

Fr. David's Weekly Newsletter



November 18, 2011

The Close of the Liturgical Year • Solemnity of Christ the King

Almighty and merciful God, You break the power of evil and make all things new in Your Son Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe. May all in Heaven and Earth acclaim Your glory and never cease to praise You.

The Solemnity of Christ the King is the last Sunday of the liturgical calendar, celebrated by the Catholic Church.

Origin and History

Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in his 1925 encyclical letter *Quas Primas*, in response to growing nationalism and secularism. In Pope John XXIII's 1960 revision of the Calendar, the date and title remained the same and, in the new simpler ranking of feasts, it was classified as a feast of the first class. In his 1969 motu proprio *Mysterii Paschalis*, Pope Paul VI gave the celebration a new title: "Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe." He also gave it a new date: the last Sunday in the liturgical year, before a new year begins with the First Sunday in Advent, the earliest date for which is 27 November. Through this choice of date "the eschatological importance of this Sunday is made clearer." The liturgical vestments for the day are colored white and/or gold, in keeping with other joyous feasts honoring Christ.

George Washington - American King?

When George Washington took the oath of office, the presidency was a uniquely American institution. Back then, kings ruled most of the world. They believed they were divinely chosen.

Of course, the first presidential inauguration changed all that. But what if the popular general had decided to become king?

Legend has it that, after his victory in the Revolutionary War, Washington was so popular that a group of citizens wanted to make him monarch of the new nation. He turned the suggestion down, or so the story goes.

Of course, there are many legends about our first president, and historians suspect that the story of Washington's spurning the throne is as apocryphal as the one about his chopping down that cherry tree. But just suppose he had been a royalist at heart. Who would be our king today? What would American history have been? What would America be like today?

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory,
deliver the souls of all the faithful departed,
bringing them into Your holy light.

Christ the King and the Last Judgment

Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.

On the final Sunday in the liturgical year, it is time to remember things that we'd prefer to forget. For starters, we recall that there is an infinite qualitative difference between us and God. He is immortal and infinite. We are not. Each one of us will come to our individual end. But so will our society, our world, even our universe.

Another thing to call to mind on this day is that while the Son of God came the first time in a way both lowly and hidden, he will come one day in a way both public and glorious. Yes, he is the Lamb of God. But He is also the Lion of Judah. He takes away the sin of those who let him. But he is also will bring things hidden in darkness into the light, call a spade a spade, and insist that all bear the consequences of their choices.

That is what any judge does. And he will come in glory, says the creed, to judge the living and the dead.

But what will the Last Judgment be like? By what criteria will we be judged?

Only one passage in the Gospels provides a sneak preview of that day of reckoning – Matthew 25:31-46. First of all, note that most of Jesus' parables have a jarring punch-line. He's always upsetting the preconceived notions of just about everyone, especially the most religious of the bunch,

whether they be Pharisees or disciples.

Clearly, all of us expect that the Judge will condemn evil and impose sentence on the guilty. And we tend to think of evildoing as stepping over the line and infringing on the rights of others, taking their possessions, maybe even taking their lives. The language of the Our Father lends itself to this interpretation of sin when it says "forgive us our trespasses."

The problem with this understanding of sin is that it is incomplete, even shallow. Lots of people think that as long as they don't lie, cheat, and steal, but just keep to themselves and mind their own business, they deserve big rewards from God.

The story of the Last Judgment addresses these "decent folks." Imagine their shock as they swagger smugly up to the judge's bench expecting praise only to be sent off to eternal punishment! Why? Because they neglected to do the good that love required them to do. They did not "commit" offenses or infractions of the law; they did nothing positively destructive. It's just that, in the presence of suffering, they heartlessly did absolutely nothing. Their sin was not a sin of "commission" but a sin of "omission." But note – these sins of omission ultimately seal the fate of the damned.

There are lots of negative commandments, often expressed

as "thou shalt not's." But the two most important commandments are positive "thou shalt's". "You shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and strength and you shall love thy neighbor as yourself." These commandments require an interior disposition that naturally produces outward actions. If you are hungry, you love yourself enough to go to the fridge or drive to McDonald's. If you truly love your hungry neighbor as yourself, you don't just say a prayer and offer sympathy (*James 2:15-17*). Loving God with all your heart doesn't mean giving a respectful nod to God and then going on your merry way. It means going out of your way, passionately seeking to love him and serve him in all that you do.

In this Last Judgment scene we see how these two commandments, these two loves, are really one. Jesus makes clear that loving God with your whole heart is expressed in loving your neighbor as yourself. And whenever you love your neighbor in this way, you are actually loving the Son of God.

So ultimately, the judgment is simple. It all comes down to love. The judge happens to be the King of hearts.





Grant Them Eternal Rest

Most loving Jesu, I humbly beg of Thee, that Thou Thyself wouldst offer to Thine eternal Father in behalf of the

Holy Souls in purgatory, the Most Precious Blood which poured forth from the sacred wounds of Thine adorable Body, together with Thine agony and death. And do thou likewise, O sorrowful Virgin Mary, present unto Him, together with the agonizing Passion of thy dear Son,

thine own sighs and tears, and all the sorrows thou didst suffer in His suffering, in order that, through the merits of the same, refreshment may be granted to the souls now suffering in the fiery torments of purgatory, so that, being delivered from that painful prison, they may be clothed with glory in heaven, there to sing the mercies of God for ever and ever. Amen.

V. Eternal rest give unto them. O Lord,
R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May they rest in peace.
R. Amen.

“Pope” Pourri



1. What name has been used by more popes than any other?
2. As founder of the Church of Rome, who is considered to have been the first pope?
3. The man who was born Angelo Roncalli took what name when he became pope?
4. Who was pope during World War II?
5. Which pope continued the policy of strict neutrality and impartiality during World War I?
6. What famous chapel is named for Pope Sixtus IV?

1. John; 2. Peter; 3. John XXIII; 4. Pius XII; 5. Benedict XV; 6. The Sistine Chapel.

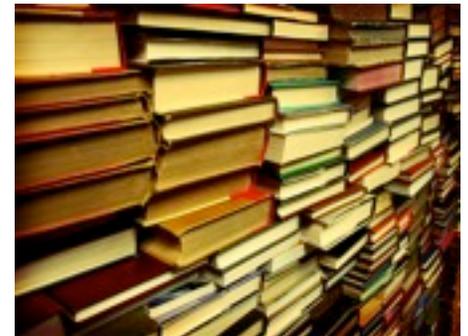
Holy, Holy, Holy



1. What is the process by which a person is declared a saint after his or her death?
2. Sainthood follows what process by which a person is declared “blessed?”
3. Two American Virgin Islands are named after two saints who were also Apostles. What are their names?
4. According to legend, which saint identified the true cross by restoring a corpse to life by its touch?
5. Who was the first native-born American saint?

1. Canonization; 2. Beatification; 3. Thomas, John; 4. Helena; 5. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

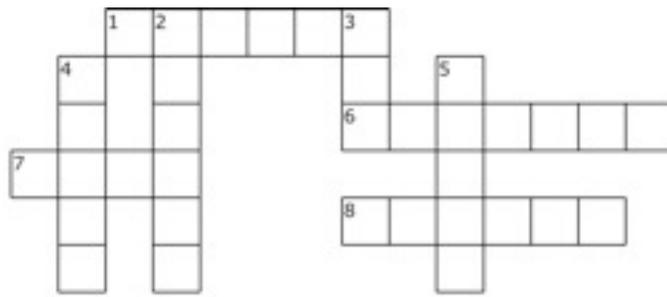
By the Books



1. What is the book in Heaven listing everyone who has eternal life according to Revelation?
2. What is the book containing hymns, prayers, and readings used by priests to recite the Divine Office?
3. Spelled one way, it’s an object forcibly propelled at a target; spelled another way, it’s the book containing the chants and prayers for the Mass.
4. The Dead Sea Scrolls contained several books of the Bible. Were they from the New Testament or the Old Testament?

1. Book of Life; 2. Breviary; 3. Missile; 4. Old Testament.

Unto the least of these...



ACROSS

1. A special chair used by a king or queen
6. The need or desire to drink something, especially water
7. A man who rules a country
8. A place where people are kept as a punishment

DOWN

2. To feel a desire or need for food
3. To put food into the mouth, chew it, and swallow it
4. To take in and swallow liquid through the mouth
5. To go to spend time with someone

EAT	THIRSTY	HUNGRY	PRISON
VISIT	KING	THRONE	DRINK



CLOTHED	SHEPHERD	HUNGRY	KING	STRANGER
LEAST	BLESSED	THRONE	SICK	EAT
GLORY	LIFE	ANGELS	DRINK	THIRSTY
BROTHERS	FATHER	ETERNAL	PRISON	COME