

taken up later by the Council of Florence (cf. nn. 2308f), it lays stress on the immediate retribution and on purgatory, the two main points on which Latins and Greeks were at variance in current controversies; it also affirms the efficacy of prayer for the dead. A clause on the general judgment is added to mark the agreement between Greeks and Latins on this point. The text is found under nn. 25-27.

BENEDICT XII

CONSTITUTION *BENEDICTUS DEUS* (1336)

*The common teaching of the Church on immediate retribution after death held that the blessed on entering the heavenly state were introduced to the immediate and eternal vision of God. Departing from this traditional opinion, Pope John XXII, in a series of sermons which he preached in Paris in 1331, asserted, as a private theologian, that soon after death the blessed enjoy only the vision of Christ's glorified humanity, while the access to the vision of the Triune God will be opened to them only after the resurrection, on the day of judgment. The following year he adapted this opinion of a progressive retribution to the condition of the damned. The Pope's opinion led to a fierce controversy, notably between the Franciscans who supported the Pope and the Dominicans who opposed him. The University of Paris requested the Pope to settle the dispute authoritatively. Though he intended to heed the request, John XXII was able only to retract his own former opinion on the eve of his death and to submit personally to the traditional doctrine of the Church. His successor Benedict XII, after a thorough enquiry, issued in 1336 the Constitution *Benedictus Deus* by which he meant to bring the controversy to an end. According to this Constitution the souls of the blessed departed see the Triune God face to face immediately after death and prior to the resurrection. But the nature of their intermediate state between death and resurrection, which is conceived as that of bodiless souls, is presupposed by the Constitution rather than directly taught.*

(On the beatific vision of God)

2305 By this Constitution which is to remain in force for ever, we, **1000** with apostolic authority, define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints who departed from this world before the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and also of the holy apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins and other faithful who died after receiving the holy baptism of Christ—provided they were not in need of any purification when they died, or will not be in need of any when they die in the future, or else, if they then needed or will need some purification, after they have been purified after death—and again the souls of children who have been reborn by the same baptism of Christ or will be when baptism is conferred on them, if they die before attaining the use of free will: all these souls, immediately (*mox*) after death and, in the case of those

in need of purification, after the purification mentioned above, since the ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven, already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment, have been, are and will be with Christ in heaven, in the heavenly kingdom and paradise, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and see the divine essence with an intuitive vision and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature by way of object of vision; rather the divine essence immediately manifests itself to them, plainly, clearly and openly, and in this vision they enjoy the divine essence. Moreover, by this vision and enjoyment the souls of those who have already died are truly blessed and have eternal life and rest. Also the souls of those who will die in the future will see the same divine essence and will enjoy it before the general judgment.

2306 Such a vision and enjoyment of the divine essence do away **1001** with the acts of faith and hope in these souls, inasmuch as faith and hope are properly theological virtues. And after such intuitive and face-to-face vision and enjoyment has or will have begun for these souls, the same vision and enjoyment has continued and will continue without any interruption and without end until the last Judgment and from then on forever.

(On hell and the general judgment)

2307 Moreover we define that according to the general disposition **1002** of God, the souls of those who die in actual mortal sin go down into hell immediately (*mox*) after death and there suffer the pain of hell. Nevertheless, on the day of judgment all men will appear with their bodies “before the judgment seat of Christ” to give an account of their personal deeds, “so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body” (2 Cor. 5.10).

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF FLORENCE

DECREE FOR THE GREEKS (1439)

The reunion with the Orientals, attempted by the second Council of Lyons in 1274, did not materialise in practice. A new and more successful attempt at reconciliation, the results of which, however, were also short-lived, was made at the Council of Florence under Pope Eugene IV. Besides the sections on the procession of the Holy Spirit (cf. nn. 322ff), on the