

JESUS CHRIST

TODAY



UNPACKING THE EMMAUS SERIES

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THE EMMAUS SERIES



Questions Catholics ask on their journey of Faith

JESUS CHRIST TODAY

SESSION 1

Introductory reading

Letter of Paul to the Philippians (2:5-11)

It is probably an adaptation of a hymn used by the early Christians.

Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus:
Who, being in the form of God,
did not count equality with God
something to be grasped.

But he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
becoming as human beings are;
and being in every way like a human being,
he was humbler yet even to accepting death,
death on a cross.

And for this God raised him high,
and gave him the name
which is above all other names;

so that all beings in the heavens,
on earth and in the underworld
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus

and that every tongue should acknowledge
Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God the Father. □

Questions opening up the topic

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp.14-15 – sharing reactions to the following questions:

Questions

- ◆ Believers relate to Jesus in a great variety of ways: as Lord and God, for instance, as a Friend and Companion, as a Teacher and Guide, as a Hero who inspires us to live a full life etc.. What has been the nature of your relationship with the Saviour?
- ◆ Do you have questions about Jesus that you would like to find answers to?

Viewing of DVD

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Chapter 1:
The Challenge of Modern Scholarship
- ◆ Chapter 2:
'Who Do You Say that I am?'
- ◆ Chapter 3:
Insights from Today's Scholarship

Sharing of reactions to the presentation

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp.14-15 – sharing immediate reactions to the presentation:

Question

- ◆ What has struck you as enlightening, inspiring, or even puzzling?

A reading related to the theme

Gospel of John (1:35-42)

The next day as John stood there again with two of his disciples, Jesus went past and John looked towards him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God'. And the two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi' – which means Teacher – 'where do you live?' He replied, 'Come and see'; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother and say to him, 'We have found the Messiah' – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas – which means Rock.' ◆

Final reflective sharing

This final sharing of personal responses to the questions given below is the most important phase of the session, and should be entered into generously, in the spirit of the Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp.14-15.

It may begin with a brief period of silent reflection, which is followed by two stages:

- 1. An informal Buzz Session in which each participant is able to express their response to each question – questions should be discussed separately.*
- 2. The sharing is brought to a conclusion, with each participant expressing, in a few words, what is their personal response to each question – in view of all that has been discussed in the session.*

Questions

- ◆ Recalling the question with which we opened this session – concerning how you relate to the Saviour - what have you gained from this session that will help you in your journey of faith?
- ◆ Are there still questions about the Saviour for which you still seek answers?

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SESSION 2

Introductory reading

Grammar of Assent (1889 edition, pp.490-91)

by Cardinal Newman

He describes the musings of someone of great ambition and acclaim (such as the exiled Napoleon) concerning the unique place that Jesus of Nazareth has in human history.

... after all, in what sense does Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great live now? Their chief home is the schoolroom ... in boys' grammars and exercise books ...

... there is just One Name in the whole world that lives; it is the name of the One who passed his years in obscurity, and who died a malefactor's death ... (Many centuries) have gone since that time, but still it has its hold upon the human mind. It has possessed the world and it maintains its possession. Amid the most varied nations, under the most diversified circumstances, in the most cultivated, in the rudest races and intellects, in all classes of society, the owner of that great Name reigns. High and low, rich and poor acknowledge him. Millions are conversing with him, are venturing on his word, are looking for his Presence. Palaces, sumptuous and innumerable, are raised to his honour, his image, as in the hour of his humiliation, is triumphantly displayed ... It is worn next to the heart in life; it is held before the failing eyes in death.

Here then, is One who is *not* a mere name, who is not a mere fiction, who is a reality ... He lives ... as the awful motive force of a thousand great events. He has done without effort what others with life-long struggles have not done. Can he be less than divine? ◆

Questions opening up the topic

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp.14-15 – sharing reactions to the following questions:

Questions

- ◆ In the first session, we came to appreciate what a remarkable figure Jesus was. What image of Jesus has emerged as central for you?
- ◆ Jesus came among us with a purpose. What did he come to give to the world?

Viewing of DVD

- ◆ Chapter 4:
What Makes him Different?
- ◆ Chapter 5:
The Mission Goes on

Sharing of reflections on the presentation

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp. 14-15 – sharing immediate reactions to the presentation:

Question

- ◆ What has struck you as enlightening, inspiring, or even puzzling?

A reading related to the theme

Alternative reading is provided on pages 24 & 25

Pope Paul VI, Manila 1970

'Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!' I am sent by Christ himself to do this. I am an apostle, I am a witness. The more distant the goal, the more difficult my mission, the more pressing is the love that urges me to it. I must bear witness to his name: Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God. He reveals the invisible God, he is the first-born of all creation, the foundation of everything created. He is the teacher of humanity, and its redeemer. He was born, he died and he rose again for us.

He is the centre of history and of the world; he is the one who knows us and who loves us; he is the companion and friend of our life. He is the man of sorrows and of hope. It is he who will come and who one day will be our judge and – we hope – the everlasting fullness of our existence, our happiness.

I could never finish speaking about him: he is the light and the truth; indeed, he is the way, the truth and the life. He is the bread and the spring of living water to satisfy our hunger and our thirst. He is our shepherd, our guide, our model, our comfort, our brother. Like us, and more than us, he has been made little, poor, humiliated; he has been a worker; he has known misfortune and been patient. For our sake he spoke, he worked miracles, and founded a new kingdom where the poor are happy, where peace is the principle for living together, where the pure of heart and those who mourn are raised up and comforted, where those who hunger and thirst after justice have their fill, where sinners can be forgiven, where all are brothers and sisters.

Jesus Christ: you have heard him spoken of; indeed the greater part of you are Christians. So, to you Christians I repeat his name, to everyone I proclaim him: Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega; he is the king of the new world; he is the secret of history; he is the key to our destiny. He is the mediator, the bridge, between heaven and earth. He is more perfectly than anyone

else the Son of Man, because he is the Son of God, eternal and infinite. He is the son of Mary, blessed among all women, his mother according to the flesh, and our mother through our sharing in the Spirit of his mystical body.

Jesus Christ is our constant preaching; it is his name that we proclaim to the ends of the earth and through the ages. □

Alternative reading

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (n.5, 7) of Vatican II

God – who ‘desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth’ (1 Tim) - ‘has spoken to our fathers through the prophets in many and various ways’ (Heb 1).

When the fullness of time had come, however, he sent his Son, the Word made flesh, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken hearted (Is 61; Lk 4), to be our bodily and spiritual medicine - the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim). His humanity, united to the person of the Word, he made the instrument of our salvation ...

The wonders wrought by God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming humankind and giving perfect worship to God.

He achieved his task principally by his *Paschal Mystery* - realised through his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension, whereby ‘dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life’. Indeed, it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament which is the whole Church ...

Christ always associates the Church with himself in the truly great work of giving perfect praise to God and making men and women holy. The Church is his dearly beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through him offers worship to the eternal Father. ◇

Final reflective sharing

This final sharing of personal responses to the questions given below is the most important phase of the session, and should be entered into generously, in the spirit of the Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet ‘Getting Started’ pp. 14-15.

It may begin with a brief period of silent reflection, which is followed by two stages:

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Questions

- ◆ What are the principal things you take away from our two sessions on the Saviour?
- ◆ Are there practical ways in which our communities can be helped develop their personal relationship with the Saviour?

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

There are two ways of understanding the Saviour in the Gospels. The most familiar is that of St John's gospel, an approach "**from above**". It begins with the divine Jesus, the Word who "**became flesh**" and returning to the Father opened the way for us to share in his divine life. The approach of the other three gospels – less familiar, but very important in an age in which many must find the Christian faith anew – is "**from below**". It begins with the man from Nazareth who made such an impression upon those who met him, and retraces the **journey into the fullness of faith** made by those who first became his followers.

Today's historical scholarship is an invaluable assistance to us as we follow this way exploring all that the gospels can tell us. Contemporary scholars point out what **a remarkable figure** Jesus turns out to be. Far from undermining our faith in Jesus as the eternal Son of the Father, this approach brings home to us that the life of Jesus only makes sense in the light of what Christian faith tells us about him. Through his human life we are led **deep into the mystery of God.**

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