

WHAT DOES JESUS DO FOR US?

Christ our Savior, Intercessor and Judge

Image of a courtroom

1. Imagine you've been charged with a crime – say, the crime of stealing millions of dollars from a bank and losing it all at a casino. And let's say you actually did it. You're guilty. And now you're in court.

2. And then let's say that you suddenly realize: the Judge is the same person as your Defense Lawyer! *The guy who's going to judge you is the same guy who's working to get you off the hook!*

3. And then, even more unbelievably, the same Judge/Defense Lawyer announces to the court: "Also, regarding that money the defendant just lost – that doesn't need to concern the court any longer. I just paid it all back to the bank out of my own pocket."

Can you imagine your gratitude to this man, who is doing everything possible to get you freed? Can you imagine how much hope you would have of things ending up all right when the Judge Himself is so invested in your acquittal that He's representing you and paying off your debt Himself?

That's what Jesus is to us

1. He's the one who made up for our sin with His Death and Resurrection
2. He's the one who intercedes on our behalf after the Ascension
3. He's the one who will be our Judge at the end of our lives

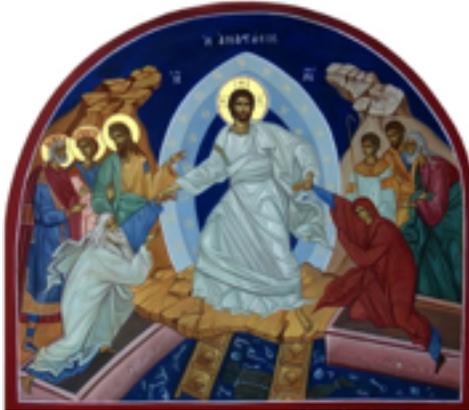
So let's look at these three roles: **Savior, Intercessor and Judge**

I. The Death and Resurrection – Christ our Savior

A. Jesus' Death and Descent to "Hell" (or the place of the dead)

1. As we saw already, Jesus' mission was to bear the weight of our sin on Himself, and so restore us to God.
2. When He died, His human body still hung on the cross, but His soul went to the souls of the dead, to point to them the newly opened door of Heaven.

3. In St. Peter's words, "The gospel was preached even to the dead" (I Peter 4:6), so that those who had not seen Christ, but had lived godly lives, might be saved.



Anastasis "Descent into Hades" Icon

B. Jesus' Resurrection

1. Then, on the third day, Christ rose again from the dead.
2. His resurrected body was filled with spiritual power (for instance, the way He passed through walls), but it was a true human body (which Jesus proved when He ate with His apostles). (Cf. John 20:19, Luke 24:42)
3. Over the centuries, skeptics have tried to attack the credibility of the resurrection, but the Resurrection still stands as the great proof of Christ's divinity:
 - a) *The story wasn't made up generations later* – Paul says there are, in his day, many living witnesses to the risen Christ (I Corinthians 15:6).
 - b) *The apostles didn't hallucinate* – even the Pharisees and Romans admitted the tomb was empty
 - c) *Jesus didn't fake His death* – if He had He would have eventually died anyway, instead of ascending on a cloud.
 - d) *The apostles didn't steal the body and lie* – most of them were martyred for their faith, and no one in history ever died for something they knew was a hoax.

C. The Paschal Mystery

1. Jesus truly died, and truly rose. This is called the Paschal Mystery.
2. By baptism, we enter this paschal mystery

Monday, February 1st, 2021

- a) And by God's grace, and our free cooperation, we enter the paschal mystery ever more deeply
- b) So that when our bodies die, it will be in union with Christ – and when our bodies rise, it will be to eternal life with God

II. Christ's Ascension -- Christ, our Intercessor

- A. Forty days after the Resurrection, Christ returned into Heaven, to be with His Father and reign in glory.
- B. There, He acts as our Intercessor
 - 1. That means that as our human representative before God, He pleads for us, on our behalf. He is on our side!
 - 2. As we said in the intro, it's as though Christ Himself is our defense attorney before the throne of God.
 - a) And since He's God and Man, He has a connection to both parties, and can continue His work of bringing both together
 - 3. Of course, even though Christ's followers aren't divine and human, we can also share Christ's work of praying to God on behalf of others. And, the closer we get to Christ, the more powerful our intercession becomes.
 - a) Which is why the prayers of Mary and the saints are the most powerful, because they're the closest to Christ!
- C. Also, although Jesus has gone up into Heaven, He will come again someday.
 - 1. We are again awaiting the coming of the Messiah – but this time He will come in glory and power, to manifest His perfect Reign over all things
 - 2. Until that time, we wait, and trust, and obey. We keep Christ's commandments, and we have faith that one day He himself will come again to set everything right once and for all.
 - a) There's an old saying that insanity means doing the same thing over and over again, but hoping for a different result.
 - b) But when God has told you to keep doing the same thing over and over again (prayer, confession, mass, virtue, acts of faith hope and charity, etc...), then it's not insanity – it's trust.
 - c) Because one day, things will be different. One day, everything will change. And those who have diligently followed Christ's instructions, day in and day out, will rejoice in triumph.

III. Christ, Our Judge

- A. The Church teaches that there will be two judgments

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1. A **particular judgment** at the end of each of our lives, and
 2. **The Last Judgment** at the end of human history
- B. In both cases, Christ Himself will be the Judge
1. This judgment will be very different than any judgment on earth
 - a) In an earthly court, the defendant already knows the truth, and the judge is the one who finds out about it
 - b) In the Heavenly court, the judge already knows the truth, and the defendant is the one who finds out about it
- C. At the Last Judgment, God's entire plan will be revealed.
1. Everything done and thought and said by everyone will be shown.
 2. All will be known, and the great beauty of God's magnificent scheme will finally be fully appreciated
 - a) Think of how wonderful it will be to watch God's home video collection with your parents, and your grandparents, and your brothers and sisters and your kids and grandkids – and God Himself!

HOW WE WILL PRAISE OUR CREATOR AND OUR REDEEMER, WHEN WE SEE HOW GOOD IS EVERYTHING THAT HE HAS ORCHESTRATED.

HOW MUCH WE WILL THANK OUR LOVING SAVIOR, OUR LOYAL INTERCESSOR, AND OUR UNSPEAKABLY GENEROUS JUDGE, FOR ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US!

Lent 2021

~~A self-improvement program~~ a path to holiness

Prayer

Jesus wants to change your family's heart during Lent through prayer! How can your family listen and speak to God?

- Do a simple family examine at the end of the day
- Pray a decade of the rosary
- Read the daily gospel together
- Attend or watch a daily mass
- Commit to 15 minutes of prayer time in the house



Fasting

It's so easy to fill ourselves up with the comforts of the world! How can your family fast together to deepen your hunger for God?

- Do not eat meat on an additional weekday
- Take the worst parking spot
- Don't buy anything extra or unnecessary
- Don't watch TV (or hulu, netflix etc)
- Commitment to a sit down family meal
- Turn off the music in the car
- Technology at the dinner table

Almsgiving

We are called to serve our neighbor, community and church! How can your family give together to deepen your love of other?

- Write or text a daily affirmation to someone as a family
- Make a thankful post it wall in the home
- Make a meal or dessert each week for someone
- Do a rice bowl together
- Pray a rosary for other's intentions

This list is not exhausted or limiting to your family!

Have a family meeting to decide what would be best for you.

If you want to commit to different fasts, consider making a Lent prayer board in the house for everyone to post up their fast and talk about it throughout Lent!

Let's grow in faith and love of God as a family and community this Lent!