Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church 107 South Fourth Street Minersville, PA 17954

St. Mary's (Dormition of the Mother of God)

Byzantine Catholic Church 131 South Morris Street

Saint Clair, PA 17970

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Served by: Very Reverend Gregory J. Noga, Pastor

SS. Peter & Paul Cantor: Mr. Paul Konkus St. Mary Cantor: Dr. Peter Yasenchak

CONFESSIONS: Sts. Peter & Paul: Saturday 2:45-3:30 PM

St. Mary's: Saturday 1:00 - 1:30 PM

SICK CALLS: As scheduled, or anytime in case of an emergency. If anyone is homebound or hospitalized, please call the rectory (544-2074)

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Minersville, PA 544-5111 Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

# Condemn Ourselves for Our Sins, and to Forgive Others

Two things therefore does He here require, both to condemn ourselves for our sins, and to forgive others; and the former for the sake of the latter, that this may become more easy (for he who considers his own sins is more indulgent to his fellow-servant); and not merely to forgive with the lips, but from the heart.

Let us not then thrust the sword into ourselves by being revengeful. For what grief has he who has grieved you inflicted upon you, like you will work unto yourself by keeping your anger in mind, and drawing upon yourself the sentence from God to condemn you? For if indeed you are watchful, and keepest yourself under control, the evil will come round upon his head, and it will be he that will suffer harm; but if you should continue indignant, and displeased, then yourself will undergo the harm not from him, but from yourself.

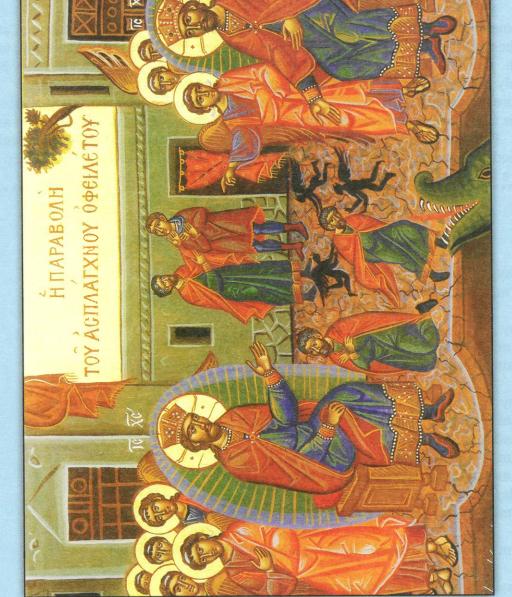
For if we be willing, no one shall be able to injure us, but even our enemies shall advantage us in the

greatest degree. And why do I speak of men? For what can be more wicked than the devil; yet nevertheless, even hence have we a great opportunity of approving ourselves; and Job shows it. But if the devil has become a cause of crowns, why are you afraid of a man as an enemy?

See then how much you gain, bearing meekly the spiteful acts of your enemies. First and greatest, deliverance from sins; secondly, fortitude and patience; thirdly, mildness and benevolence; for he that knows not how to be angry with them that grieve him, much more will he be ready to serve them that love him. Fourthly, to be free from anger continually, to which nothing can be equal. For of him that is free from anger, it is quite clear that he is delivered also from the despondency hence arising, and will not spend his life on vain labors and sorrows.

St. John Chrysostom

# ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Unforgiving Servant

Volume 2021 Christ is among us! Number 32 He is and will be!

### Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost Tone 1

Welcome to the parish communities of SS. Peter and Paul and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Churches of Minersville and Saint Clair, Pennsylvania. We greet and welcome you to our Church. Our Church is a holy place. Our Church is where we get together in Jesus' Name. it is holy because we come here to worship, to be nourished in faith through Sacred Scripture and preaching, to open our hearts and minds to celebrate the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ and to dedicate ourselves to a life of holiness and service to the Lord and others. The church building itself reflects this faith and calls us to enter into communion with God. We invite you to share our faith in Jesus Christ, to experience our worship and to live a life dedicated to the service of God and one another in Jesus' Name.

# August 8 – August 14, 2021 All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted

Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy (at SS Peter & Paul)

4:00 p.m. For the Greater Honor & Glory of God req. by Marie Wanchick

Sunday

8:00 a.m. +Michael Sinko req. by Joe Gerchak & Son(at St. Mary)

10:00 am Health and Blessing of the Parishioners (at SS. Peter & Paul)

Livestreamed

Tuesday

8:00 a.m. +Mary Lutz req. by MM James Lutz

Wednesday

8:00 a.m. +Anna Becker req. by Pauline Kacinecz

6:00 p.m Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God

Thursday

8:00 a.m. +Peter Dembinsky req. by Mrs. Julia Ryan & family

Friday

8:00 a.m. +Anna Kostura req. by Mineresville Area Cafeteria Staff

Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy (at SS. Peter & Paul) 4:00 p.m. +Metro Cremo, Sr. reg. by MM Emil Seginak

**Epistle Readers**: 8/5 – Angela Frank; 8/6 – Ellen Sinkovich; 8/7 – Marie Wanchick; 8/8 – Anna Keer; 8/14 – Dolores Kramer; 8/15 – Gail Burgess; 8/21 – Angela Frank; 8/22 – Jennifer Keer; 8/28 – Marie Wanchick; 8/29 – Ellen Sinkovich.

**Special Note:** On August 15, 2021, the Divine Liturgy at St. Mary Parish, Saint Clair, is transferred to 10:00 a.m. at SS. Peter & Paul, Minersville for that Sunday Only. Kindly mark your calendars. Father Joseph Loya will be the celebrant of that Divine Liturgy. I will be away that Sunday.

Also, please mark your calendar for the August 21<sup>st</sup> Steak & Shrimp cocktail Dinner accompanied with Baked Potato, Salad and Dessert. Deadline for Ordering: August 17.

As previously announced in the bulletin, beginning in August the Church will be open each Friday from 12 Noon until 3:00 p.m. with the Mystery of Forgiveness from 2-3 p.m. and again from 6-7 p.m. this will commence on August 13. (The date posted last week was in error)

**The Dormition Fast** is preparation for the Holy Day of the Dormition of the Mother of God. The Council of Hierarchs of the Byzantine Metropolia of Pittsburgh have decreed this period (14 days) as a time of penitential preparation. Keeping the traditional fast is an option, i.e., voluntary.

### 11th Sunday After Pentecost

Jerome Biblical Commentary

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (18:21-35). See Luke 17:4. Matthew turns an instruction by Jesus in Q into a Peter-Jesus dialogue in which the bloodthirsty boast of Lamech is reversed (Gen 4:15,24); see comment on the sin against the Spirit in Matt 12:31. The parable that follows in vv 23-35 is only loosely attached to this teaching. It is properly a homiletic midrash on the instruction in Matt 6: 12, 14, 15, probably composed by the evangelist himself to make part of the Lord's Prayer vivid to his people. 23. It is a parable of the kingdom. servants: This is an OT way of referring not only to slaves but also, as here, to court officials or ministers. In this parable the servants could refer to tax gatherers or finance ministers. 24. a debtor of ten thousand talents: Lit., "a myriad of talents." Since the silver talent was worth over \$1,000.00, this is a way of saying an immensely large sum. 26-27. Already we see that the parable concerns not abusing the divine patience and mercy. 28. The parable unfolds in three acts: the first is between the king and his minister; the second between the royal ministers themselves; the third returns to the king and his minister. 34-35. The divine patience is not infinite. The parable teaches the need to imitate the divine mercy (see B. B. Scott, JBL 104 [1985] 429-42).

shall I consider myself if I may join in and praise my God, My King, my Lord, for all eternity Confessions.

The beloved Apostle of Christ imparts for our edification a portion of his vision:

I heard the voices of many angels who surrounded the throne and the living creatures and the elders. They were countless in number, thousands and tens of thousands, and they all cried out: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and praise Revelation 5: 11, 12.

And in yet another instance:

Then I heard what sounded like the shouts of a great crowd, or the roaring of the deep, or mighty peals of thunder, as they cried: Alleluia! The Lord is King, our God, the Almighty! Let us rejoice and be glad, and give him glory! Revelation 19: 6, 7.

In Heaven saints are vested in white garments:

...they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb Revelation 7: 14,

and they receive a crown of beauty and honor:

He...shall wear beautiful sure judgment for a helmet Wisdom 5: 17.

They enjoy perfect freedom and are made custodians of the works of God; they are present wherever Christ is.

Father, all those you gave me, I would have in my company where I am John 17: 24.

The blessed see the face of God in Heaven.

I assure you, their angels in heaven constantly behold my heavenly Father's face Matthew 18: 10.

They therefore know and appreciate the infinity and perfection of God. They see God as He is, face to face,

... for we shall see him as he is 1 John 3: 2;

...there we shall see face to face 1 Corinthians 13: 12.

# Never - Ending Paradise

The blessed in Heaven love one another; they are united by God's love which is their chief characteristic. It is love which marks the children of the eternal kingdom from the children of perdition. Joy unspeakable enters the soul as it recognizes its loved ones, relatives and friends in that blessed place. The blessed are free from all suffering; they shall neither hunger nor thirst.

Never again shall they know hunger or thirst Revelation 7: 16.

Death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor sorrow.

...no more mourning or death... Revelation 21: 4.

And night shall not exist for them any longer.

The night shall be no more, for the Lord shall give them light...Revelation 22:5.

The joys of Heaven last forever. Christ says that the blessed shall enter everlasting life.

I assure you...these will go off...to eternal life Matthew 25: 46.

The Holy Spirit is united forever to those who merit eternal beatitude.

I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you always John 14: 16.

The joy experienced by those saved in Christ can never be wrestled from them; nor will it abandon them.

...your hearts will rejoice with a joy no one can take from you John 16: 22.

We can all look forward to fulfillment and completion in Heaven. The vision of the blessed varies according to their lives. If they have genuinely accepted God's grace and cooperated with it in maturing towards sanctity, St. Paul offers this observation,

We measure everything by the standard of the future, rather than the present, and define as useful only that which will be of service to us with reference to the grace of eternal life St. Ambrose 1, 28. On the Duties of the Clergy.

God's original wish was that all should be saved and enter His kingdom. For it was not as punishment that He formed us, but to share in His goodness, inasmuch as He is a good God. But inasmuch as He is a just God, His will is that sinners should suffer punishment. The first then is called God's antecedent will and pleasure, and springs from the very nature of Himself, while the second is called God's consequent will and permission and has its origin in us St. John Damascene, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith.

### Eternal Beatitude

Generally speaking, all thought and speculation on Heaven cannot be profound in relation to objective reality and truth. Man cannot possibly, with his limited intellect, grasp nor understand what God has in store for the faithful and devoted believer. All attempts resemble a child's pondering thoughts and questionings on things far beyond its powers of comprehension and remind us of St. Paul's observation

When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, reason like a child, think like a child 1 Corinthians 13: 11.

### Heaven Here and Now

And it is true that we are children when we are confronted with the immensity of the glories of Heaven. We have a foretaste of Heaven here on earth because it is present wherever the torrent of Divine Life streams into the soul endowed with sanctifying grace. However, our experience of Heaven in the life of Christ's Body the Church, is commensurate with our limited ability here and now to know it.

Do you not know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?...so glorify God in your body 1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20.

You too are living stones, built as an edifice of spirit, into a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ 1 Peter 2: 5.

"The kingdom of God is at hand" Matthew 3: 2.

...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness Philippians 2: 12.

The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me Galatians 2: 20.

I will entrust to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven Matthew 16: 18.

every parish church, He would be just as spiritually present and visible among us as He is among the angels and saints in Heaven.

Thus Heaven is not a distant figure, a simply hoped for aspiration, not a far off place, but a realistic and tangible state to be experienced at least in part here on earth, whenever we enter into the fullness of the life of the Body of Christ, His Church, and immersed in the Holy Spirit as our strengthening grace and Guide, we offer in celebration the Divine Liturgy with the priestly celebrant and then become a part of Him in the Eucharist.

But here on earth, however and unfortunately, we in our daily pursuit of life, are a huge way off from the Kingdom of God, whose excellencies, whose designs, whose ends, whose constitution is spiritual and holy, sublime and perfect and eternal. All this we have now as communicants of the Orthodox Church. So that all we do is exchange time for eternity and Heaven becomes ours forever.

The Lord is sweet to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Let all your works, O Lord, praise you; and let your saints bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and shall tell of your power;

To make your might known to the sons of men and glorify the magnificence of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is a kingdom of all ages; and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Psalms 144: 8 - 13.

...we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, to our glory; Which none of the princes of this world knew; for if they had known it, they would never had crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, That eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him

1 Corinthians 2: 7 - 9.

The glorified body will possess the quality of spirituality, so that while the form and dimensions of the body remain, it is enabled to pass not only through space, but through solid substances, which are naturally impenetrable to it, in the same manner sun rays pass through glass. Our risen Saviour has shown us this by passing through the rock which covered His tomb and by entering the locked and closed Upper Room where the Twelve were gathered out of fear of the Jews.

Yet in the Old Testament we find already the description of the agility of the bodies of those blessed in the Lord,

They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagle's wings; they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint Isaiah 40: 31.

According to the insightful saints, we shall be gifted with a swiftness like that of an angel, who in a moment can come down from Heaven to earth and as quickly return to Heaven. St. Augustine shares a thought with us:

Wherever the spirit wishes to go, the body will likewise presently be Elementary Catechism.

Our divine Saviour Himself taught us,

Then the saints will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom Matthew 13: 43.

St. Ephrem the Syrian calls the sun the greatest splendor that may be imagined by the human mind here on earth, and he was of the opinion that the elect in Heaven far surpass the sun in brightness and splendor because of their holiness and sanctity. This brightness does not dazzle or bewilder, but rejoices and delights the soul.

Since all of creation was involved in the curse of Adam, in this present state it can hardly furnish a fitting habitation for the blessed as Heaven must certainly remain free and untouched by sin's curse. Scripture speaks of this transformation:

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and on that day the heavens will vanish with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and its deeds will be made manifest.... What we await are new heavens and a new earth where, according to His promise, the justice of God will reside 2 Peter 3: 10, 13.

Let me say this much; he who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully 2 Corinthians 9: 6.

All in Heaven see God, but some see Him more perfectly and experience Him more fully than others, according to the quality of their sanctity, the measure of their spiritual lives. The degrees of heavenly glory which the blessed possess can neither be diminished nor increased. There is of course, no envy among the blessed. In heaven each soul rejoices at the happiness and fulfillment of the others. There, the joy and happiness of another becomes one's own happiness and eternal bliss.

Heaven is not won by indulgence, but by denial. The road to heaven is not an easy one; it follows the path which Christ marked out for us on His way to Golgotha. St. Paul emphasizes this truth:

We must undergo many trials if we are to enter into the kingdom of God Acts of the Apostles 14: 21.

There is no beatitude without the practice of self-denial.

But how narrow is the gate that leads to life, how rough the road, and how few there are that find it Matthew 7: 14.

For those who are justified before God, Heaven begins on earth. Those who seek eternal joy already have it. The just have true and abiding peace.

Then God's peace, which is beyond all understanding will stand guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus Philippians 4: 7.

Here on earth those who are committed to Christ are joyful and grateful in adversity.

Blessed are those persecuted for holiness sake; the kingdom of God is theirs Matthew 5: 10,

and in the midst of sufferings,

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven Matthew 5: 11, 12.

In Heaven, in that place of God, there is no want, there is no deficiency, no concupiscence, nor generation, no ending, no failure, no death, no termination, no old age. There is neither hatred nor wrath, nor envy nor weariness, nor toil, nor darkness, nor night, nor falsehood. There is not in

garden of ravishing beauty, bounded with earthly delights that proceed from God, a garden of perpetual spring time, painted in lively and gorgeous engaging colors. None of our capacities will go ungratified. The glorified and transformed body will be refined and spiritualized beyond imagining; glorified conditions will be presented so that the words of the Apostle find ready application,

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love him 1 Corinthians 2: 9.

So we can never appreciate the sensible joys of Heaven by the senses we know and experience in this earthly life.

# Senses Incapable

The senses of the body in Heaven will be gratified in a wonderful manner because in their earthly life they were kept from evil and utilized only for good. Contemplation of this blessednes induced St. Augustine to exclaim:

O my soul, if we were to suffer the greatest pains daily, yes, even hell itself for sometime, if it were thereby vouchsafed that we could see Christ in his glory, should we not gladly suffer this? Elementary Catechism.

And what happiness and what bliss will our eyes bring us as they feast at the sight of the Holy Countenance of the most beautiful of all the children of men? Faithful Orthodox believers will be enraptured by the sight of the exalted spiritual and radiant beauty in the souls of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Birthgiver of God, and all the Saints, who in unison shout out in a loud acknowledging voice,

Salvation is from our God, who is seated on the throne and from the Lamb! Praise and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving and honor, power and might, to our God forever and ever Revelation 7: 10, 12.

If we should see this vision now, we would not be able to bear it. Our body, like an earthen vessel, would break to pieces for excessive joy. The hearing of the blessed will be unceasingly refreshed by heavenly melody and praise from God. St. Augustine witnesses that,

Happy, truly happy shall I be in eternity if it is permitted me to hear those celestial melodies and hymns of praise. Blessed and again blessed

### New Heaven

### Similarly in the Book of Revelation:

The earth and the sky fled from His presence until they no longer could be seen Revelation 20: 11;

Then I saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer. I also saw the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband Revelation 21: 1.

Thus the entire universe will be filled with the same brilliance which the heavenly Jerusalem now possesses, a conception totally beyond our present finite ability and capacity to grasp and understand. So it is understandable to us that Scripture should only give us a brief and fleeting description by way of imagery. The sublimest characterizations of the heavenly city are to be found in the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation. There it is portrayed as a city built upon a lofty mountain with walls made of precious stones, with gates of pearl, streets of purest gold, transparent as glass. This description is completed by that of the throne of God:

A throne was standing there in Heaven, and on the throne was seated One whose appearance had a gem-like sparkle as of jasper and carnelian. Around the throne was a rainbow as brilliant as emerald....From the throne came flashes of lightning and peals of thunder; before it burned seven flaming torches....The floor around the throne was like a sea of glass that was crystal clear Revelation 4: 1 - 7,

along with the infinite grandeur of the Son of Man and the large number of details with which the book is replete.

One like a Son of Man wearing an ankle-length robe, with a sash of gold about his breast. The hair of his head was white as snow-white wool and His eyes blazed like fire. His feet gleamed like polished brass refined in a furnace, and His voice sounded like the roar of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars. A sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth, and his face shone like the sun at its brightest Revelation 1: 13 - 16.

The name itself, transposed, paradise, which Scripture as well as the college of Church Fathers employ for Heaven give some hint of the attractiveness of the place. It can be represented as a

that place any want at all; but it is full of light, of life, of grace, of fullness, of completion, and satisfaction, and renewal of life and love and all the good promises that are made by Almighty God,

...for them that love him 2 Corinthians 2: 9.

In Heaven, men shall be like angels, the soul shall be empowered with new senses, the body spiritualized, the eyes shall perceive the everlasting glory of God; the mouth shall feed upon hymns and glorification of God, the stomach shall be satisfied only by the fullness of righteousness, and the tongue shall speak nothing but praises and wisdom; our society there will be choirs of singers, chanting to God's eternal glory. Contemplation of the holiness of God will be our food; love will be our wine and drink and the beverage of God's holy ones. There will be no earthly desires, the appetite will not want, it will only be a faculty of delight.

In Heaven, there will be understanding surpassing everything we know today: love, wonder, joy and every day will be the same forever. This shall be the state of those accounted worthy of the resurrection to eternal life; where the body will no longer be a servant, but a partner with God; where it shall have no work of its own, but shall rejoice with the soul; where it will bask in the presence of God's infinite beauty; in this great place where we shall be fitted to see and enjoy God Who is our Lord and our loving Father.

It is an eternal source of pain and anguish to our God that because of their sad perverseness men prefer war to peace, cares to tranquillity, grief to joy, and the vanities of this narrow stage to the true and solid comforts of Heaven. Man becomes too comfortable on earth with all its temporary and transient joys and occupations and little realizes it is Heaven which is his true home and rightful destiny. He was created for Heaven and nothing less than its exalted glory is worthy of his dignity as created in the image of Almighty God. The brief sojourn here on earth is but a taste of eternal bliss and meant only to introduce us to how delectable is the sight of the Lord. Even after man's nature shook its fist at the Merciful Father, His loving magnanimity was wont to make other attempts to reconcile recalcitrant sinfulness to Himself. So His never-ending love found expression in the entrance of His Son into the world and with His assumption of our frail humanity, once again, God could show the infinite love that characterized His relationship to man at the creation of the world.

## Heavenly Eucharist

And as if this were not enough, He provided a Heaven on earth by endowing His priests with the power of invoking the grace of the Holy Spirit to transform the meager gifts of bread and wine into His very precious Body and Blood so that reposing on His earthly throne in the tabernacle of

The kingdom of God is at hand Mark 1: 15.

The kingdom of heaven is within you Luke 17: 21.

However, this is just a little stream of light compared to the glory of the sun. And Heaven is not so much place as it is a state, a state of inexpressible and intimate union with Almighty God in the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the life of the Body of Christ we experience Heaven in a limited incomplete way which shall be perfected in us for all eternity after the Last and Final Dread Judgment.

Since perfect happiness is not confined alone to the soul, it flows into the body as well. Since the body cooperated in God's service during its earthly existence, it will also share in glory afterwards. Complete beatitude in Heaven will be imparted to man, soul and body.

If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then He who raised Christ from the dead will bring your mortal bodies to life also, through his Spirit dwelling in you Romans 8: 11.

# Glorified Body

To give us an idea of the splendor of the glorified body, the Apostle Paul compares it with the beauty of the glorified body of Jesus Christ.

He will give a new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern of His glorified body, by his power to subject everything to himself Philippians 3: 21.

The final book of Scripture tells us that

He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death nor mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away Revelation 21: 4;

Never again shall they know hunger or thirst, nor shall the sun or its heat beat down upon them Revelation 7: 16.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth were gone, and the sea is now no more. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people and God himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat on the throne said, Behold I make all things new

Revelation 21: 1 - 5.



He that asks me about heaven means not to listen to or hear me, but to silence me; for he knows that I cannot tell him. When I meet him there, I shall be able to tell him and then he will be as able to tell me; yet then we shall be able to tell one another this, this, and even that which we enjoy forever in heaven, but the tongues of angels, the tongues of glorified saints shall not be able to express what heaven really is. For even in heaven, our faculties will never be able to fully and totally grasp. We shall be overwhelmed.

Heaven is not at all a place that is created, for all place that was created shall be dissolved. God did not plant a paradise for Himself, and remove to that, as He planted a paradise for Adam and removed him to that; but God is still where He was before the world was made. And in that place where there are more suns than there are stars in the firmament, for all the glorified saints are stars, and more light in another Sun, the Son of Righteousness, the Son of Glory, the Son of God, than in all of them; in that illustration, that emanation, that effusion of beams of glory that began to shine incomprehensible eons ago, in those uncreated heavens, shall we finally see our God.