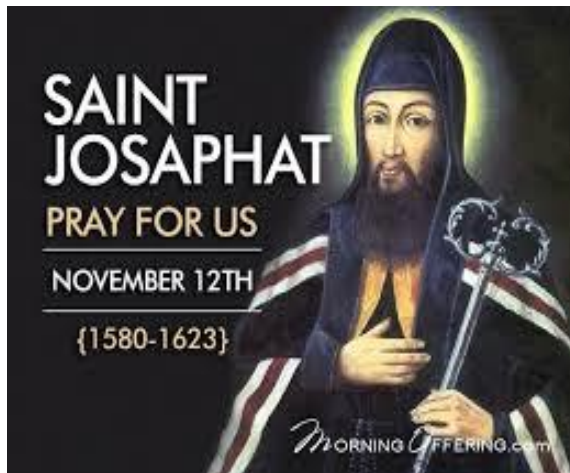


WEEK 32 THURSDAY



Josaphat was born in Ukraine but grew to manhood working a trade in Vilnius, Lithuania. In his late teens, he felt called to be a monk, so he rejected an offer of marriage and joined a monastery in Vilnius in 1604.

“For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you.” Luke 17: 20-25

In today’s Gospel passage, Jesus describes the phrases “*the Kingdom of God*” and “*the Son of Man*”. The meanings of both are elusive, and that’s Jesus’ point. In the Pharisees, who ask “*when the Kingdom of God would come*”, we can see many in our own day who exert great effort in predicting and spreading news of the time of this coming. Jesus splashes cold water on them all: this coming “*cannot be observed, and no one will announce, ‘Look, here it is’*”. Along the same line, Jesus soberly explains to the Pharisees that while they “*will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man,*” they “*will not see it.*” However, in the midst of this sobering up, Jesus declares something provocative, if not confusing. “*For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you.*” So while the coming of the Kingdom “*cannot be observed,*” it already “*is among you.*” How are we to understand what seems on the surface like a contradiction? Perhaps such understanding ought only be sought by the Pharisees of old. Perhaps our part is simply to live within the Kingdom of God, under the shepherding of the Son of Man.

St. Josaphat Kuntsevych was a holy monk and later became bishop of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

At that time the Christian faithful were divided between those who obeyed the Pope and were in communion with him and those who followed the Eastern Orthodox communion with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. By that time there was an incredible mutual distrust which led to the increasingly distant and hostile relationship between the two sides. It was a divided kingdom of God. Consequently, the faithful also ended up becoming ever more divided and hostile against each other. Saint Josaphat, tirelessly worked for the unity of Christians and tried to bring reconciliation between the two sides which cost him his life attempting to bring East and West together.