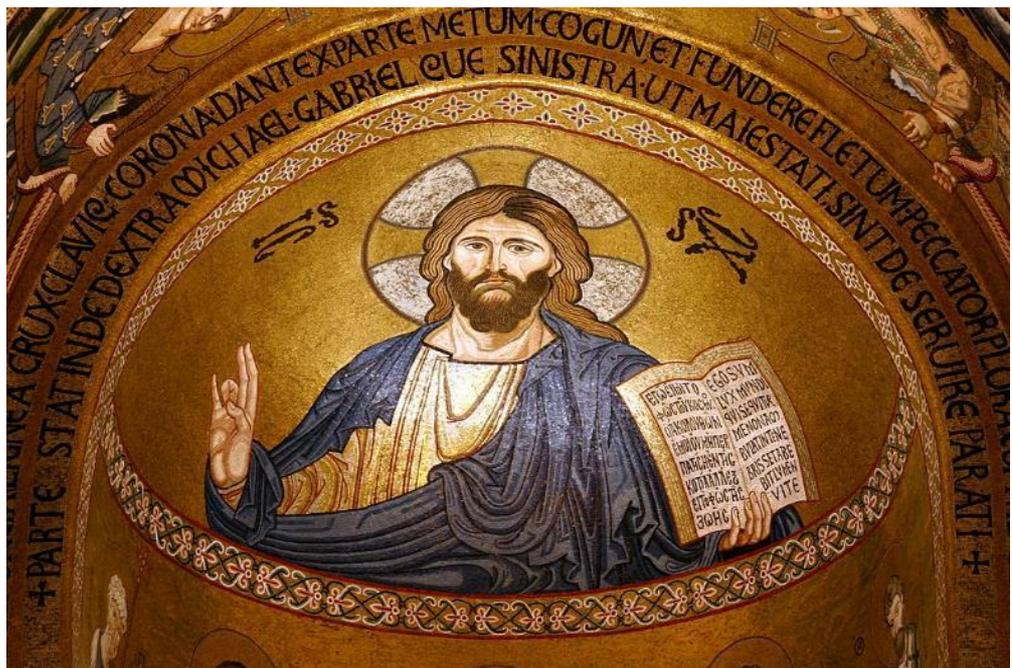
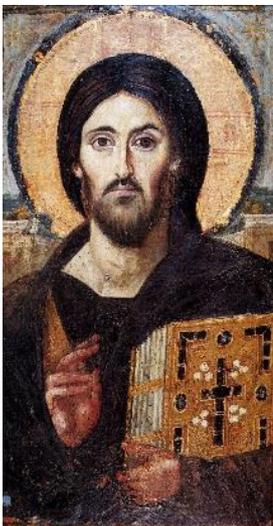


Christ the King 22nd November

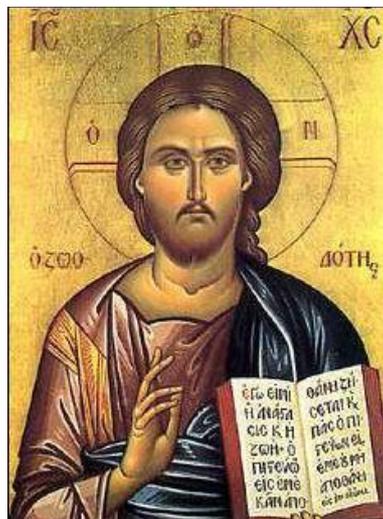
The feast of Christ the King was instituted very recently (1925, and, from 1969 on the last Sunday of Ordinary Time) but draws on numerous scriptural references to Christ (ie "The Anointed One, a kingly designation) as a king, indeed "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (1 Timothy 6:14-15 and Revelation 17:14) the phrase so memorably repeated by the choir in Handel's *Messiah*. Recently, the summation "Jesus is Lord, and Caesar is not" has been frequently used to emphasize the authority of Christ over all earthly rule.

However, the image of Christ as ruler has a very long history in Christian art. One of the very earliest known icons of Christ, from St Catherine's Monastery on Mt Sinai, (6th c) (left) is a Pantokrater type, that is, Christ as the Almighty – literally "All-Ruler"



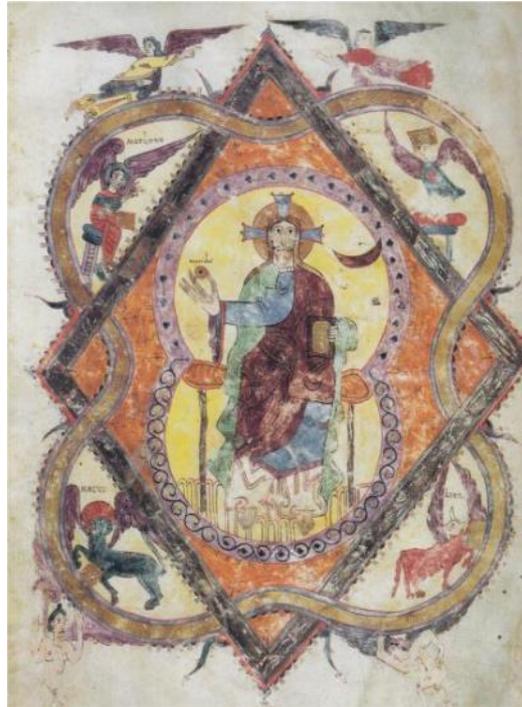
In evolved Byzantine iconography the Pantokrator is placed in the half dome apse behind the altar, on a huge scale, dominating the space, as in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo on the right (1140s).

The letters of the Greek "Christos" often appear on each side, as above, but the halo may also include letters standing for "He Who Is" (as in the Name given to Moses) as in the modern icon below. The hand gesture is either of blessing, or of teaching.

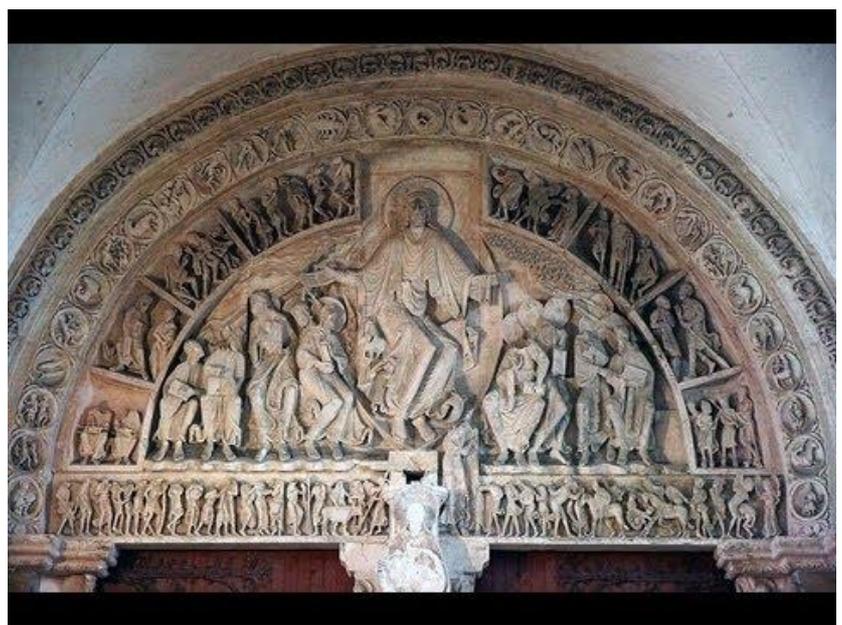
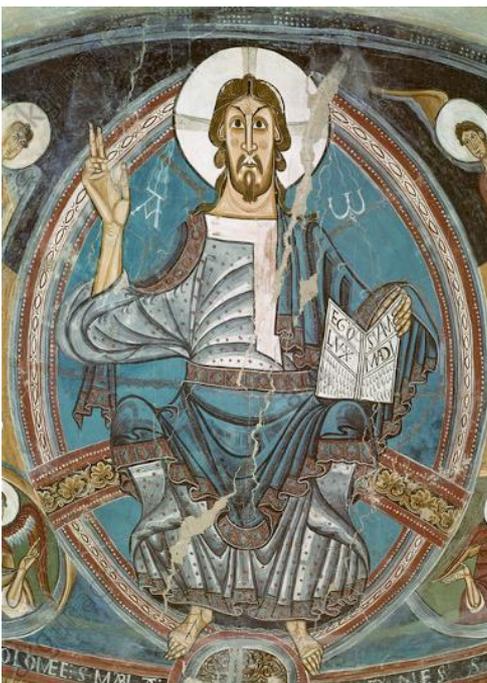


In the West a comparable image is known as the Maiestas (Majesty) which evolved with a different iconography.

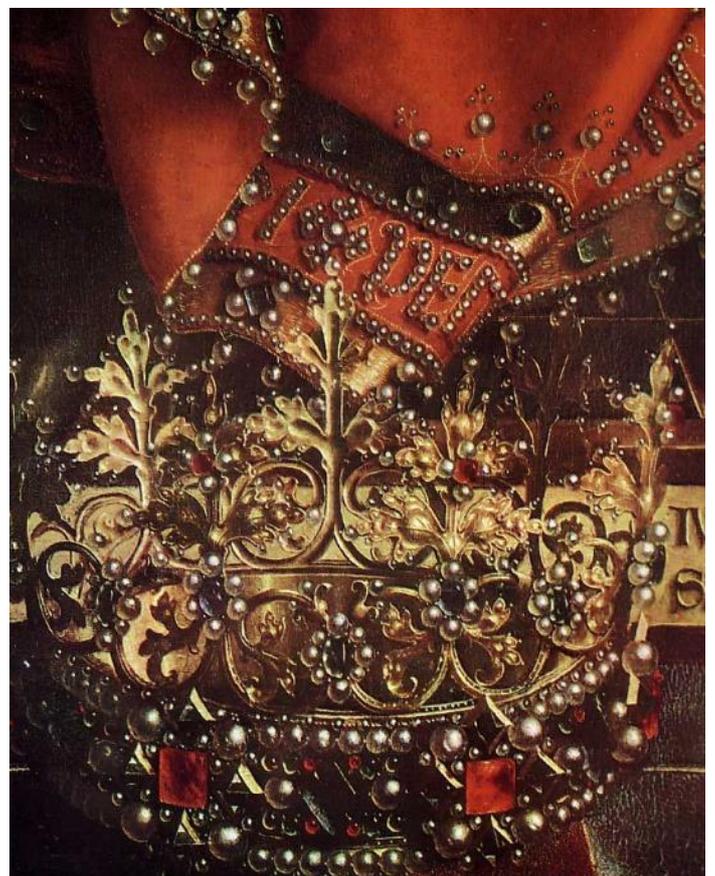
Early examples, like this one from the Carolingian Gospels of Ende (c 975) often show Christ with cosmic symbols, and surrounded by the Four Evangelists, here in the form of their symbols.



The Maiestas is also placed in a dominant position in the church, either painted inside, as in this example from San Clemente, Tahull, Spain (c 1190), or sculpted on the entry door tympanum, where it is usually associated with the Last Judgement, as at Vezelay (1120-1132).



Perhaps the apotheosis of this image is that painted by Jan van Eyck in his masterpiece, the Ghent Altar (1432) where it occupies the top central position. The triple headpiece denotes Christ's identity as Prophet, Priest and King. The crown, significantly at His feet, is an extraordinary piece of oil painting, the medium van Eyck developed to an unprecedented degree. The image may in fact represent both Father and Son.



St Cecilia 22nd November

The martyr Cecilia has been honoured in the church from the Early Christian period, with the founding of the church of St Cecilia in Trastevere in the third century. According to one account she was killed around 230. The legend recounts that when she was being forcibly married to a Roman nobleman "she sang to the Lord in her heart"; this is the origin of her association with music, which has inspired many musical compositions.



Orazio Gentileschi and Giovanni Lanfranco 1617-1627 – St Cecilia with an angel

In the apse mosaic of the church (9th c) Cecilia (in gold) and her husband, whom she converted to Christianity, are shown with St Peter, in the robes of wealthy Romans, and carrying their martyrs crowns.





Cecilia was buried in the Catacomb of Callixtus, and her body later transferred to the church, where it was rediscovered in 1599. Stefano Maderno made a sculpture, affirming that this was how the body appeared; it is now in the church, and a copy is placed in the Catacomb.

St Clement of Rome 23rd November

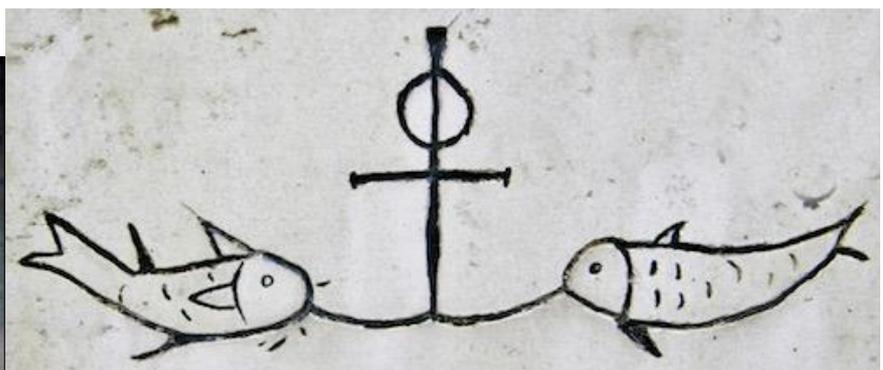
Clement was either the second or third Bishop of Rome from 88 to 99; according to some accounts he was ordained by St Peter. His Epistle to the Corinthians, written around 96, is a valuable early document of the Church, including testimony about Peter and Paul.

He was martyred, but the earliest accounts of his life are from the 4th century. They relate that he was killed by being thrown into the sea with an anchor around his neck. Interestingly, an anchor was a symbol used by early Christian groups to reference their faith, appearing frequently in grave inscriptions in the Catacombs.

Hebrews 6

19 We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Here is a 4th c example from the Catacomb of Priscilla, and, combined with the fish, the letters of which in Greek (Ichthus) spell out the initial letters of "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour" from the Catacomb of Domitilla.





This initial letter showing the martyrdom from the 15th c Breviary of Martin of Aragon shows the anchor as a stone, a typical form also for early shipping.

Seven centuries after his death the "Apostles to the Slavs" SS Cyril and Methodius, miraculously discovered the fragments of St Clement's body, and brought them to Rome in 868 and buried them in San Clemente, a church erected in the 3rd c over what was believed to have been the site of the bishop's house, as shown in the 11th c fresco from San Clemente below.

