

Funeral Masses have restrictions



Father John Dietzen

Question Corner

Q. Two years ago I was told we could not have a funeral Mass on Ash Wednesday. This year a funeral Mass was celebrated on that day. Has there been a change? (Texas)

A. Some slight changes have occurred in the past few years. According to regulations in the present Sacramentary (Missal), funeral Masses may not be celebrated on holy days of obligation, Holy Thursday, the Easter Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter. There is no prohibition for Ash Wednesday.

Similar rules govern Ritual Masses, connected with celebration of the sacraments or sacramentals (weddings, for example, and Masses with anointing of the sick or baptism). These are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, solemnities, days in the octave of Easter, All Souls Day, Ash Wednesday and during Holy Week (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 3372 and 3380).

Note that it is funeral or ritual Masses that are prohibited. Funeral ceremonies, weddings and other sacramental liturgies without Mass may be celebrated on these days, with due respect, of course, for their liturgical character.

Q. With all the theories today about UFOs and interspace travel, does the Catholic faith have anything to say about life on other planets? Could there be?

If there is intelligent life somewhere else, would that mean that Jesus Christ would need to die on every planet to save the people? (Wisconsin)

A. There's no way the Catholic Church would know any more than anyone else whether intelligent life exists on other galaxies or universes. It hasn't attempted to speculate on the subject, and there's no reason it should.

The spiritual condition of any conscious, intelligent life that might flourish elsewhere is even more of a mystery. Beginning with the possibility of a race of beings that might still be in some sort of original innocence (to use terminology we're familiar with), there's a whole rainbow of conceivable circumstances in which such creatures might live.

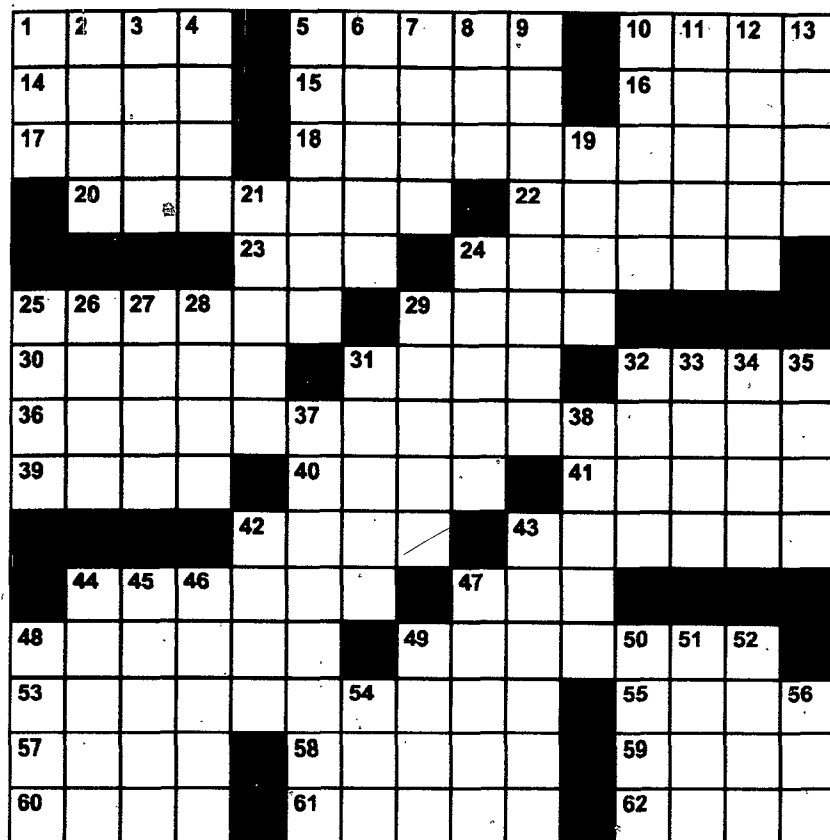
About the only sure claim we can make in such matters is that God's creative imagination and power are certainly not exhausted by the humanity and other creatures on this earth. Countless other life forms might exist with the ability to know

and love and relate to the Creator in a conscious way. What "salvation" might mean for these creatures we have no clue.

Considering the exuberant generosity with which God so lavishly showers life of all kinds on the world around us, one might suspect that this divine extravagance is not limited to our time and place. Any theory about whether or how that might happen, however, is pure speculation.

Specific teachings of the church about the saving grace of Jesus being necessary for salvation apply, as far as we can know, only to members of our human family. As I said, concerning the relationship God might have established between himself and creatures of another world, we cannot make even a respectable guess.

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Catholic Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 First man
- 5 Postage
- 10 Math. measure
- 14 Game maker
- 15 Chocolate drink
- 16 Comb. Form pertaining to Mars
- 17 Fruit
- 18 12th century council
- 20 Arid state
- 22 In being (Lt.)
- 23 Morsel
- 24 Honor
- 25 Labor org.
- 29 Sounds of disgust
- 30 Snoops
- 31 Concern
- 32 Venerable English Church historian
- 36 Feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit
- 39 Where Jacques puts his beret
- 40 "... the _____ I swore to your father Abraham." (Gn 26:3)
- 41 "Common Sense" author
- 42 Fr. miss
- 43 Treats with malice
- 44 Ethics
- 47 "Bye, Bye Miss American _____"
- 48 Mathematical term
- 49 Sodium _____
- 53 Mission City on the El Camino Real
- 55 Depend
- 57 It's _____ to tell a lie

DOWN

- 1 Cleopatra's instrument of choice
- 2 Act
- 3 Sarah's maid (Duoay variation)
- 4 Mother of Jesus
- 5 Hard (comb.)
- 6 A drink to your health
- 7 NT book
- 8 One of the Three Stooges
- 9 Local churches
- 10 Indian royalty
- 11 "Awake, O sleeper, _____ from the dead." (Eph 5:14)
- 12 Belief in an indifferent God
- 13 Parisian silk
- 19 Picnic intruders
- 21 "... up in the sky came a _____ like a strong driving wind and it filled the entire house ..." (Acts 2:2)
- 24 "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the _____ ..." (Gn 1:1)
- 25 Entry in date bk.
- 26 "... and the truth will set you _____" (Jn 8:32)
- 27 Dryer build-up
- 28 Group of badgers
- 29 What you should do to the turkey
- 31 What you need for the barbecue
- 32 _____ B'rith
- 33 Revise
- 34 Great _____
- 35 Orbs
- 37 Loyola in Maryland and Providence in Rhode Island are both Catholic _____
- 38 The _____ Room
- 42 Nobel Prize winner, Thomas _____
- 43 Perches
- 44 Type of lodge
- 45 Actor _____ Davis
- 46 Smiling.
- 47 Sculpture of Jesus and Mary
- 48 Shellfish
- 49 Geog. line of demarcation
- 50 Modern-day land of the Biblical Tigris-Euphrates Valley
- 51 Paul was a _____ maker by trade
- 52 "_____ , lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34)
- 54 The Christian _____
- 56 Bark

Answers on page 5 (No. 36)

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