Wagga Parish Serving: Ashmont, Collingullie, Glenfield, Lloyd, and San Isidore

The West Wagga Wag

Issue 201 December 2019

Coming Events

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Trinity

- 6 to 7am daily;

The Holy Family

- overnight from 9pm Friday through to 7am Saturdays

Monthly Cuppa, after 9am Mass on last Sunday of the month.

Saint Francis Xavier Tue 3

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mon 9

Our Lady of Guadalupe
Saint Lucy
Christmas Day!
Thu 12
Saint Stephen
Thu 26
Saint John, Apostle
The Holy Innocents
Thu 28



Sun 29

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The date for submissions for the next Wag is: **Wednesday Jan 1st.**

Come to Jesus this December!

Advent is a special time for thinking – thinking about how Jesus has and is and will come to us, and about how we are called to come to Him. It is also a time for decisions and actions.

Here are some ways to help come to Jesus this December:



- visit TheChosen.TV
- Invite someone to come with you to Come to Bethlehem
- Sacrament of Confession at the usual times and also FRI 20 Dec 7.30pm and SAT 21 Dec 11am;
- Christmas Mass:

Vigil - Holy Trinity 6.45pm, Midnight Mass 12am

Christmas Day - San Isidore Church 8am; Holy Trinity 9am; Collingullie Church 9.30am;

Home of Compassion 10.30am; Holy Trinity 5.30pm

Come to Bethlehem 2019



Volunteers Most Welcome & Needed

Please consider giving a little of your time on any of the following occasions:

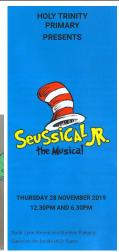
- * Set up Thurs 19-Sat 21 Dec from 9.30am (lunch provided)
- * Acting Sun 22 to Tue 24 Dec, 8 – 9.45pm
 - * Packup Thur Dec 26 from 9am (lunch provided)

Many thanks to all who generously assist.

Holy Trinity PS Musical for 2019

was held last Thursday. Congratulations to everyone, especially Directors Nicole Beard and Samantha Wynne, and the brilliant set work of Juanita McLauchlan.





PASTOR'S PAGE - PUT OUT THE "WELCOME" MAT FOR JESUS

Happy Advent! We are preparing for Christmas, but did you know it is Christmas in our hearts every time we receive Holy Communion (if only we realised this!) and every time we say "Yes" to Jesus in any day of the year? Jesus is longing to come to you, but only if you invite Him. I want to share with you some ideas about how to make Him welcome.

In one of the Psalms we are taught to pray, "O gates lift high your heads, grow higher, ancient doors; let Him enter, the King of Glory!" In ancient times, cities would honour the king and declare their willingness have him rule them by removing the draw-bridge and gates or whatever way they would keep the enemy away. In a home equivalent, this is like putting out the "Welcome" mat. It's good to welcome our neighbours and those in need, but even more we should welcome Our Lord Jesus.

He went throughout Israel visiting villages and also sent out disciples ahead of Him to prepare for His visits. He instructed them that if any town did not make them welcome, they were to shake the dust off their feet and leave. The towns which did welcome Him and His disciples were blessed.

He was in the world, and the world came to be through Him, but the world did not know Him. He came to what was His own, but His own people did not accept Him. But to those who did accept Him He gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. (John 1:10-112)

If we want to meet Jesus more, to be blessed by Him, we need to take active steps to make Him welcome.

We do this firstly by prayer. Put out the welcome mat at the beginning of the day by our morning prayers. These can be simple, and don't have to take long; but just as breakfast is said to be the most important meal of the day, even more can our morning prayers be the most important of the day. They are like sunshine, full of hope (no matter what happened the day before), welcoming the new day as a gift from God, asking to be equipped to fulfil our mission, putting on the armour of Faith, asking God for the wisdom to live this day well for His glory and the salvation of souls.



After meeting Jesus along the road to Emmaus, two disciples said to Him, "Stay with us". We can have Him stay with us during the day simply by remembering that we belong to Him and He to us, through our Baptism. We are part of His Body. And knowing that He is aware of our every thought, we can live in His presence, offering up to Him whatever we are doing at any given moment, and now and then having an informal conversation with Him. We can include little prayers which are full of meaning such as "Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy kingdom come", or the Advent Prayer, "Come Lord Jesus". This idea of not keeping Jesus just to Mass and formal prayer times can

seem radical, but those who try it will find it is really natural for those who have been given supernatural life in baptism. As St John Paul said, "Do not be afraid to open the door to Jesus". It will make us wiser, calmer, kinder, i.e. more and more like Jesus.

We can put out the welcome mat by spiritual reading and conversations. Read the Bible. If you read a chapter of St Luke's Gospel every day during December you will finish just before Christmas. It will only take a couple of minutes each day.

There are many other ways, including visits to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, Confession, some extra Masses and importantly visiting the sick and others in need.

One traditional Christmas-tide practice could also be very helpful, i.e. inviting a priest to come and bless your home during the Christmas season. Your family could invite some friends along, have this renewal of the home blessing and then share a cuppa or meal. Let us priests know and we can schedule your home blessing. It can be a way to remind your selves that Jesus is always welcome into your home and your hearts. Of course, Jesus comes always together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And so during Advent as well as the prayer "Come Lord Jesus", we can also pray,

"Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your Faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth."

Fr Thomas Casanova

Divine Mercy Calendars 2020

are available from the parish for \$10 each. Come have a look at these amazing calendars!



December Jokes

Railway

What's the difference between a teacher and a railway security guard? One trains the mind, the other minds the trains...

I know an elephant who refused to travel by train because he didn't want to leave his trunk in the baggage car.

I miss the old days of railway when the engineer had plenty of esteem.

Young Gordon was with his parents and they were taking refreshments in the bar at Reading station when they heard a whistle. The three of them rushed out of the bar onto the platform only to discover that they had just missed the train. 'The next train is in one hour.' intoned the stationmaster. The three went back into the bar. The parents had another drink, Gordon had a coke. Again they heard a whistle, rushed out and discovered the train pulling away. 'Next one is sixty minutes from now,' grunted the stationmaster. An hour later, Gordon, with his mum and dad, raced out onto the

platform, and his parents leaped onto the train as it pulled away. The boy was left standing on the platform and began to laugh uproariously.

'Your parents just left you,' said the stationmaster. 'Why are you laughing?'

Gordon smiled, 'They only came to see me off.'



Restaurant

A boy asks his father, "Dad, are bugs good to eat?" "That's disgusting. Don't talk about things like that over dinner," the dad replies. After dinner the father asks, "Now, son, what did you want to ask me?"

"Oh, nothing," the boy says. "There was a bug in your soup, but now it's gone."

Q: What do you call it when you walk into a cafe you're sure you've been to before? A: Déjà brew

Why was the restaurant called "Out of this World"? Because it was full of Unidentified Frying Objects.

Random

Friend of mine said he's going to spend his savings on learning to drive a steamroller. I said I'm not going to stand in his way.

Friend told me he had set up business washing mice & rats. Thought it was dodgy at first, then realised it was squeaky clean.

Had a race to see who could hang out the washing quickest. It was level pegging.

A friend did a PhD in Washing Machines. He's a Spin Doctor. Took a risk washing my clothes when there was a chance of rain. I put it all on the line.

I keep taking photos beside boiling kettles. I think I have selfie steam issues.

Bible Quizzicle

What time of day was Adam created? Just a little before Eve.

Why didn't they play cards on the Ark? Because Noah was always standing on the deck

Why couldn't Jonah trust the ocean? He just knew there was something fishy about it.

What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth? Absolutely ruthless.

Who was the first tennis player in the bible? Joseph because he served in Pharaoh's court.

Which Bible Character is a locksmith? Zaccheus.

Who is the greatest babysitter mentioned in the Bible? David — he rocked Goliath to a very deep sleep.

Who was the greatest moneyman in the Bible? Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

What do we have that Adam never had? Ancestors.

Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible? Samson — he brought the house down.

Did you know they had cars in Jesus' time? Yup. The Bible says the disciples were all of one Accord.

Who was the smartest man in the Bible? Abraham. He knew a Lot.

Who was the best female finance lady in the Bible? Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet

Name a Bible character who had no parents?

Joshua, son of Nun (Joshua 1:1).

Where is medicine first mentioned in the Bible?

When God gave Moses two tablets.

Where was Solomon's temple located? On the side of his head.

GOD'S GARBAGE PEOPLE

by Matthew Schmitz



As the sun comes up, the men go out from Garbage City and into the streets of -Cairo. Some walk alone, carrying empty plastic sacks over their shoulders. Some drive trucks whose bare beds will soon be piled high with waste. Others are already returning with the trash they collected overnight. They heap it in front of their homes, where the women will sort it amid the rats and flies.

These men and women are known as zabbaleen, -literally, "garbage people." The name evokes not only their work as the ragpickers of Cairo, but also their faith. Almost all of the fifty thousand residents of this neighborhood are Christian. More than the trash they collect, the God they kneel to makes them objects of contempt.

As if to compensate for the de facto prohibition of Christian images elsewhere in Cairo, every building in Garbage City seems to bear some proclamation of Christian faith. Walls are adorned with a verse of Scripture, or a pale Italianate Madonna dissolving into clouds, or a Christ drawing men toward his Sacred Heart. (Popular devotions, like so much of pop culture, seem to spread from west to east.) The overwhelming stench is occasionally interrupted by the smell of grilled pork.

The neighborhood's seeming disorder serves a carefully organized economy. Azza Fekry, a grandmother who rises at 3:30 every morning to sort garbage in front of her home, tells me, "My son works overnight to gather the trash. They don't have fights, because the garbage is not picked up randomly. There's a sequence and a very -well-established system." The four-story tenement behind her is outfitted with air conditioners and satellite dishes, a testament to the zabbaleen's ability to turn -garbage into gold.

The route through Garbage City is the only way to St. Simon Monastery, a quiet preserve that sits high on -Mokattam Mountain. As soon as one passes into the monastery grounds, the stench dissipates and the sound of cars is replaced by that of birds. Pilgrims come alone to pray, gathering in huge crowds at a "cave church" carved into the limestone and surrounded by a twenty-thousand-seat amphitheater. The site is at once ancient and up-to-date, a monastic megachurch.

Fr. Botros Roshdy, a priest who serves there, tucks an iPhone into his black cassock. He has a social media presence and is known across the country. He is more willing than most to discuss the persecution faced by the zabbaleen and Egypt's other Christians. "Neither the church leaders you have met, nor those you are going to meet, are speaking freely," he says after we sit down. "If they could speak freely, they would discuss the discriminatory laws, the infiltration of the judicial system by the Muslim Brotherhood."

Roshdy notes that little has changed for the Copts over the last decade, despite the hollow promises of freedom that came with the Arab Spring and current president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's self-presentation as a defender of Christians. "We are still being used as a playing card in political games. When the government wants to win the support of Copts during the elections, they offer to let us build a church." But these overtures have not changed the landscape. "Take the blasphemy law," -Roshdy says. "It has been applied only against Christians.'

Roshdy mentions some typical incidents of persecution. One involved an elderly Coptic woman in Minya who was attacked, stripped naked, and dragged through the streets. "Everyone knows who did this crime, but there has been no punishment." A group of Coptic students in Bani -Mazar filmed a video in which they mocked ISIS. "People in their town accused them of blasphemy for mocking Islam. So these young

children were arrested and jailed. . . . They were finally freed and received asylum in -Europe."

Despite the persecution, Egypt's Christians are winning converts. The number and names of converts must be carefully guarded, however, because conversion from Islam carries a high price. "Some of them are kicked out of their houses, some of them are fired, some of them have their kids taken away," Roshdy says. "But they consider all of these troubles nothing for the sake of Christ. Their faith is so strong, they see him." Cast out by their families, these men and women are adopted into the household of God.

General Sisi has made gestures of support for Egypt's Christianssome of them very welcome—but daily reality has hardly changed. Egypt is a centrally controlled police state. It mercilessly suppresses dissent, but it has done little to punish those who attack Christians. Instead of enforcing the law in such cases, it has promoted so-called "reconciliation sessions," in which the victim is often forced to apologize to the perpetrator. Sisi's government is certainly better than the government of the Muslim Brotherhood, which preceded it, and probably better than any likely alternative. But it upholds neither justice nor decency.

Sisi's greatest display of support for Egypt's Christians has been the building of a shrine church in honor of the twenty-one martyrs who were beheaded by ISIS on the coast of Libya in 2015. Twenty of the martyrs were from a single region in Upper Egypt, the most rural and most Christian part of the country. The twenty-first was a Ghanaian man named Matthew who was almost certainly not a Copt. ISIS was prepared to spare him, but he insisted on dying alongside his Christian brothers.



GOD'S GARBAGE PEOPLE continued...



Fr. Abi Fanus Unan, a priest at the shrine church, tells me, "After we saw the videos of the beheading, we expected that they had thrown the bodies in the water." In fact, ISIS had tossed them in a ditch. When a team found the bodies after a long search, they discovered a horrifying scene. "They had separated the bodies from the heads. There were a lot of heads and a lot of bodies." The remains of the twenty Copts were returned to Egypt, but the body of Matthew has remained unclaimed.

And so the Copts sought to bring him to Egypt. Thanks to persistent lobbying, the Libyan government has at last agreed. Matthew will once again take his place alongside his fellow martyrs. This act is particularly significant given the divides that split Egypt's Christians. Makarios, the Orthodox bishop of the nearby city of Minya, has claimed that other churches—including the Coptic Catholic Church—do not administer a real baptism. But he cannot deny this baptism of blood.

Copts do not display the bones of their saints, but they have carefully laid out the rotting items found among the martyrs' remains. Pilgrims now pray before a dirty arm cast, a soiled back brace, and the plastic zip-ties that once bound the martyrs' hands. These signs of infirmity and bondage have been cast off for heavenly raiment. They

may look like trash, but they are treasured as relics of sanctity.

When I ask Farag Ibrahim Sayid, the father of one of the martyrs, whether he regrets the loss of his son, he responds with the words of Scripture: "All things work together for good for those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). In that same passage, St. Paul promises that we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into God's glorious liberty. But Egypt's Christians also hope for a more worldly form of freedom. Several of the martyrs' mothers tell me that they hope their children can go to America. Some are engineers; some are laborers. All want freedom and prosperity.

President Trump has promised to help Christians in the Middle East, but the number of Christian refugees allowed into the United States declined by 36 percent in 2018. Given the religious persecution faced by Middle Eastern Christians, it is striking that American Christian leaders do not demand more. Even the magnificent shrine to the Coptic martyrs bears marks of persecution. It was built outside the village of al-Our, after a mob prevented the rebuilding of a more conveniently located church where several of the martyrs had been baptized and confirmed.

Outside the shrine, the streets are littered with trash. Wherever one goes in Egypt—from the tony developments west of Cairo, to the rural south—one sees refuse. "Waste is usually dumped in irrigation canals or in the streets, or burnt," Atef Yakoub Haleem, a professor of agronomy, tells me. Government officials are anxious that the waste not be noticed. "We do some recycling, but we don't have the facilities or the equipment needed. The ministry of agriculture

does its best," says Emad Abdelgelil, head of development in the village of Al Amoudein. "Maybe we have a problem, but we are working on it. Maybe next visit you won't find it."

Egypt's trash seems less likely to disappear than its Christians do. More than a million Copts have emigrated from Egypt in recent decades. Coptic authorities say that fifteen to eighteen million remain, but the government claims that there are only five million. There is something foreboding about this low estimate. It seems to express a desire that the Copts will go away, just as Egypt's ancient and storied Jewish community—for so long such an essential part of the country—has done.

Early one morning, I return to Garbage City. As the men go out on their rounds, the women walk up to the monastery, children in tow, dressed in their finest clothes. They are God's own garbage people, despised but elect, valuing what the world rejects. They welcome the outcast, adopt the unwanted, and make relics of refuse. Seeing them, one feels the force of Psalmist's prophecy. There is in Zion a tried stone, a precious stone, a sure foundation. For the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Matthew Schmitz is senior editor of First Things.



A man asked a priest: If God is everywhere, why do I go to Church?

The priest replied: The whole atmosphere is filled with water; but when you want to drink you have to go to a fountain or a well.



Dismas and His Opposites

Fr. Paul D. Scalia

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. These words of Saint Dismas, the Good Thief, saved in his last hours on a cross, resound as a perfect acknowledgment of Christ as King. Their power becomes more evident when contrasted with the words of others at that moment. At Calvary, there are three other reactions to the Crucified One. They come from Dismas's opposites and reveal the attitudes that always oppose Christ the King.

First, the rulers. [They] sneered at Jesus and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God." These are not pagans or unbelievers but Israel's own religious leaders. These are the men who awaited their King, anticipated His coming, and desired His rule. But, as comes to be clear, they did so on their own terms. Jesus of Nazareth did not meet their requirements for kingship. He comes not on a warhorse to impose a kingdom, but humble, and mounted on an ass. (Mt 21:5) He comes not to judge but to seek and to save what was lost (Lk 19:10), to call not the righteous but sinners. (cf. Lk 5:32)

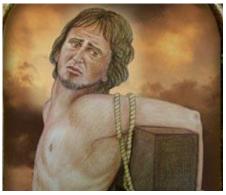
Second, the Roman soldiers.

[They] jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." The great genius of the Romans was that they tolerated the religion of their subjects. Of course, that tolerance was cynical and lasted only as long as the people kept the gods in the proper place and their religion to themselves. Faith was tolerable only when kept private or confined to certain areas and spheres of life. It became intolerable when it made public claims. For Him to be executed, Jesus had to be presented as a political threat to Roman rule. Religion must be kept in its place.

Third, the bad thief: [O]ne of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us." You

would think that he would remain silent, if only to hedge his bets against impending judgment. But he is unrepentant. In the midst of his suffering, he lashes out at God rather than acknowledge his sins and ask forgiveness. Even in his agony, he prefers his own will to that of Christ the King.

These reactions do not remain solely in the past. We see them throughout history – in every rejection of revelation, persecution of the faithful, and refusal to repent. More to the point, they continue in us. Each rejection of Christ the King can be found, at one time or another, within us.



We at times resemble Israel's religious leaders: we want God, but on our own terms. We long for His coming and cry out for His help. . . but then resent His intrusion and the challenges He presents. We want a king, to be sure. In fact, we know exactly how he should behave.

At other times we act like the Romans. We allow God in our lives, as part of our lives, but not to rule our lives. We are always drawing a line He cannot cross. We forbid Him to have any say in (choose one or more) politics, economics, sex, entertainment, etc. We are forever declaring to Him, "Thus far and no further!"

As a society, we have restricted Christ to private life. We have accepted the error that faith is a strictly private matter. Out of fear of looking different or of offending, we forbid Him access to our broader life. Whatever the case, we claim the right to be one thing privately and another publicly. Of course, this can't last. We inevitably privatize our faith so much that we ourselves no longer believe it.

In fact, the Solemnity of Christ the King is a feast established to combat this privatization. The feast is not, as might be reasonably presumed, a vestige of the Middle Ages when kingship was more familiar. It was established by Pius XI in 1925, precisely to emphasize the public reign of Christ the King and combat the increasing privatization of religion.

Finally, we at times behave like the impenitent thief. We demand that the King do our bidding, that He save us without any repentance on our part. Rather than conform ourselves to the truth, we rail against Him Who is the Truth. More often than not this is just ... childish. But in the final hour, it's tragic.

In stark contrast to the sneerers, jeerers, and revilers is Dismas. His dying prayer says it all: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Unlike the religious leaders, he does not dictate the conditions of kingship; he is not ashamed to have a crucified King. This is one salutary effect of suffering: you stop dictating the terms of your own salvation.

Unlike the Romans, Dismas sets no limit on Christ's authority. He sees that Jesus has not only a kingdom but power over death. He gives Him free reign. Here is another benefit suffering brings: you stop confining God's power.

Most of all, unlike the thief opposite him, Dismas repents. Such repentance represents the full acceptance of Christ as King, giving Him authority over what is most painful and shameful.

Saint Dismas gives us the first example of devotion to Christ the King. It means to ... give Him authority over everything, ...l to surrender our wills to Him Who alone perfects them.

Reclaiming Advent

by Tom and Caroline McDonald

Every year, we resolve to have a peaceful, meaningful Advent in our household — yet every year it somehow sneaks up on us.

The culture doesn't help: According to the retail-store calendar, the Christmas season began in mid-September.

By the time Christmas Day actually rolls around, it feels like a conclusion rather than a beginning.

We as a society have it completely backward: In our impatient, instantgratification culture, the idea of being patient and anticipating a big event can seem beyond us.

But we must persevere. So many valuable lessons are lost when we ignore the liturgical seasons and dive into Christmas music in November. The Church actually teaches that learning to wait is important for the future moral life of our kids: "Chastity cannot exist as a virtue without the capacity to renounce self, to make sacrifices and to wait" (Pontifical Council for the Family's "Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality," 5).

Remember that it's never too late to start creating some Advent traditions, and any effort is worthwhile.

Here are some tried-and-true ideas



for reclaiming the Advent and Christmas seasons in your family:

Deck the halls with lots of purple. When you put up all your wreaths and greenery on doors and windows, hold on to your red Christmas bows and invest in some purple ribbon instead. This can set the tone for the whole Advent season: that it's something special and different from Christmas. Switch out the purple bows on Christmas Eve. What a witness to the whole neighbourhood!

Pray a new prayer. Advent is the perfect time to introduce new prayers to your household. Novenas are wonderful family prayers, because once you start, everyone is invested in praying every day. This year, we'll be praying the "Novena to Our Lady of the New Advent,"

which begins on Dec. 16. Learn more about this newer devotion by googling the title. Be sure to note the beautiful icon of this image, which shows Christ in utero.

Stake out family time. Christmas celebrates the Holy Family; honour them by scheduling time together as a family. For example, plan a family movie night and pop in It's A Wonderful Life. Make this lifeaffirming movie mandatory viewing for all of your kids.

Celebrate the birthday of Baby Jesus. In our house, we make a birthday cake for Jesus as part of Christmas dinner, and, yes, you can light candles and sing Happy Birthday. Other families we know sing the song in the morning before opening presents. Still others have a crèche inside and make a big deal of placing Baby Jesus in the crib that morning.

Be Web-savvy. Explore Catholic websites for more ideas. Our personal favourites are CatholicCusine.blogspot.com and the Advent and Christmas workshops at CatholicCulture.org. Find one or two new ideas that will work for your family and make those part of your Christmas preparation.

Happy Advent!



BENEFITS OF A GOOD VOCABULARY

I recently called an old Engineering buddy of mine and asked what he was working on these days.

He replied that he was working on "Aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminium and steel under a constrained environment."

I was impressed until, upon further inquiry, I learned that he was washing dishes with hot water under his wife's supervision.

If you rearrange the letters in DEPRESSION you'll get I PRESSED ON! Meaning your current situation is NOT your final destination!



One minute you have an innocent infant.

Then suddenly, without warning, they turn into the TODDLERSAURUS REX.

The West Wagga Wag

West Wagga Parish



Serving: Ashmont, Collingullie, Glenfield, Lloyd, and San Isidore



THE WIDOW & THE JUDGE

Find the words below hidden in the 225 letters to the right.

EXPECT	READY
HEAVEN	NIGHT
OWNER	HOUR
ANGELS	COME
HOUSE	TIME
WATCH	SON
THIEF	DAY

KNOW

Be Prepared

So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Matthew 24:44 (NIV)



R В Α C Z Е P Е C Е Н R G J K N Ι S E Н Υ K Z Z G X Q G Н Ι В Е Μ X Ι K N G Z X R Е Α D P D Ι Н Т Н Е Q В Ι Ζ R S Ι Т Ν S D D Q В