

HOLY GRAIL

Everybody loves the Indiana Jones movie series: Raiders of the Lost Ark; The Temple of Doom; The Last Crusade.

The Last Crusade is probably my favorite in part, of course, because it involves Knights; like you and me.

The story of The Last Crusade involves Indiana Jones, an archeology professor, and his father Henry Jones Sr. The latter has found some obscure cryptic information that he believes will lead him to the Holy Grail and he sets out to find it. The adventure story and the personal relationship story develops as Indiana Jones (played by Harrison Ford) follows after his father (played by Sean Connery) and they confront a series of dangerous situations — including, of course, Nazis.

The Nazi part is not so fanciful as, indeed, in real life the SS Chief Heinrich Himmler looked for the Holy Grail himself as he believed it would give him unprecedented powers. He thought it was buried at Montserrat Abby near Barcelona. His Nazi friend during the Second World War, the medievalist Otto Rahn, was convinced that it was at Montsegur Castle in southern France.

The original story of the Holy Grail really is a combination of Celtic themes mixed with the mystical Christian development of the sacrament of Communion. Its origins are in the 12th century and the King Arthur legend.

Robert de Baron had written a story about Joseph of Arimathea who, of course, was a rich man and secret disciple of Jesus. After the

Crucifixion Joseph prepared the body of Jesus and wrapped Him in a cloth which eventually became the Shroud of Turin. Joseph was put in prison but not before he had procured the Sacred Cup from the Last Supper. The legend says this Holy Grail sustained him while he was in prison.

Later, Joseph and his family emigrated west to as far, perhaps, as England. He and his family started the dynasty of Grail Keepers. It was this Holy Grail that became the quest of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table which began, symbolically, at Pentecost. It was no longer enough for a knight to be just chivalrous; pursuit of spirituality became a necessity for a true knight.

Only 3 knights were able to find the Grail at the Castle at Carbonic: Perceval, Bors, and Galahad. And only Sir Galahad, who was the son of Lancelot, possessed the **purity of heart** to have a mystical experience of union with God while looking at the Holy Grail.

The Grail spiritually nourished the knights and gave them comfort. It is the symbol of God's grace.

If you look up Holy Grail on the internet you will find such subjects as "The Holy Grail of Retirement," "The Holy Grail of Weight Loss," and even "The Holy Grail of Hot Wheels." That misses the point.

Somewhere along the way some search for the wrong Grail — suitable only as a theme for an entertaining movie.