

St. Edward the Confessor
RCIA Class on God, The Son – Nov. 21, 2010

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Bible

- John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word as with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
- John 3:16 God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Creed

Nicene Creed: We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. (1)

For us men and our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. (2)

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of the scriptures: (3)

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. (4)

Apostles Creed: ...in Jesus Christ His only Son, Our Lord (1)

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit
Born of the Virgin Mary (2)

Suffered under Pontius Pilate
Was crucified, died and was buried.
On the third day, he rose again (3)

He ascended into Heaven
and is seated at the right hand
of God, the Father Almighty. (4)
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Introduction

We understand the salvation provide by God through Jesus Christ (see the excerpts from the Creeds above) as being built on 4 basic ideas: 1) that Jesus is God, 2) that Jesus came into the world as man (but not losing an attribute of being God), 3) that by his life, death, and resurrection he shows us our full human dignity as creatures made in the likeness of God and how much God loves us, and 4) that after his resurrection he ascended into heaven.

Chapters 7 of [USCC & SG] deal with God sending his Son into the world (points 1 & 2) and Chapters 8 deals with the salvation achieved through the death and resurrection of Christ (point 3 & 4).

The core belief in God the Son as “True God” and “True Man” (points 1 & 2) is the concept of the Incarnation – that the Son of God came into the world as man. The Incarnation is presented in a profound sense in the Gospel of John (John 1:1-5) and is often summarized as the “Word made flesh.” The Incarnation is fulfillment of the promise of salvation made throughout the Old Testament – from Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Moses, and David, to Isaiah, and the all of the prophets [SG].

The core belief in the salvation achieved by Jesus Christ through his suffering and subsequent glorification (points 3 & 4) is the known as the Paschal Mystery – that by his cross and resurrection, Jesus overcame sin and death and brings new life and grace in the Holy Spirit to the world.

Essentials (adapted from [SG] and [CCC])

The catechesis comes from Section 2, Articles 2-7 of the CCC and covers God the Son and the salvation he achieved for man.

- The Incarnation is the belief in the mystery by which the Son of God (the Word) assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation [CCC 423, 461-463]
- Two solemn moment affirm that Jesus is the beloved Son of God – Baptism and the Transfiguration of Christ [CCC 444, 554, 556]
- Jesus became truly man (human nature [CCC 470] - finite body [CCC 476] & rational human soul [CCC 471] were assumed) while remaining truly God [CCC480]. He is not a confused mixture of the divine and the human [CCC 464] nor is he God ‘pretending to be man’ or other such ideas [CCC 465-469].
- The Word became flesh to make us “partakers of the divine nature” [CCC 460]
- Jesus is the one mediator between and God [CCC 464-469]
- Jesus gave us our model of love, forgiveness, and holiness [CCC 588-589]. His life is a template for us to follow in our own lives. “Love one another as I have loved you [John 15:12].

- Jesus has many other titles or names, including the Christ or the messiah (meaning the One Anointed and chosen by God) [CCC 436], the Son of God (reflecting his divine nature as a member of the Trinity), Lord (reflecting his divine power over the world), and the Son of Man.
- Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king [CCC 436]
- The Church believes that the purpose of human history is to found in Jesus Christ [CCC 450]
- The chief mysteries of Jesus are his birth and the Paschal Mystery of his Resurrection and Ascension [CCC 557, CCC Article 4]
- The Paschal Mystery (Jesus' suffering and death on the cross and his resurrection) are at the center of the Good News of the Gospel [CCC 571]
- God's saving plan was accomplished once and for all in the death of Jesus [CCC 599, 601, 613-614, 624]
- The Paschal sacrifice, which is unique and which completes and surpasses all other sacrifices, overcame our disobedience to God and is the mean of our reconciliation with God [CCC 613-614] making us adopted children of God [CCC 422]
- The Paschal Mystery is a manifestation of God's love for Man [CCC 599-618]
- We participate in the Paschal mystery through the sacraments, especially in the Baptism [CCC 628] and the Eucharist
- Christ's resurrection is a historically attested to event [CCC 638-658] and glorifies God [CCC 434]
- Christ ascended into heaven and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead [CCC 659-682]

Commentary

Some commentary on the points above:

1. Frank Sheed, in his book 'Theology for beginners' (Chapter 5), walks the reader through the argument that:
 - Since the Father's nature is infinite the Son's must be as well
 - Saint John gives us a term for the relationship between the Father and Son –The Son is the Word of God
 - Since God is pure spirit any word he utters must be akin to a thought or idea.
 - The only idea of God's that could possibly be God is God's idea of himself
2. If you are like me you might tend to think that John 15:13 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.' only refers to dying. But recently, events (providence) have pointed to other forms of 'laying down one's life' including the kind of self-sacrifice that Mother Teresa had in dedicating her life to the poor.
3. Jesus' temptation and death were not 'fakes' or 'shows' – they were real tests or a real human being, who unlike Adam, remained steadfast and faithful to God.

Q&A

References

- [CCC] – Catechism of the Catholic Church
- [Con] - Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church
- [USCC] – United States Catholic Catechism for Adults
- [SG] - Study Guide for the USCC