

Council of Trent would spell out orthodoxy on these issues in uncompromising terms. On original sin and the need for infant baptism it stated: *"If any one denies, that infants....are to be baptized; or says that they are baptized indeed for the remission of sins, but that they derive nothing of original sin from Adam,- let him be anathema."* On the role of grace in our salvation: *"If any one saith, that man may be justified before God by his own works, whether done through the teaching of human nature, or that of the law, without the grace of God through Jesus Christ; let him be anathema."* Salvation begins with grace which calls us to repent; it cannot be 'earned', proceeding as it does uniquely from God's love and mercy. Grace does not impinge upon our free will, since we can choose to accept it and turn to God, or reject it and remain sinful.

Pelagius himself was excommunicated in 418 AD, after which little, if anything is known of him. There is a strand of modern theology which is less critical of him. It may be fair to say that, although his central doctrine was false, he propounded it with the motive of improving Christian moral behaviour.

-Stephen S

Entrance antiphon: How worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and divinity, and wisdom and strength and honour. To him belong glory and power for ever and ever.

Reading: Ezekiel 34: 11-12, 15-178

Responsorial Psalm: 22: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. /R

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15: 20-26, 28

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew: 25: 31-46

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: The Lord sits as King for ever. The Lord will bless his people with peace.



Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe Cycle A, 2023

Weekly Reflection: Heresies 4: Pelagianism: Pelagius was a 4th-5th century scholar, fluent in Latin and Greek and a theologian. He is thought to have originated from Celtic Britain,

then moved to Rome in about 380 AD and, after Rome's invasion by Alaric in 410 AD, to Carthage. In his early years of activity in Rome his writings were praised by clerics and he led an austere life. St Augustine referred to him as a holy man. However, it became progressively clearer that Pelagius' teachings were far from orthodox. His central thesis was that human nature was essentially good. He rejected the fall of man and original sin, maintaining that they permitted intrinsic human weakness to be an excuse for sin. His teaching was that being essentially good, man had a free choice between doing good or evil and, by choosing the former, he would be redeemed. It can be seen that there is a superficial attraction in this and Pelagius himself believed that it led to improvement in the moral conduct of Christians.

Nevertheless, the consequences of the false doctrine were, in summary (i) it denied the teaching on original sin, Pelagius asserting that Adam's sin was a bad example, the following of which was responsible for the subsequent universality of sin, (ii) therefore infant baptism was erroneous, (iii) man's salvation could be achieved by his own will, by choosing right over wrong, by faith and good works, without the need for divine grace, (iv) Christ's passion was not in itself redemptive of mankind, but was limited to an instructive example by which Jesus demonstrated true goodness to counterbalance the wicked example of Adam. The controversy raised by Pelagius assisted the early Church in developing and asserting the doctrine of Christian grace which the Catholic Encyclopaedia describes as "vague and undefined" before that time. It was St Augustine and others who were primarily responsible for introducing greater clarity on grace and original sin. In due course the