

February Queen's Messenger Article for 2016

Deacon Mike's Corner

What is the Catholic Church's teaching about people in the Old Testament living to be hundreds of years old, even to their 900's?

The Church does not have a teaching regarding whether these ages are to be taken literally or not. The Church will say that whatever Scripture says is inerrant but must be understood in terms of the rules of literature that were in use at the time.

It is known that in many ancient cultures fantastically large ages were assigned to famous forbearers, so that could be an indication that the ages are to be taken as symbolic of the greatness and venerability of the individuals.

However, this is not something the Church has taught. God can keep people alive as long as he wants. If he wants someone to live to be 900, he can keep him alive that long.

Remember that these storied long lives were at a time in which there were relatively few people living on the earth. There might have been a need to allow long lives in order to populate the earth and environmentally they might have lived in better conditions in a more rural setting where disease was not as common etc.

Does the number 666 have any true ties to the Antichrist or Satan?

In many ancient languages, including Hebrew and Aramaic, the alphabet doubled for numbers. The most likely interpretation of the 666 reference in scripture is the numeric value of the letters in the name of the Emperor Nero Caesar, who instituted the first sustained persecution of the Church in the first century and under whom both Peter and Paul were executed.

Using this theory, here is how the 666 is derived: Nero Caesar in ancient Hebrew is NRW NQSR (there were no vowels in ancient Hebrew). N=50, R=200, W=6, N=50, Q=100, S=60, R=200. The sum of the numeric values is 666!!!!

Who was St. Valentine and how did his feast day of Feb 14 come to be regarded as a day for romance?

Two Valentines are listed in the Roman Martyrology for February 14th. The first was a Roman priest who reportedly was martyred on the Flaminian Way during the reign of the Emperor Claudius. The other Valentine was a third century bishop of Terni who was martyred in Rome but whose relics were sent back to his home see. Some claim there has been confusion and that the two Valentines are really one.

The reason the feast day has come to be associated with romance has nothing to do with the two saints, neither of whom had a clear connection to lovers or courtship. The association has to do with the belief, dating at least from the time of Chaucer, that birds pair up on February 14th. This belief about biology became associated with the feast day, and eventually the thought of courtship and romance came to dominate. In any event, the Church certainly does not teach that Valentine's Day should be celebrated in connection with romance!!!

JMJ