

## **THE FOUR LAST THINGS.**

### **THE DEATH OF THE JUST MAN AND THAT OF THE SINNER.**

**1.** To die a good or holy death is to die in a state of grace. It is the very highest happiness attainable.

**2.** To die a bad death is to die in a state of mortal sin. It is the most awful calamity that can befall us.

**3.** We read in Psalms XXXIII, 22 that « the death of the wicked is very evil. »

**4.** It is *very evil* because the wicked man, with his sins heavy on him, finds it very hard indeed to quit this world and all its pleasures, for which alone he has lived his life, and because he knows that in a few moments more he will receive in hell the punishment he has so richly merited by such criminal neglect.

**5.** An awful death was that of Herod as described in the Acts of the Apostles (XII, 19-23).

« And when Herod had sought for him (Paul) and found him not, having examined the keepers, he commanded they should be put to death; and going down from Judea to Caesarea, he abode there. And he was angry with the Tyrians and the Sidonians. But they with one accord came to him, and having gained Blastus who was the king's chamberlain, they desired peace, because their countries were nourished by him. And upon a day appointed, Herod being arrayed in kingly apparel, sat in the judgment seat and made an oration to them. And the people made acclamation, saying: « It is the voice of a god and not of a man. » And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God; and being eaten up by worms, he gave up the ghost. »

**6.** As terrible was the death of the traitor Judas:

« And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas,

Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Alpheus and Simon Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James. All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. »

« In those days Peter rising up in the midst of the brethren, said (now the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty: »

« Men brethren, the Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was numbered with us and had obtained part of this ministry. And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity, and being hanged, burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the same field was called in their tongue *Haceldama*, that is to say, the field of blood. For it is written in the book of psalms, *Let their habitation become desolate, and let here be none to dwell therein. And his bishopric let another take.* Wherefore of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day wherein He was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of His resurrection. »

« And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Mathias. And praying, they said: « Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen to take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place. » And they gave them lots and the lot fell upon Mathias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. » (*Acts* I, 13-25.)

7. In Psalms *CXV*, 14, we read « Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. »

8. It is « precious », i. e., of great value, 1stly., because it delivers them from all the ills of this life; 2ndly., because they love God and are now at last at peace with their conscience; and 3rdly., because they are about to receive in heaven their reward for the good works done by them in this life.

## **Explanation of the Plate.**

**9.** The two pictures represent respectively the death of the *just* man and that of the *sinner*.

**10.** The *just* man, lying resigned on his bed of sickness and pain, is receiving the last consolations of religion. His Guardian Angel stands by, inspiring him with courage; his relations are praying for him; Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin are regarding him from heaven with outstretched arms, while Satan, in rage and shame, is fleeing back to hell.

**11.** As a contrast, the dying sinner rudely pushes back the priest. His Guardian Angel, turning away from this dreadful scene, is abandoning him weeping. The priest once more holds up the Crucifix before him, but without avail. His relations are broken-hearted and dismayed. Jesus Christ appears on high, showing him the Cross on which He died to save him and under which He will judge him, while devils surround his bed, eagerness to pounce upon his soul the moment it quits his body.

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