

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## APOSTASY’S IRREVERENCE

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**T**his past week we have seen the world and its media focus upon the funeral of Pope John Paul II. We have heard praise for a man in terms of one being committed to faith and manifesting Christ’s love to the world. “We can be sure”, his spokesman said that he is at the Father’s window looking down on us from Heaven. Where in God’s Word would you assure one that such an event is “surely” taking place? In reality, this popular man has been head of an apostate church that further manifests irreverence for the Christ she and her Pope are supposed to honor.

Pope John Paul II now awaits the Judgment of Christ (*John 5:22*). He will stand before the Judgment seat of Christ to answer why he encouraged followers to call him “Father” when Jesus plainly forbids such recognition. In the context of religious titles, Jesus commands, “*and call no man your father on earth: for one is your Father, even He who is in Heaven*” (*Matthew 23:9*). This apostasy from the very words of Christ probably was not even given a second thought by the 4 million people who attended

his funeral, or the 1.1 billion Catholics who call him “Pope” or “Father. Yet, put Christ’s words and this Catholic practice together, would it not be considered irreverent for those who love and honor Christ?

Irreverence for Christ is at the very heart of having a Pope in the first place. Jesus did not promise to build his church on Peter, (*Petros—stone*), but on the rock (*Petra—foundation rock*), the confession that Peter made: Jesus “*is the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (*Matthew 16:18*). Only in the imagination of Catholic dogma is the need for Christ to have a single visible head of the whole church on earth, make Peter the first “Pope”, and claim the “Pope” as the successor of Peter. Is it not irreverent to Christ to assume that his headship needs a visible representative on earth, and ignore the fact of his giving binding and loosing authority upon all the apostles, not just Peter (*Matthew 18:18, John 20:23*)?

On April 18, a conclave of Cardinals will meet in secret in the Vatican to choose a new “Pope”. 117 Cardinals of the church will cast ballots supposedly under the

guidance of the Holy Spirit. But when one church leader was asked as who might be the next Pope, he said he did not know, but we can be sure that it will not be an American. How could one be so sure that God, would not guide church leaders to choose an American? The answer lies in the fact that the choosing of a Pope, has more to do with geography, and Catholic population concentrations than in being guided by God. How irreverent to seek God’s guidance, but limit His choices!

When the new Pope is chosen, he will be called, “*Most Reverent Lord*” as he makes known the name he will called as Pope. In Scripture, only God is called “*reverend*” (*Psalms 111:9*). Only God is to be worshipped (*Revelation 22:9*). Not even Peter, supposedly Catholicism’s first Pope, received worship (*Acts 10:25-26*).

The Cardinals who cast a ballot for a new Pope, will acknowledge that they do so “*before the Lord who will be my Judge*”. Time has long passed for them to reverence the standard for Judgment (*John 12:48*).