



JESUS AND THE GOSPEL

Opening Prayer

Lord, you became man in order to restore our relationship with you. Through your death and Resurrection, you have made us brothers and sisters and sharers in the promise of immortality. Send your Holy Spirit upon us that we might recognize you as our Savior and Lord and inspire us to become your disciples. We ask this in your most holy Name. Amen.

Scripture Reading *John 6:60-69*

In this Gospel, Jesus has finished giving his Bread of Life discourse and many followers of Jesus have left because of his difficult teachings. Jesus asks the Apostles if they are going to leave as well. Peter responds, "You have the words of eternal life." In this statement, he confesses that Jesus is Lord and God.

Who is Jesus?

- The central claim of Christianity is the Jesus is not just some holy teacher or good person, but that Jesus is God.
- Jesus' name directs us to his vocation, "God saves." God became man to save us from sin and death. The title of Christ acknowledges that Jesus is the anointed one of God, a title that he shares with us as "Christians."
- By referring to Jesus as Lord, it is confessing that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. The same Word present in the book of Genesis before creation is Jesus. Using the title of Lord confesses Jesus is God and "testifies to the respect and trust of those approach him for help and healing" (CCC, 448). To call Jesus Lord is not just simply a title, but states that Jesus is the key, the center, and the purpose of everything.
- "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).
- The **hypostatic union** is the mystery that Jesus Christ is both fully divine and fully human. Jesus was always God before time began, but assumes our humanity at the Incarnation without losing his divinity.
- The **Incarnation** is the mystery that God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation. Many Church Fathers have stated, "God became man in order that man may become divine."
- The **Paschal Mystery** is the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection as the method of salvation in which we participate in through the liturgy. The Paschal Mystery proves Jesus is God.

What did Jesus do?

- **Annunciation:** the angel Gabriel visits Mary, who says yes to God's invitation and conceives Jesus. (March 25)
- **Nativity:** the birth of Jesus. (December 25)
- **Epiphany:** the visitation of the three wise men to the baby Jesus. (January 6)
- Throughout Jesus' public ministry, he performed miracles, forgave sin, and preached to show his authority as God. The Gospels record the events of Jesus' life to demonstrate his power and his teachings on the kingdom of God.
- **Resurrection:** the mystery that Jesus rose from the dead in God. The Resurrection destroyed sin and death forever, giving humans the ability for eternal life. (Easter)
- **Ascension:** Christ's return to heaven forty days after the Resurrection.

What is the purpose of the Gospels?

- "The Gospels are the heart of all the Scriptures, because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Savior" (CCC, 125).
- The Gospels were not written to be biographies of Jesus, rather they were written to show that Jesus is divine and God's only begotten Son.
- The Gospels authors also desire to show that Jesus was a human being who existed at a particular time and place. They attempt to recount the events of his ministry and the memorable parables that he told.
- The Gospels are told in light of the death and the Resurrection of Jesus. Each Gospel has the cross as the climax of the narrative.
- The Gospels were written to a particular audience, mostly Christian communities, to encourage faith in that community. "What is written in the Gospels was set down there so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (CCC, 514, Mk. 1:1).

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How did the Gospels come to be?

- The written Gospels developed throughout the first century through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels:
 - The life and teachings of Jesus. The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels faithfully hand on what Jesus really did and taught.
 - The oral tradition. After the Ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what Jesus had said and done, having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit.
 - The written Gospels. The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form, in light of the situation of the early churches, but always in a fashion they have told us the honest truth about Jesus. (cf. CCC, 126)

What is our call to discipleship in the Gospels?

- God became man so that we might have a relationship with God.
- "In all of his life Jesus presents himself as our model. He is the perfect man who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. He has given us an example to imitate" (CCC, 520).
- A disciple is one who has had a living encounter with Jesus, who has accepted Jesus as Savior and acknowledges Jesus as Lord, and who wants to follow Jesus closely in everything.