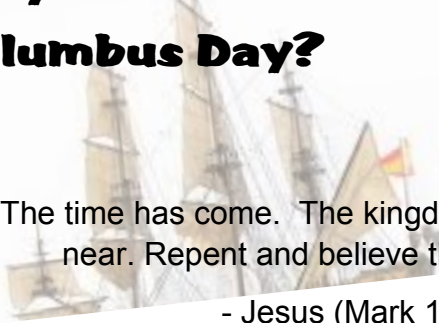


Why all this fuss about Columbus Day?



“The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

- Jesus (Mark 1:15)

Because repentance is about turning around and valuing what God values, the process of repentance will often affect the way we see or understand ourselves. In this situation, our church leaders are choosing to invite all who will hear to reconsider the way history is told. Turning from the celebration of Columbus as a brave explorer in whom we see ourselves to an active rejection of his (our?) cruelty and greed requires an intense trust in the grace of God and a deep desire to pursue truth.

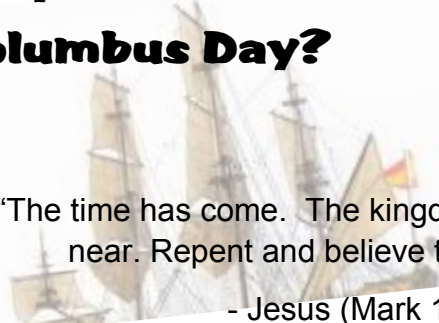
Here are some quotes that may be helpful in the search for truth:



"these people are very simple as regards the use of arms, as your Highnesses will see ... with fifty men they can all be subjugated and made to do what is required of them."

Journal of Christopher Columbus

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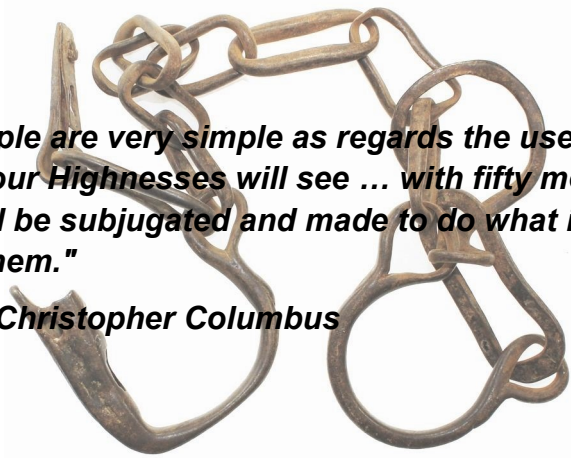


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A drawing by one of Columbus' contemporaries depicting a man's hand being chopped off. Columbus ordered this punishment for all who were not able to bring a weekly quota of gold to him.

“Christians, with their horses and swords and pikes began to carry out massacres and strange cruelties against them. They attacked the towns and spared neither the children nor the aged nor pregnant women nor women in childbed, not only stabbing them and dismembering them but cutting them to pieces as if dealing with sheep in the slaughter house. ... After the wars and the killings had ended, when usually there survived only some boys, some women, and children, these survivors were distributed among the Christians to be slaves. ” Eye witness Bartolome de Las Casas

Ultimately, the role of the Christian church will be to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations (Luke 24:47). Jesus calls us to lead the world by example and service. When we publically ask God's forgiveness for the way we have celebrated a legacy of domination and enslavement, we prepare ourselves for the task announcing a new age in which human beings are free to love and be loved as God desires.



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