

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe • Year A • November 22, 2020

O God,
stir up our hearts
that we might strive
more eagerly to share
our gifts in preparation for
the coming of your
kingdom where your
Son, Jesus Christ,
rules and judges.

Amen.



Sunday Word

Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17
Psalm 23:1–2, 2–3, 5–6
1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 28
Matthew 25:31–46

God Judges His Sheep

The prophet Ezekiel likens God to a shepherd. The Lord will tend to his sheep. He brings back the stray, gives his flock rest, heals those injured, and judges between one sheep and another.

Christ Reigns

Jesus Christ will present to his heavenly Father the kingdom. In Christ we are loved back into life so that we might be presented to God, who is author of all life.

The Son of Man Comes in Glory

Jesus' parable of the Sheep and the Goats illustrates how the Son of Man, when he comes in glory, will judge how we have lived up to God's Commandments. Evildoers will go to eternal punishment, and the righteous will inherit everlasting life.

Church Teaching: Judge the Living and Dead

Lord and Redeemer

As stated in the Nicene Creed, we believe that Christ our Redeemer, who died and was raised up again to new life, will judge the works and hearts of all people. Christ has ascended to the Father, and yields divine power and authority. We acknowledge him as Lord over even the unfolding of history itself. In Christ all of human history is fulfilled. Christ is the key, the center, and the hope of God's plan for human history.

The kingdom, over which Christ is Lord, is present in a mysterious way on Earth in the Church. In other words, Christ dwells on Earth in his Church, the Body of Christ. She is his Bride, who is espoused to him. God's plan is for the faithful to be eternally joined in Christ through the Holy Spirit to give glory to the Father. Yet evil still exists in the world and resists God's reign. The kingdom has yet to fully come. The Church is the

instrument of God. In her God propels us forward by the power of his grace to face judgment.

Already Not Yet

The final age of the world is upon us. The Church is in a pilgrim state gradually being moved toward the fulfillment of the kingdom. In her Sacraments and institutions, the kingdom is already here but not yet fully present. Her faithful take their place among the fallen who groan and the redeemed who travail. We, the faithful children of God, anticipate with hope the end of time. We look forward to judgment and the fulfillment of the kingdom. All the children of God await the full Revelation of God's glory.

This final Revelation is the judgment Christ the King will render. Particular and final judgments are his (recall the discussion from the Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time). So how will Christ judge, especially in light of John's message that he has come *not* to condemn but that all might have life and be saved (see John 3:17)?

Particular judgment is a Revelation from the Lord of each person's life on Earth. In other words, in the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each person's relationship with God will be unveiled. Christ the King will judge us according to the lives we live today. In this way, judgment shall have already been achieved by the way in which we have lived.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

The Last Judgment at the end of time also constitutes God's final word on all of history. Jesus Christ, the living Word, will reveal God's glorious triumph over evil. Christ the King will manifest the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation. Until that final hour, the Church will continue to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to prepare the way for the fulfillment of God's kingdom.

Key Terms

CHRIST THE KING

Christ, anointed by his heavenly Father as Priest, Prophet, and King, exercises divine kingship by drawing all people to himself through the Paschal Mystery (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 786).

CHURCH

In the universal sense, the Church is the worldwide assembly or convocation of the People of God (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 752).

NICENE CREED

The creed which we profess at Sunday Mass, drawn from two ecumenical councils at Nicaea in AD 325 and Constantinople in AD 381 (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 195).

Voices of Faith

By the last day or time of divine judgment, I mean what the whole of the true Church means when it believes and openly proclaims that Christ will come from heaven to judge the living and the dead. . . . This will be a day of judgment in the precise sense that there will be no place for any uncomprehending complaint that this sinner has been blessed or that that good person has been punished.

—Saint Augustine

The triumph of Jesus at the end of time will be the triumph of the cross, the demonstration that the sacrifice of oneself for love of neighbor, in imitation of Christ, is the only victorious power, the only stable point in the midst of the upheavals of the world.

—Pope Francis

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1038 (the Last Judgment), 1040 (Christ's coming in glory), 1048 (creation is in transition)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:

Chapter 13, especially the section entitled "The Last Judgment," pages 156 – 157

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:

214 (final judgment), 215 (occurrence of final judgment)