the CATHOLIC NAVIGATOR
*Aboard St. Peter's Barque with the Catechism Charting Our Course*

**23 November 2014; Cycle A, Solemnity of Christ the King** *Volume I, Issue 52*

# Chasing Holiness

Our liturgical year begins with Advent, the looking toward the coming of the Word, incarnate in the babe, Jesus. It culminates in the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. We cover a lot of ground in one year! But, note what ground Jesus covered in one lifetime. He gave us a real story, nestled in a particular time and place. He gave us his role and purpose as a way to give meaning in our story. He gave us his justice to guide our lives. And he offers us mercy so we might come to live with him at the end.

The name 'Christ,' meaning 'anointed', "became proper to Jesus only because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that 'Christ' signifies... (he) fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king." (*CCC 436*) Today, we celebrate this last office.

As a people of God, we are unabashedly Christ-centered. We worship one God and keep our eyes on his Son, the God-Man, Jesus, so as to enter into his holiness. He offers us a different reality, a love defined like no other. This love gives a meaning to our pain so that it becomes a suffering we can endure. Purpose is given to our self-sacrifice, and the emptiness this creates is flooded with the presence of God.

Like our liturgical year, our holiness begins and ends with/in Christ. In Advent we prepare for the coming of Word made flesh; we then spend our lives preparing ourselves and watching for the King to lead us into the Kingdom of God.








## On December 11, 1925

...Pope Pius XI issued his encyclical *Quas Primas* establishing the Feast of Christ the King. The 'why' and 'when' of this feast had special significance to Pius XI. Why? After World War I, he looked out and saw a world in material and spiritual chaos. Millions had been killed. Many more millions had lost home, livelihood, hope, and faith. Stalin was spearheading Communism's sweep across Russia. Benito Mussolini had just become dictator of Fascist Italy while Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party were gaining traction in Germany. Atheism and agnosticism were undermining European Christianity. And worldwide, the 'roaring 20's' were helping to bring about the breakdown of time-honored moral constraints. So, the Holy Father felt it necessary to affirm the Kingship and supremacy of Christ over humankind, all its material pursuits and political ideologies, and its culture of cynicism and pessimism.

The 'when' was the last Sunday in October, just before All Saints' Day to emphasize Christ's Kingship of both the temporal and the eternal. In 1969 Pope Paul VI raised its rank and changed the name to The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of All. He moved its date to the last Sunday before Advent to stress Christ's second coming as King.

## SAINTS PRESERVE US!

As with many saints, audiences were so moved by her story that legends sprang up, threatening to obscure the real life upon which the legend was built. Yet, Catherine of Alexandria, once taken off the calendar of saints, lived in the hearts and minds of so many that she was restored to the calendar (November 25) by Pope St. John Paul II in 2002.

Born to nobility, and well educated, she converted to Catholicism after having a vision at 18. She was so convincing a speaker and debater that many converted upon hearing her. She had already enraged a savage Emperor Maximinus (under Diocletian) when she condemned his persecution of Christians. When neither he, nor his philosophers, could match wits with Catherine, he had her imprisoned. The last straw came when Maximinus' wife, along with the head of the army, Porphyry, went to see this amazing young woman. They too were convinced, converted, and baptized!

She was condemned to death on 'the wheel,' a gruesome device where a person was tied to something like a wagon wheel and then beaten with a crude instrument until all the bones were broken. The agony was great and death often did not come for awhile. It is said that when Catherine touched the wheel, it broke. To this day, this barbaric form of torture is often referred to as The Catherine Wheel. Her end actually came by beheading.

# SCRIPTURAL SECRETS...



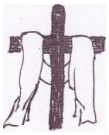
Today's gospel directly links salvation and the final judgment with what we know as the Corporal Works of Mercy. As discussed earlier (see Issue #8; 19 January 2014), these works are the concrete actions that Jesus asks of us which express our love of our neighbor. These actions give us real experience with what it means to be selfless, humble, obedient, loving, and detached from the material.

Our union with God is brought about through our will: we *choose* to act in loving ways. As we interact with our brothers and sisters, these actions help us move from the self-centered to the selfless, from self-reliance to desiring to rest only in God, and from the material to the eternal. This is movement from imperfect to perfect.

Christ implies that he so intimately lives within each of us that when you clothe, feed, house, or visit another, you are doing this to him. Jesus Christ let go of all his glory to become the weakest and most broken of us all. In so doing, he made it possible for us to find him in the least of us, and in us when we are at our least. We are called to *see* this Christ... and respond!

The following story is told of Mother Teresa: A priest watched from a window and saw a tiny wisp of a man, covered in ulcers and sores, dying in the street below. Ashamed of his own revulsion at the diseased and dying man, he watched a tiny little woman walk over, bend down, and pick up this emaciated, dying man, cradling him close to her chest. She said, "Welcome, Jesus! Come to my house!"

This is the call and the challenge to each of us in our lives: show mercy to the Christ in our neighbor, welcoming him into our house, so that one day, Jesus will pick us up, show mercy, and welcome us into his house.







# Catechetical Corner

Christ the King Sunday calls our attention to Jesus Christ's return and the Last Judgment: "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Mt. 25:46) This is different from the particular judgment which rewards or punishes individuals in their soul immediately at the time of physical death. Rather, this judgment will be at an undisclosed time, as this age is brought to its fulfillment.

As seen in today's gospel, at the Second Coming the Son of God will be the one to separate the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the unrighteous. He will judge because it was through him that all creation sprang: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." (Jn. 1:1-3; also, Gen. 1:2, Wisdom 7:22-8:1)

Before he was arrested, we hear Jesus pray to the Father, "...and now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made." (Jn. 17:5) With this fulfilled, he will return at the proper hour to call all forth from their grave, "'both the just and the unjust,'... 'and he will separate them one from another... And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" (*CCC 1038*- the Catechism draws from today's reading)

It is at this Last Judgment, when all are called forth, that "the righteous will reign for ever with Christ, glorified in body and soul." (*CCC 1042*) So, while the particular judgment that occurs at one's physical death will bring reward/punishment to the individual soul, it is only at the Last Judgment that the definitive sorting is done. Only then will the people of God be raised in glorified bodies to enjoy the place that was prepared for them.

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