

# Preserving Our Christian Faith for the Next Generation

*Rise & Shine, September 23<sup>rd</sup>*

## **Joshua 4:6-7**

*... so that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, "What do those stones mean to you?" then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever. (For context, read 4:1-7.)*

## **Matthew 6:19-20**

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. (For context, read 6:19-21.)*

**Questions:** How can we help new generations feel that the history of our faith is important for their lives today? What “artifacts” of the Church are we in danger of losing?

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*In the news*

## **Fire in Brazil Museum Results in Massive Loss of Irreplaceable Artifacts**

On September 2, a fire broke out at the Palace of Saint Christopher in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which housed the 200-year-old National Museum of Brazil. The museum held more than 20 million items spanning 11,000 years of world history, of which an estimated 90 percent were lost. President of Brazil Michel Temer deemed the fire an "incalculable" loss of the country's historical and cultural heritage.

Although researchers have yet to have full access to the burned and collapsed three-floor structure, which had been fully engulfed in flames, it is believed that most items in the collection could not have survived. Among the items presumed lost are:

- frescoes from Pompeii.
- hundreds of Egyptian artifacts, including a 2,700-year-old painted sarcophagus.

- art and ceramics from indigenous Brazilian cultures, some of whose populations number only in the thousands.
- audio recordings of indigenous languages, some of which are no longer spoken.
- 1,800 South American artifacts that dated back to pre-colonial times, including urns, statues and weapons.
- a Chilean mummy that was at least 3,500 years old.
- fossils, from crocodile relatives like *Pepesuchus* to one of the oldest relatives of today's scorpions.
- some of the oldest human remains in the Americas including the 11,500-year-old skull and pelvis of a woman who was unearthed in 1975 and nicknamed Luzia.

The building itself had historic value, having been the residence of the Portuguese Royal Family and later of the Brazilian Imperial Family until 1889, when the country became a republic.

The museum had long been underfunded and suffering from deferred maintenance. It had no fire suppression system. And when firefighters arrived, they found the two hydrants nearest the building to be lacking water and thus had to truck water in from a lake.

Brazilian environmentalist and politician Marina Silva called the fire "a lobotomy of the Brazilian memory." Commenting on the loss, Michael Novacek, a paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, said that museums maintain "our tangible record of life on earth." A great collection, he said, is like new terrain to explore, a place of rediscovery, where new studies of old objects yield new truths.

Brazil's place of rediscovery, however, is mostly gone forever, most observers say.

### **Prayer for the Church (BCP p.816)**

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth, with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. *Amen.*