirs only on loan, and that as debtors they have to give an accounting to Me. *Now they find themselves naked and virtueless,* and wherever they turn they

hear nothing but great confounding reproach.

The injustice they practiced during their lifetime so accuses their conscience that they dare not ask for anything but justice. I tell you, their shame and confusion is so great that their only hope is to put their trust in My mercy if only this one time in their whole life. Granted, because of their sins) it is really presumptuous, for those who have used the arm of mercy to offend can hardly call this putting their trust in mercy. It is more presumption than trust, but at least they have accepted mercy's action. Thus, if when they come to the point of death they acknowledge their sin and unload their conscience in holy confession, the offensiveness of their presumptuousness is removed and what remains is mercy. With this mercy they gain access to hope if only they are willing. If this were not the case there is no one who would not despair, and despair would bring eternal damnation with the devil!

Thus does My mercy work to bring them to hope during their lifetime. I do not do this to give them leave to abuse My mercy but so that charity and the consideration of My goodness may make them open up. But these wretches abuse My mercy to the full, for they use the hope My mercy has given them to sin against Me. Still I keep them in hope of My mercy so that at the point of death they will have something to take hold of and will not be completely crushed by their re-

proach and so end in despair. For this sin of ultimate despair is much more displeasing to Me and harmful to them than all the other evils they have committed. And this is why: Other sins are committed with some selfish sensual pleasure, and sometimes they are regretted, and they can be regretted in such a way that the regret will win My mercy. ***But the motive for despair is not weakness, because there is to be found in it no pleasure but only intolerable pain. (Depression)***

Despair spurns My mercy by considering one's sinfulness greater than My goodness and mercy. So once one has fallen into this sin there is no repentance, no true sorrow for having offended Me (as one should be sorry). ***True, there is sorrow for one's own damnation but none for the offense done to Me.*** Thus, the end is eternal damnation.

So you see, this single sin is what leads them to hell, and in hell they are tormented for this and for all the other sins they have committed. If they had repented in sorrow for having offended Me and had put their trust in My mercy, they would have found mercy. For, as I have told you, My mercy is incomparably greater than all the sins anyone could commit. Thus it displeases Me greatly when they consider their sins to be greater, and this is that sin which is not forgiven either here or hereafter. Because despair displeases Me so much it is My will that they should put their trust in My mercy even at the point of

death, after they have spent their life in wickedness. So while they are still alive I use this gentle trick to make them put immense trust in My mercy. For if they are nurtured within this hope, *when they come to die and hear those harsh reproaches*, they will not be as inclined to let go of it as they would be if they had not been nurtured in it.

All this is given them by the fiery abyss of My unspeakable charity. But because they have abused it with their darksome selfish love, the source of all sin, they have not known it in truth. This is why, so far as their will is concerned, the gentleness of My mercy is for them considered a great presumption. And this is another reproach their conscience gives them through the appearance of the demons: that the time and generosity of My mercy in which they had put their trust should have made them open up in charity and love for virtue, and thus virtuously spend the time that I in My love had given them; but they used that time and that expansive trust in My mercy to sin miserably against Me.

O blind and worse than blind! You buried the pearl, the talent I had entrusted to you so that you might realize a profit from it. You, presumptuous as you were, *chose not to do My will*. You buried your talent in the earth of your perverse self-centered selfishness, and now it is giving you its return in the fruit of death.

O you wretch! How great is the punishment you are receiving now in the end! And your wretchedness is not hidden from you, for the worm of your conscience is no longer asleep, but is gnawing away. *The devils are screaming at you* and giving you the wages they are in the habit of giving to their servants: confusion and reproach. And to prevent your escaping from their hands at the point of death, they want to bring you to despair. This is why they confound you, so that later they can share with you what is theirs by right.

O wretch! The dignity I appointed you (You is referring to the clergy.) to shows itself luminous as it is for your shame, knowing that you have kept and used it in such sinful darkness. The Church's goods remind you that you are a debtor and a thief, and ought to have given what you owed to the poor and to holy Church. Next your conscience reminds you that it was on public prostitutes that you spent those goods, and on supporting your children and enriching your relatives, and you swallowed them up in feasting, on adornments for your house, on all sorts of silver vessels. And you should have been living in voluntary poverty.

Your conscience displays before you the Divine Office, which you set aside, not caring that you were falling into deadly sin. Even if you said it with your mouth, your heart was far from Me. You ought to have had charity for your subjects and hunger

for nurturing them in virtue, giving them the example of your own life, disciplining them with the hand of mercy and the rod of justice. But because you did just the opposite, your conscience reproaches you in the horrible appearance of the demons.

And you who have been in authority: If you have been unjust in bestowing high office on your subjects or in putting them in charge of others, if you have been careless in your appointments, all this now comes before your conscience. For flattering words and human respect should not have ruled you in this, but only regard for virtue and My honor and the salvation of souls. And because you did wrong in this, you are being reproached for it. It will be to your greater suffering and confusion to have what you have wrongly done and wrongly left undone set before your conscience in the light of understanding.

I want you to know, dearest daughter, that white is more clearly seen next to black, and black next to white. This is how it happens to these wretches- all of them in general, but especially to these [evil ministers]. Just as the just begin to see their happiness more clearly at death, *so these wretched souls are presented with the sight of their evil lives.* There is no need for anyone else to show them, for their own conscience sets before them the sins they have committed and the virtues they ought to have practiced. Why the virtues? So as to shame them

the more. *For when vice and virtue are set side by side, vice is better known* [for what it is] in contrast to virtue, and the more they know this the more ashamed they are. And in contrast to their sinfulness they are more aware of how perfect virtue is. Thus their grief is the greater *because they see that their lives are lacking in any virtue.*

And I want you to know that because of this knowledge they have of virtue and vice *they see all too well the reward that follows the virtuous and the punishment that follows those who have wallowed in the darkness of deadly sin.*

I grant this knowledge not to lead them to despair but to lead them to perfect self-knowledge and hope filled shame over their sinfulness so that they may atone for their sins with discerning shame and placate My wrath by humbly asking for mercy.

As for the virtuous, it intensifies their joy and their knowledge of My charity, for they attribute to Me, not to themselves, the grace of having followed virtue and walked in the way of My Truth. Therefore they exult in Me. With this true knowledge they receive and 'enjoy their gracious end, in the way I have told you of elsewhere. So these just who have lived in burning charity exult in joy, while the darksome wicked are confounded in pain. The darksome sight of the demons does not bother or frighten the just; only sin can cause

them fear and harm. But those whose lives have been guided by lust and wickedness find fear and hurt in the sight of the demons. Not the hurt of despair, unless they so choose, but the pain of reproach and the reawakening of conscience, and fear and fright at the demons' horrible appearance.

See, then, dearest daughter, how different are the pain and struggle the just and the wicked experience in death, and how different are their ends. I have described for you and shown to your mind's eye only the smallest bit- so little as to be almost nothing in comparison with the reality of the punishment of the one and the reward of the other.

Now you see how blind people are, especially these wretches, for because they have received more from Me and been more enlightened by Holy Scripture, they are so much the more obligated. So they reap more unbearable confusion. Because they knew more of Holy Scripture in their lifetime, in death they know more clearly how greatly they have sinned and are allotted greater torment than others, just as the lot of good [ministers] is more magnificent.

It happens to them as it does to unfaithful Christians who are allotted greater torment in hell than are pagans, because they had the light of faith and renounced it, whereas the pagans never had it. Just so these evil ministers will be more severely punished than other Christians who

were guilty of the very same sin, because of the ministry I entrusted to them when I made them stewards of the sun of the holy Sacrament, and because they had the light of learning by which to discern the truth for themselves as well as for others if they had so chosen. It is therefore just that they should be more severely punished.

But these wretches do not know this. For if they had the least regard for their position they would never have come to such an evil pass. They would have been what they should have been. But they are not. Indeed, the whole world is corrupt, and they behave much more badly than their worldly peers. With their filthiness they defile the face of their own souls and corrupt their subjects and suck the Blood of My bride, holy Church. By their sins they have left her pale. The loving charity they ought to have had for this bride they lavished on themselves, thinking of nothing but snitching her grapes one by one, taking her high offices and lucrative positions when they should have been seeking after souls. Thus their evil lives lead the people (though these are not thereby excused) to irreverence and disobedience toward holy Church.

Questions

- 1) If we want to die in peace, we need to declare war on the world, the devil, and our selfish _____.

- 2) Our conscience can be symbolized as a _____. When ever an enemy comes to capture us our conscience should _____ and warn our reasoning power to say no to sin.
- 3) We do not want to turn back to look at our past virtues because we do not want to place our trust in them but only in the _____ wherein God's mercy is to be found.
- 4) So devil will come in horrible forms to _____ us with their hideously foul appearance. But if we have lived a virtuous life, their appearance does not _____ us.
- 5) When the devils see that the soul has entered into the Blood ablaze with charity, they cannot bear it, but from far off they keep shooting their _____. But their screaming does no harm to that soul, for the soul has already begun to taste eternal life.
- 6) Because a virtuous soul has lived in charity for their neighbors, that soul shares the joy of all those who are truly joyful in _____ one another.
- 7) Now those who know more _____ more, and those who _____ more receive more.
- 8) At the moment of death the demons accuse sinners with such terrifying and darksome faces that a person would choose any suffering that can be endured in this life rather than endure this sight. Such souls had made their selfish _____ and perverse _____ rule over their reason.
- 9) The devil will taunt sinners with their unfaithfulness in order to lead them to _____. Oh how hard this struggle is for them! For it finds them unarmed, without the weapon of loving _____.
- 10) Sinners never understood learning because the horns of _____ kept them from tasting its sweet center. And now in these great struggles they do not know what to do. They were never nourished in hope because they put their trust not in Me or, in the Blood whose steward I had made them, but only in themselves and in worldly honors and _____.
- 11) Now sinners will find themselves naked and _____, and wherever they turn they hear nothing but great confounding reproach.
- 12) Despair spurns God's mercy by considering one's _____ greater than God's goodness and mercy.
- 13) The damned have great sorrow for one's own damnation but none for the offense done to _____.
- 14) For when vice and _____ are set side by side, vice is better known [for what it is] in contrast to _____, and the more sinners know this the more ashamed they are. And in contrast to their sinfulness they are

more aware of how perfect _____ is. Thus their grief is the greater because they see that their lives are lacking in any _____.

- 15) Unfaithful Christians are allotted greater torment in hell than are pagans, because they had the light of faith and _____ it, whereas the pagans never had It.