

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session read all the readings.

Isaiah 66:18-21

Psalms 117:1, 2

Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13

Luke 13:22-30

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading that appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

The Word In Liturgy

Scholars generally date the third part of the Book of Isaiah (cc. 56-66) to the time after the return from exile. Among the concerns of the author(s) of this book are a desire to overcome the narrow particularism found especially in certain priestly circles and to hold up a vision of universal salvation where even the pagan nations will be welcomed in the house of the Lord. The section we read today describes an incredible assembly of people from every corner of the earth, streaming to Jerusalem where all—Jew and Gentile alike—will join in worship at the Temple (“They shall . . . bring their offering to the house of the Lord”).

Even more startling is the Lord’s promise to include Gentiles among those who minister in the Temple: “Some of these I will take as priests and Levites.” The prophet’s vision is eschatological, a dream of a world transformed by the action of a God whose glory consists in receiving praise and worship from all peoples (“They shall come and see my glory”).

In the Gospel Luke once again emphasizes that Jesus is teaching as he is “making his way to Jerusalem.” Contemporary Jewish apocalyptic speculation foresaw numerous reversals of fortune in the final age. Here, a question is posed to Jesus about who will be saved, and he takes the opportunity to warn his fellow Jews against assuming that their status as children of Abraham guarantees them anything. The possibility is real of being excluded from the kingdom. Jesus reiterates the prophetic stance heard earlier in our first reading, namely that Gentiles from the four corners of the earth will stream to God’s the eschatological banquet



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and find a place at table. But in sobering terms he adds the implied judgment in his closing dictum ("Some who are last will be first and some who are first will be last.") that the presence of the Gentiles at table may go hand in hand with an exclusion of those in his audience.

Catholic Doctrine

Final Judgment

The Church teaches there are two moments of judgment. At one's death, God judges the moral quality of one's total life, how one has chosen fundamentally to either cooperate with God's grace or how one has chosen to reject God's grace. Accordingly, judgment is rendered and the person is assigned to heaven, purgatory, or hell. This immediate judging after one's death is called the particular judgment.

What, then, is the difference between particular judgment and the final judgment? While the former concerns the individual and reflects our belief in the immortality of the soul (whether in heaven or hell), the latter looks to that end-time when Christ will come again bringing the fullness of the kingdom of God. At this end-time, Christ who is the Lord of eternal life will pass definitive judgment on the works and hearts of all people, nations and times (CCC 679). It is by his cross that Jesus has been given the right to judge, and yet, as the gospel affirms, the Son of God did not come in order to judge but to save and to give life (John 3:17; 5:26).

So, how does Christ judge? The form of judgment is a revelation from the Lord who is the fullness of God's revelation among us. Each person will be revealed in this judgment, and thus the judging has already been achieved by the way in which one lived.

The final or last judgment also constitutes God's final word on all of history. Jesus Christ, who is the living Word of God, will reveal God's glorious triumph over evil and at the same time manifest the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation. Then, all will be revealed concerning the way divine providence has led everything to this completion. God's plan will come to fruition and all will know that love truly is stronger than death and that the last word in all things belongs to God (CCC 1040).

The meaning of the last judgment for believers is an urgent call to conversion, to make the best use of the time available. The Church, in this regard, speaks of holy fear, that feeling which commits us to the justice of God's kingdom and pursuing the way of life in Christ rather than the way of death (CCC 1041).



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