

The Beatific Vision (4th Sunday of Easter, Year B)

1 John 3:1-2—We Shall See Him as He Is

¹ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

² Beloved, we are God's children now; *it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* (1 John 3:1-2)

1. Love = “love” (Greek *agape*) (3:1)
2. Children of God: and “so we are” (3:1)
3. Parousia: “when he appears” (3:2)
4. Likeness: “we shall be like him” (3:2)

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, *after our likeness*... (Gen 1:26)

5. Vision: “for we shall *see him as he is*” (Greek *kathōs estin*) (3:2)

6. Beatific Vision:

¹ Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city...

³ There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; ⁴ *they shall see his face*... (Rev 22:1-4)

The Living Tradition

Benedict XII: By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints ... and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, ... or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, ...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment—and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven—have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. *Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.* (Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* [A.D. 1336])

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (4th Sunday of Easter, Year B)

1. What is the relationship between the Parousia and the Beatific Vision, according to John? What effect will it have on us?

For Further Reading

1. Saint Augustine. *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*. Translated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2008.