

Dear Padre,
I'm in the OCIA program. My wife and I were married civilly. She goes to a non-denominational church but is not baptized. Someone said we would have to get our marriage "convalidated." Why? And what does that mean?

Convalidation is a legal term, but it can also be understood as good pastoral practice and even more as a wise spiritual choice. Basically, from a legal point of reference, your marriage took place outside of the canonical structure of the Church. It needs to be "regularized" and "documented" for you to move forward. Because your wife is not baptized, it cannot be a sacramental marriage, which requires baptism, but it can be made valid and recorded in official Church documentation. Such documentation is helpful, particularly if you have children and intend to raise them as Catholic. Also, if your wife ever decides to become a baptized Catholic, your marriage would automatically become a sacramental marriage when she is baptized. Nothing more is required of you. All in all, it is a good decision and a positive step in your spiritual journey. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV
God speaks to us.... [T]he first attitude to cultivate is listening, so that the divine Word may penetrate our minds and our hearts; at the same time, we are required to speak with God, not to communicate to him what he already knows, but to reveal ourselves to ourselves. Hence the need for prayer, in which we are called to live and to cultivate friendship with the Lord.

**GENERAL AUDIENCE,
ROME, JANUARY 14,
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BOGDAN SONJACHNYI / SHUTTERSTOCK

Do you have a question for the Padre?		
Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about <i>Dear Padre</i> .		
Monday July 27 Weekday Jer 13:1–11 Mt 13:31–35	Thursday July 30 Weekday Jer 18:1–6 Mt 13:47–53	Saturday August 1 St. Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop and Doctor of the Church Jer 26:11–16, 24 Mt 14:1–12
Tuesday July 28 Weekday Jer 14:17–22 Mt 13:36–43	Friday July 31 St. Ignatius of Loyola, Priest Jer 26:1–9 Mt 13:54–58	Sunday August 2 Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Is 55:1–3 Rom 8:35, 37–39 Mt 14:13–21
Wednesday July 29 Sts. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus Jer 15:10, 16–21 Jn 11:19–27 or Lk 10:38–42		



[Solomon said to the Lord,]
“Give your servant, therefore,
a listening heart to judge your
people and to distinguish
between good and evil.”

1 KINGS 3:9

What Image of the Kingdom Will You Serve Up?

ANN M. GARRIDO

Jesus’ favorite thing to talk about was a mystery he called the kingdom of God, referred to in the Gospel of Matthew as the kingdom of heaven. He was not the first to speak of it. The prophets before him spoke often of God’s dream for the world. They wanted all to know what it would look like when God reigns here on earth as God already reigns in the heavens. But Jesus added to that teaching by offering vivid new images of what God’s reign is like. Matthew 13 is filled with such snapshots. The kingdom of heaven will be like a mustard seed, a pearl, a measure of leaven, a hidden treasure. It will be like a sower casting out seed, a wheat harvest, a net that catches many fish.

At the end of this litany, however, Jesus offers an image of what he expects of those who have received his teaching about the Kingdom. They are to be like “the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old” (Matthew 13:52). It sounds as if Jesus’ disciples are to act like hosts of a banquet, setting the table with stories from across time to feed their guests with whatever words and images would best help them grasp the mystery of this kingdom. They are to continue Jesus’ work of developing new ways to illumine a mystery that is in the end too great for words. ●



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Reflect

What image of God’s kingdom would you offer people of the twenty-first century?