



## RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY PARISH

### Land Stewardship Committee

## Cosmic Purpose

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the launch of the world's farthest and longest-lived spacecraft, NASA's Voyager 1 and 2. (September 1977) Four decades ago, they embarked on an ambitious mission to explore the giant outer planets, the two outermost of which had never been visited. And since completing their flybys of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune in 1989, they have been journeying toward the farthest reaches of our solar system – where no spacecraft has been before. These two intrepid spacecraft continue to return data to NASA daily, offering a window into the mysterious outer realms of our solar system and beyond.

And they do that with less power than your refrigerator light has.

And in all that time they have traveled over 13 billion miles and companion Voyager Two is about to go into interstellar space—beyond our solar system.

Even with 45 years of space flight behind them, the Voyagers are expected to continue returning valuable data until about 2025. And here is the amazing news—neither space craft has collided with anything!

Simplicio, the Aristotelian, once argued to Salviati, Galileo's spokesman, in the *Dialogue Concerning Two Chief World Systems*, "If Copernicus was right about the earth's motion around the sun, a parallax shift ought to be noticeable in the relative positions of the stars. Yet none is seen. The alternative is that the stars are at an enormous distance from us. But then," Simplicio asks, "to what purpose are these great spaces? Are they not "superfluous and vain?"

To which Salviati replies that "God may well have other plans in mind besides the care of the human race. And, in any event, "it is brash for our feebleness to attempt to judge the reasons for God's actions."

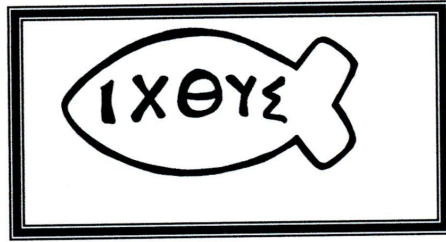
† GOOD ADVICE, EH? †

Saint Augustine gained a respect for the diversity of God's creatures. According to his theocentric aesthetic, other creatures do not exist solely to serve humans but rather to glorify God. Heretics, he objects in the *City of God*, "do not consider how admirable these things are in their own places, how excellent in their own natures, how beautifully adjusted to the rest of creation and how much grace they contribute to the universe by their own contributions, as to a commonwealth."

RESURRECTION

## Symbolism of the Fish

The fish was among the earliest symbols employed by the primitive Christians. It came in use because the fish was already recognized in pagan art as a purely decorative sign. During the period of Roman Persecution of Christians the cross was much too obvious so the more vague reference to the fish was used as an introduction, password, or "security pass".



The earliest literary reference to the symbolic fish is made by Clement of Alexandria (born 150 AD). He suggested that Christian seals have either a dove or fish engraved upon them. Clement did not consider it necessary to give any reason for this recommendation, from which it may be safely inferred that the meaning of both symbols was unnecessary. Indeed, from monumental sources we know that the symbolic fish was familiar to Christians long before the famous Alexandrian was born; in such Roman monuments as the Capella Greca and the Sacrament Chapels of the catacomb of St. Callistus, the fish was depicted as a symbol in the first decades of the second century.

It is not certain where the fish symbol originated, but the miracle of the loaves and fishes and morning meal cooked by Jesus after his resurrection may have been the link. (John 21:9). But there is also another interesting aspect of the fish having to do with acrostics. Acrostic is a literary tool where the letters from a line or poem are first letters for other words. The initial letters of five Greek words forming the word for fish (Ichthys, rendered i-ch-th-y-s), briefly but clearly described the character of Christ and His claim to the worship of believers: **I**esous **C**hristos **T**heou **Y**iois **S**oter, i.e. Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. This formula originated in the City of Alexandria and was intended as a protest against the pagan apotheosis of the Roman Emperor Domitian (81-96) who claimed on coinage that he was "Theou Yios" (Son of God). If there was any doubt as to the symbolism and high importance of the reference, it ended with the writings of Tertullian who called Christians believers in the mystic Ichthys — "little fishes". In his work titled *De baptismo*, he said "We, little fishes, after the image of our Ichthys, Jesus Christ, are born in the water". In the early Church, the fish symbol was quite frequently found associated with such other symbols as the dove, the anchor, and the monogram of Christ. After the fourth century the symbolism of the fish gradually disappeared to be replaced by the cross.

### —EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY—

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