

# CATECHIST FORMATION PROGRAM FOR SFDC CATECHISTS

## TOPIC: JESUS, THE FULLNESS OF REVELATION

Opening Prayer: John 1:1-11

Discussion questions: Do you have a favorite title or image of Jesus?  
Why is it your favorite? What's the Good News  
behind that?

Theological sources: Catechism of the Catholic Church-CCC (#124-130;  
422-680)

Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,  
Chapter 5.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT-NT (The Christian Scriptures).

What is Revelation?

Revelation is defined literally as the uncovering or disclosure of something that is hidden. The Bible itself addresses the meaning of revelation.

Heb 1:1-2: In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a Son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe,

1 Cor 2:9-10: But as it is written: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him," this God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

Mt 16:17

Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father."

Mt 11:27

All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

2 Pet 1:21

for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God.

Rom 1:19

For what can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them.

**The Catholic Church, through the Second Vatican Council also defined what is meant by revelation:**

“In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of his will by which, through Christ the Word made flesh, people have access to the Father in the Holy Spirit and come to share in the divine nature. Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God out of the abundance of his love speaks to his people as friends and lives among them, so that he may invite them into fellowship with Himself” *Constitution on Divine Revelation*, No. 2.

In sum, Divine Revelation is God’s self-disclosure to humanity.

**How does it come to us? In two ways:**

Sacred Scripture (Holy Bible)- the Word of God written under divine inspiration, and

Sacred Tradition-the Word of God handed down to us orally from the time of the Apostles.

**Purpose of Revelation:** God reveals himself to us in order to save us and bring us to fellowship with himself.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave\* his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life*

## ❖ Relationship between Sacred Scripture & Sacred Tradition

- ❖ They are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other.
  - ❖ They both flow from the same divine source (Holy Spirit).
  - ❖ They come together to form one thing (Word of God), and move towards the same goal (salvation).
  - ❖ Both must be accepted and honored with the same feelings of devotion and reverence.
  - ❖ Both have single interpreter (The Magisterium)
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# Inspiration

The Bible is a record of true and trustworthy account of God's revelation to man written down under the impulse and guidance of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Bible is an inspired book.

The word "**inspiration**" comes to us from the Vulgate which speaks of the Bible as "**divinely inspired**" and of the sacred writers (Hagiographers) as "inspired by the Holy Spirit." St. Paul writes that "All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct to instruct in justice" (II Timothy 3:16). And St. Peter adds that "prophecy came not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21).

Inspiration in its strict sense denotes the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit under which the Bible was written. In his Encyclical on Sacred Scripture Pope Leo XIII writes:

"By supernatural power He (the Holy Spirit) so moved and impelled them (the sacred writers) to write - He was so present to them - that the things which He ordered, and those only, they first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth."



# Nature of Inspiration

The Holy Spirit as principal author of Sacred Scripture influenced the sacred writers in three ways:

- 1. Illuminated the mind of the sacred writers.*** Under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit the sacred writers formed a concept of what God wished them to write (history, prophecy, didactic literature) and of the single truths or facts which it was to contain. This illumination was not necessarily revelation since the sacred writers might have come to the knowledge of what was already revealed to others. But it enabled them to make correct use of their faculties, aided them in the gathering of materials, so that they correctly conceived in their minds all that God wished

**2. *Moved the will of the sacred writers.*** After the sacred writers had under inspiration formed in their minds an idea of the book and of its contents, the Holy Spirit moved their will to write freely, though infallibly, what God wished.

**3. *Aided the sacred writers in the work of composition.*** Finally, the Holy Spirit assisted the sacred authors in carrying out their project, by watching over them and when necessary by positively directing them, lest they add or omit something and lest fall into error. If certain writers made use of secretaries, and if these secretaries were instrumental in choosing the language and determining the mode of expression, they were inspired collaborators.

# Inerrancy

Inerrancy is freedom from error. The inerrancy of Scripture is a consequence of its divine inspiration. Whatever the Bible teaches, God teaches, because God is the principal author of Scripture and His teaching is necessarily true.

We attribute this quality of inerrancy in the first place to the original Biblical books written by the pen of the sacred writers themselves, and, secondly to reproductions of the Bible, but only in so far as these agree with the original sacred books. Any error is as a result of copyists, editors, and translators- human errors but maintains its truth to teach moral lessons.

This absolute inerrancy and authority of the Bible is taught by Sacred Scripture itself. Our Lord, the Apostles and Evangelists regarded any passage from Scripture as the word of God, as necessarily true, as final and supreme authority.

They affirm that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), that "one jot, or one title shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18) and that the "Scriptures shall be fulfilled" (Matthew 26:54).



## Divisions of the Bible (Old & New Testaments/Covenants)

The Old Testament books are grouped in the following manner:

1) Historical books, which are arranged not in the order in which they were written but according to the order of events in time which they narrate (Genesis to Esther);

2) Didactic or sapiential or moral books, which are so called because they instruct us especially about heavenly wisdom and principles of morality (Job to Ecclesiasticus);

3) The prophetic books, which contain God's message to men, and predictions concerning the future (Isaiah to Malachi)

4) A historical appendix (the Books of the Maccabees).

## The New Testament like the Old Testament has also a threefold division:

- 1) Historical books (the Gospels and the Acts).
- 2) Didactic writings (the 14 Pauline Epistles & the 7 Catholic Epistles);
- 3) A prophetic book of Revelation (the Apocalypse).

The various divisions of the Biblical books are of rather recent origin.

The Jews divided their sacred books into sections. The chapter division, as found in the Bible today, dates from the thirteenth

century and is the work of Stephen Langton, professor at the University of Paris and later Archbishop of Canterbury. The present verse division was first introduced by the Dominican, Santes

The modern verse division in the New Testament is the work of Robert Stephen, a Paris printer of the sixteenth century.

The chapter and divisions are of great value for purposes of reference but frequently break up the sequence of thought

(<http://www.cathtruth.com/catholicbible/inspire.htm>).



# THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST (CCC #422-429, 479)

-Jesus is the Son of God: He is the Word (John 1:1-14) and a substantial image of God who became man by assuming our human nature but still maintains his divine nature.

**Jesus is true God and True Man; He is consubstantial with the Father.**

**Jesus is the final and ultimate revelation of God.**

**He is the one who leads us to God and brings God to us.**

**The Good News: God has sent his Son (Galatians 4:4-5).**

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

This is 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: God has visited his people.

He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation - he has sent his own 'beloved Son'



## **At the heart of catechesis is Christ CCC#426**

At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father.

To catechize is "to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person.

Catechesis aims at putting "people. . . in communion. . . with Jesus Christ who alone can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity."

In catechesis "Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God,. . . is taught - everything else is taught with reference to him - and it is Christ alone who teaches.

Anyone else teaches to the extent that he/she is Christ's spokesperson, enabling Christ to teach with his/her lips.

Every catechist should be able to apply to him/herself the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.'

Whoever is called "to teach Christ" must first seek "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus"... and loving to let others know him, **CCC #429.**

## **BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (NT)**

The NT consists of the:

Synoptic Gospels-Matthew, Mark and Luke

Gospel of John

Letters (Epistles) of Paul and other epistles (Catholic epistles).

Acts of the Apostles, and

Revelation (Apocalypse).

### **Letters and Epistles in the Bible**

A letter is generally regarded as a communication of a private, personal, confidential nature whereas an epistle is of a general nature, addressed to all whom it may concern, and intended to be made public. This distinction may be retained for the Bible, although quite a number of the New Testament Epistles contain those intimate touches which are proper to a letter. On the other hand since the letters are a part of divine revelation they are now of interest to all people.

## B. STAGES OF THE FORMATION OF THE GOSPELS- CCC##124-126

The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament which hand on the ultimate truth of God's Revelation.

Their central object is Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son: his acts, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church's beginnings under the Spirit's guidance.

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".

We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels.

Namely,

1. ***The life and teaching of Jesus.*** The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, "whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up, ( see *DV 19; Acts 1:1-2* ).

2. ***The oral tradition.*** For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed.

3. *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; others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus.

4. Modern scholars have added Redactional stage.

The fourfold Gospel holds a unique place in the Church, as is evident both in the veneration which the liturgy accords it and in the surpassing attraction it has exercised on the saints at all times.

*St. Caesaria the Younger wrote to St. Richildis and St. Radegunde, in these words:*

*There is no doctrine which could be better, more precious and more splendid than the text of the Gospel. Behold and retain what our Lord and Master, Christ, has taught by his words and accomplished by his deeds.*

*But above all it's the gospels that occupy my mind when I'm at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one*

*thing needful. I'm always finding fresh lights there; hidden meanings which had meant nothing to me hitherto” (St. Caesaria*

*the Younger to St. Richildis and St. Radegunde, SCh 345, 480).*

## The unity of the Old and New Testaments

OT is a prefiguration of the NT.

NT is the fulfilment of the OT.

OT is read in the light of Christ crucified and risen.

Old saying that the NT lies

hidden in the OT, and the OT is

unveiled in the NT.

**D. Historical/Cultural Setting of the Gospels. (Insert video)**



## 2. MYSTERIES OF JESUS' LIFE (CCC ##484-570)

The writers of the Gospels chose to focus on these areas of Jesus' life:

**Infancy:** Only Matthew and Luke have the infancy narratives, but are also distinct in their presentation based on their specific purpose and theology. Mark has no infancy narrative at all.

**Jesus' public life:** - miracles (Shows his divine power).

**Preaching of the Kingdom (Messiah).**

**Parables (Very prominent in Matthew).**

**Death and resurrection (Affirmation of their theology).**

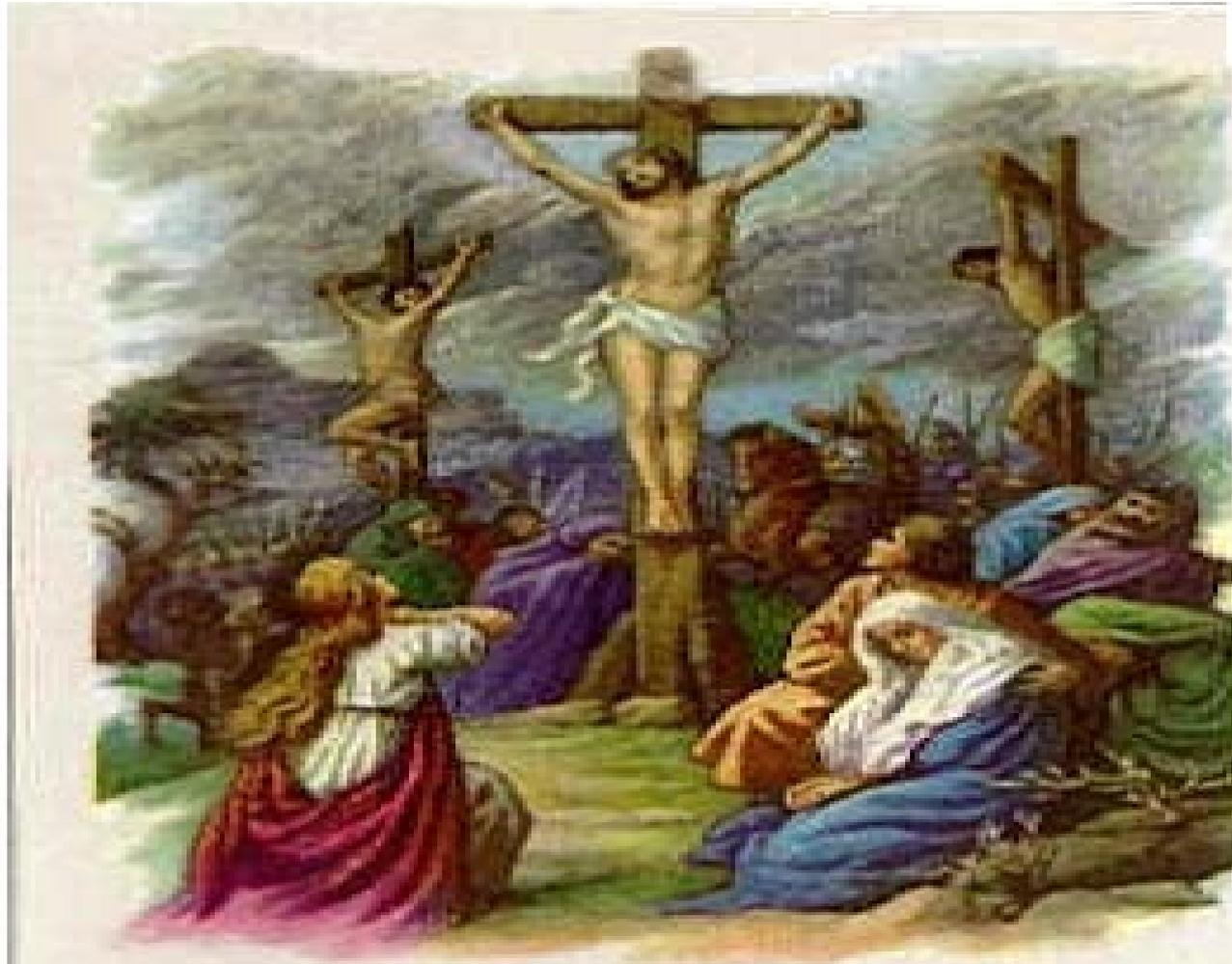
## THE JESUS OF THE EVANGELISTS

Mark: Jesus is the Suffering Servant – Mk 1:1; 8:27-8:38; 16:33, 15:38-39 (Proper ending of Mark; the rest is redaction).

The essence of Mark's Christology: Son of God = Suffering Son of Man.

Mark's conception of Jesus certainly includes power and authority implied in the Son of God title (the miracles and exorcisms, the setting aside of the Sabbath, the imminent judgment); but for Mark the power and authority are hidden in Jesus and will not be fully revealed until the parousia, the return of Jesus in glory

. In the meantime, we must not attempt to appropriate Jesus' future glory to our present, but must follow him in the way of the cross.



Matthew: Jesus is the promised Messiah – Matthew wanted to impress on his fellow Jews this important truth: “Jesus Christ is the Messiah, promised in the Old Testament.”



He expresses this in many ways:

- ❖ Jesus came from the family of David, fulfilling the prophecy that the Messiah would be a descendant of David (see 2 Sam 7:8-16; Mt 1:1, 6, 17, 20). Christ is often called '*Son of David*' in Matthew's Gospel. (Mt 9:27; 12:23; 15:22, 20:30-32; 21:9, 15).
- ❖ Jesus is *the New Moses*, sent in fulfillment of the prophecy by which God had promised that he would raise the Messiah as a new Moses (Dt 18:15-19).

- Instead of the Ten Commandments, he gives eight beatitudes. (Mt 5:3-10)
  - He explicitly refers to the old law, to Jesus' perfecting the ancient precepts (Mt 5:17-20; 21 etc.).
  - Moses appears as Jesus' forerunner on the mount of transfiguration. (Mt 17:34)
  - Jesus abrogates the permission to divorce granted by Moses. (Mt 19:3-9)
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❖ Very often the Old Testament is cited in various ways:

- *"for it is written"* Mt 2:5; 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 11:10; 21: 13; 26:31.
- *"Have you never read?"* Mt 19:4; 21:16; 21:42; 22:31;
- *"God said"* Mt 15:4; 19:5.

Matthew takes care to stress that Jesus is not a POLITICAL MESSIAH (such as many Jews were expecting), but that he is a *MESSIAH WITH DIVINE POWER*. Jesus' divinity and equality with God the Father is brought out in many ways in Matthew's Gospel.

**Luke: Jesus is the Son of God: -His conception 1:35**



- His baptism 3:21-22

- Transfiguration 4:34-35

The Spirit of the Lord is upon him 4:16-20 (Synagogue in Nazareth) This emphasis on the work of the Spirit within Jesus identifies him as the servant of God and one who has an intimate relationship with his Father. This relationship is often expressed through prayer in Luke and God responds also in prayer, in a 'heavenly voice' (Lk 9:35).

John: Jesus is the Divine Word of God (Logos) - 1: 1-14

(Known commonly as the prologue).

Jesus is equal with the Father - He works miracle on Sabbath

5:1-5

His defense 5:30-47; 5: 17-18, 19-29.



# NAMES/TITLES OF JESUS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

(#430-455) 1:1-17,

Jesus's titles are grouped into three:

-Human title: Prophet, Son of Joseph, Son of Mary, Rabbi.

-Ambiguous titles: Son of God, Son of Man, - Because it's applied to Israel & human beings; Jn 1:12-14.

Lord: Can be applied to human beings, eg Roman Lords-

can also mean sir, Acts 9:1-11.(but Lord is used in the LXX for God. Son of man has soteriological meaning)

Dan 6, one who pre-existed and who has come.

- ❖ Divine title: Christ, Messiah (Divine vs Glorious warrior) Logos, Savior.
- ❖ **Jesus:** Hebrew means "God saves." It expresses both his identity and his mission (CCC # 430).
- ❖ The name "Jesus" signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son, made man for the universal and definitive redemption from sins (# 432).
- ❖ **Christ:** The word "Christ" comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, which means "anointed". It became the name proper to Jesus only because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that "Christ" signifies. In effect, in Israel those consecrated to God for a mission that he gave were anointed in his name. This was the case for kings, for priests and, in rare instances, for prophets (CCC # 436). Jesus is the Christ, for "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). He was the one "who is to come" (Lk 7:19), the object of "the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20

- ❖ **Only Son of God:** - In the Old Testament, "*son of God*" is a title given to the angels, the Chosen People, the children of Israel, and their kings. It signifies an adoptive sonship that establishes a relationship of particular intimacy between God and his creature. When the promised Messiah-King is called "son of God", it does not necessarily imply that he was more than human, according to the literal meaning of these texts. Those who called Jesus "son of God", as the Messiah of Israel, perhaps meant nothing more than this (CCC # 441, see John 3:18).
- ❖ **Lord:** - The title "Lord" indicates divine sovereignty. To confess or invoke Jesus as Lord is to believe in his divinity. "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3, CCC # 455).
- ❖ **Savior:** A title originally used for God or any human being who would "save" people from present or future dangers. In Greco-

**OT:** "Savior" is sometimes applied to human leaders (e.g. Neh 9:27), but is used mainly as a title for God.

**NT:** The title is rarely used in most NT writings (0 Mk, 0 Mt, 3 Lk, 1 Jn, 2 Acts, 1 Paul), but is more common in the later "Pastoral" and "Catholic" epistles (25 times).

In Luke, "Savior" only once refers to God (Luke 1:47), and twice to the new-born Jesus (1:67, 2:11). The longer phrase "Savior of the world" occurs only in John 4:42 and 1 John 4:14.

The name "Jesus" (or "Joshua" or "Yeshua") itself means "God saves" (cf. Matt 1:21). Also, the verb "to save" is frequently applied to Jesus' ministry (cf. Matt 8:25; Mark 13:13; Luke 7:50; John 3:17; etc.)

## **CHRISTOLOGY (Mt 22:41-46; Mk 14:61-62; Lk 1:35; Jn 12:28, 20:31; Rom 1:3)**

Mystery of Incarnation: (CCC ##429-478)

Taking up St. John's expression, "The Word became flesh", the Church calls "Incarnation" the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it (CCC # 462)

Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is

## Some heresies associated with the incarnation

- ❖ **Arianism (by Arius):** affirmed that the Son of God "came to be from things that were not" and that he was "from another substance" than that of the Father. Countered by Council of Nicaea confessed that the Son of God is "begotten, not made, and of the same substance as the Father"( Council of Nicaea I (325): DS 130, 12).
- ❖ **The Nestorian** heresy regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God's Son. The council of Ephesus in 431, confessed "that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man." Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. Hence Mary wproclaimed Mother of God.

The Monophysites affirmed that the human nature had ceased to exist as such in Christ when the divine person of God's Son assumed it. The council of Chalcedon in 451, reaffirmed the true divine and human nature of Jesus, and introduced a theological word “consubstantial” same substance as the Father, and same human like us in all things but sin.

**Apollinarius** of Laodicaea asserted that in Christ the divine Word had replaced the soul or spirit. Against this error the Church confessed that the eternal Son also assumed a rational, human soul

## **B. Mystery of Redemption/Salvation: ( From CCC## 571-666)**

-Jesus' humanity became the free and perfect instrument of God's divine love which desires the salvation of all in suffering and death. We read from Mk 16:17; Mt 20:28; Jn 3:16, 8:33-36; Heb 5:7-9

The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all"<sup>313</sup> by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ (# 571).

Jesus performed acts, such as forgiving sins, that manifested him to be the Savior God himself (cf. *Jn* 5:16-18). Certain Jews, who did not recognize God made man (cf. *Jn* 1:14), saw in him only a man who made himself God (*Jn* 10:33), and judged him as a blasphemer (# 594). But for us, forgiveness of sin is an act of great kindness and immeasurable love.



# JESUS, CENTER AND MODEL OF CHRISTIAN LIFE ( CCC ## 520,521)

- ❖ Jesus is the way to the Father: Mk 2:14-17; 6:2-18
- ❖ Jesus, founder of Community of Faith (The Church): Mt 25:34-40; Rom 15:5-6.
- ❖ He is model for Christian living: Mk 12:28-34; Jn 13:15
- ❖ He is example of commitment to the poor and the oppressed:  
Lk 4: 16-21

- In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is "the perfect man",<sup>191</sup> who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way.
- Christ enables us to *live in him* all that he himself lived, and *he lives it in us*. "By his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man."<sup>193</sup> We are called only to become one with him, for he enables us as the members of his Body to share in what he lived for us in his flesh as our model.

## DISCUSSION QUESTION

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ?

Is it possible to be one in today's world?

