

The Good News

422–24 He was born to a Jewish woman of Nazareth,
a daughter of Israel
named Mary.

It was during the time of King Herod the Great
and the emperor Caesar Augustus.

He was a carpenter by trade,
“Joseph’s son,”
according to those who knew him.

He taught in public and in private
and he once said,
between the cradle and the cross,
“Love one another
as I have loved you.”

He died in Jerusalem some thirty years later,
crucified and essentially alone,
save a few women and one or two brave men,
under the eye of the procurator Pontius Pilate
during the reign of the emperor Tiberius.

We believe that this man we are describing here,
Jesus Christ,
is the eternal Son of God.

We believe that this man,
in the words of the opening chapter
of John’s Gospel,
is “the Word made flesh”
who “lived among us”
and whose glory we have seen.

We believe that this man
is “full of grace and truth.”

From his life, we have all received grace.

We believe that,
while the law came through Moses,
“grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

Christ dwells within us
and among us.
Christ invites us to speak with him
as we would with a friend and helper.

425 When we speak of “passing on the faith”
from one generation to the next,
it is this faith of which we speak.
The early disciples burned with this faith,
with a desire to share with others
that which they had seen with their own eyes,
which they had heard,
which they had touched.

426 We give a name to the passing on of faith
when we echo it in our own lives
and share it with others as a witness.
We call it “catechesis,”
a Greek word that means “to echo.”
At the very heart of all catechesis we find
not a book,
not a theological system,
not a litany of doctrine and dogma,
not a list of rules and regulations,
but a person,
and that person is Jesus of Nazareth.

427-29 The Church teaches us about this
in the documents which guide catechesis:
“Christ, the Incarnate Word, and Son of God ...
is who we teach.
Everything else is taught regarding him.
It is Christ alone who teaches.
We teach only to the extent that
we are Christ’s spokespersons,
enabling Christ to teach with our lips.
Every catechist should be able
to apply to himself [or herself]
the mysterious words of Jesus:

‘My teaching is not mine,
but his who sent me.’”

*The name
of Jesus is
at the heart
of all our
prayers.*

430

“Jesus.”

In Hebrew, the name means “God saves.”

And indeed, through Jesus,
through his life, death, and resurrection,
God is saving us,
bringing all of salvation history
into one shining moment.

431

Human sinfulness, that inclination to reject God,
is forgiven,
and we are made whole again.

432–35

This is a holy name
which summons the image of God.
The name of Jesus is at the heart of all our prayers,
concluding as we do in these words:
“through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

436

“Christ.”

It is a Greek title that means “Messiah.”

In Hebrew, it carries the meaning “anointed.”
And indeed, Jesus Christ is the anointed one of God,
the one who announces the reign of God.
Anointed by the Spirit in the river,
called by God on the mountain,
Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

437

He was of royal family ties,
born as a descendant of King David.
His teaching and his many works
made clear that he was the holy one of God.
He came to Nazareth as a young man,
as Luke’s Gospel retells it in chapter 4,
to the synagogue, on the Sabbath,
and standing to read was handed the scroll
of the prophet Isaiah.

He unrolled the scroll with great purpose,
found the passage he wanted,
and read aloud for all to hear.
“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” he read,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor....”

His audience was stunned!
And within hours,
or perhaps days at the most,
the work of teaching and healing,
of calling disciples
and shaping them as a community,
had begun.

440 From almost the beginning, it seems,
Jesus understood the dangerous work
to which he was called.

For when you announce the reign of God
you must, at the same time,
announce the end of darkness.

Darkness never goes quickly into the night.

In your very person,
you become a servant,
a lover,
and a forgiver.

In a word, you prepare to die to yourself in love:
only that, you realize,
will lead to joy,
glory,
and resurrection.

Jesus offered his life to liberate us,
and this great act of love
opened the reign of God for all.



441

“Son of God.”

This title is given to angels in the Old Testament,
to the chosen people,
to the children of Israel,
and even to their kings.

When Jesus was called by this title,
that in itself does not suggest
anything more than human.

442

But for Peter, it is a different story.

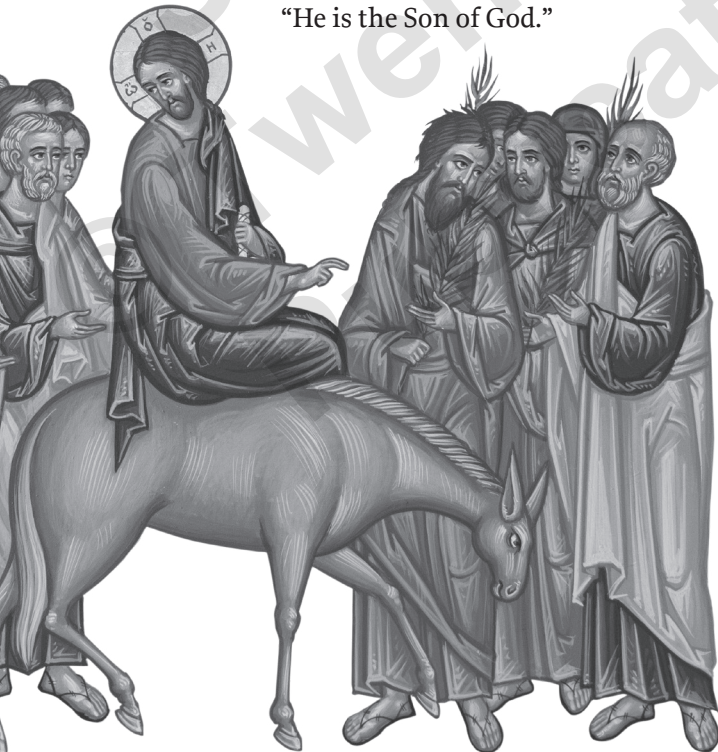
He names Jesus the Christ,
the Messiah,
the Son of God.

And Jesus assures Peter

that this insight into his divinity
came from “my Father who is in heaven.”

And for Paul as well, after his conversion.

While still in Damascus,
within days of having met the Lord,
he is already proclaiming about Jesus,
“He is the Son of God.”



GROUP OR PERSONAL PROCESS

How have you met Christ in your own life?

How do you experience your daily walk with Christ?

We believe that grace comes to us through Christ. How does grace empower you to live with the forgiveness, generosity, mercy, and love of Christ?

To whom are you sent as a catechist? To whom are you sent to echo your faith?