

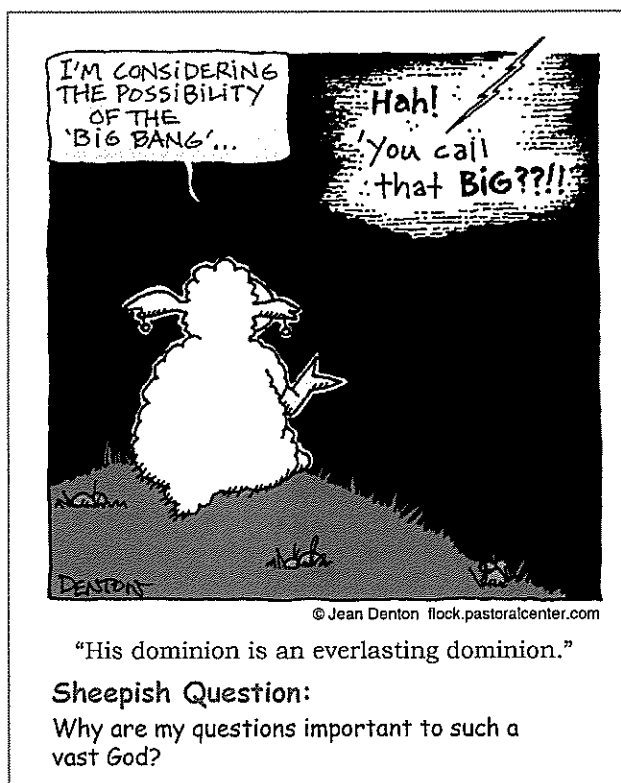
Take the Long View

This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Daniel 7:13-14 - Daniel's vision of one like the Son of man
- ▶ Revelation 1:5-8 - Praise to Jesus Christ
- ▶ John 18:33b-37 - The blood and water

On the last Sunday of the church year, just before we begin Advent, we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. The readings remind us that there is purpose in our lives that moves in the direction of God's Kingdom, despite the disturbing reality of hatred, violence, natural disasters, illness, and death. Martin Luther King Jr. put it this way: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

This feast reminds us to look beyond the tragedy and suffering of our lives with the hope that there is more to life than the eye can see. Jesus points to this in his exchange with Pontius Pilate when Pilate puts him on trial before sentencing him to death. The chief priests handed Jesus over, accusing him of claiming to be the King of the Jews and a threat to the ruling Roman empire. Jesus won't deny that he is a king, but he responds that his kingdom "does not belong to this world."



As Christians, the point isn't that we should passively endure violence, torture, and suffering in this life just because we are waiting for the next life. In fact, Jesus did everything he could to relieve the physical, emotional, and mental pain of those he met during his lifetime. The point is, as humans we cannot escape some pain because we live in an imperfect world. But while we must suffer, we can also hold out hope for a kingdom we can't yet see where Christ is our leader and Christ will rule over a realm of truth, peace, and love.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Is the afterlife something you think about? Why or why not? How do you think of it?
- 2 Have you experienced any periods in your life when the Christian concept of another kingdom awaiting you was comforting? How so?

Word of the Week • Copyright © 2018 Ann Naffziger. Published by the Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com. All rights reserved.