

Jesus' Love Is Now

Jesus' life, brought to a climax in the Paschal Mystery, reveals God's great love. Jesus' preaching, miracles, compassion for the poor, and the time spent with his disciples testify to this love. He taught and lived a message of mercy, forgiveness, and justice. He calls us, his disciples, to do the same by striving to live good, moral, and holy lives.

Jesus continues to live through his followers' compassion to the poor, outcast, and downtrodden as well as in the proclamation of the Word, the sacraments, and particularly the Eucharist. He gives us himself in the Eucharist, where he is really present in a unique way.

Jesus, the Son of God, is truly present there — body and blood, soul and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine.



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Jesus' love is present in the gathering of the Church. At Pentecost, he sent the Holy Spirit to those gathered "together in one place" (Acts 2:1). After they were "filled with the Holy Spirit," his disciples realized in a new way that Jesus lived in and through them — the church community (Acts 4:8).

Knowing Jesus

Knowing Jesus is a lifelong task. We come to know him in a variety of ways.

Prayer. Asking in prayer for knowledge about Jesus is an important way to know the risen Lord. Doing so enables us to develop a personal relationship with him.

Jesus is present to us in prayer. He is our model of prayer. When Jesus needed strength from his Father, he went aside and prayed. We need to follow his way to the Father.



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How do you integrate prayer into your daily life?

The Holy Eucharist. Jesus' Eucharistic presence holds a special place in the Church's life. For many disciples, it is the source and summit of their personal relationship with Jesus. When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we can experience the depths of divine friendship between ourselves and our risen Lord. His abiding presence in the Eucharist affords us special opportunities to praise and thank him in visits to the Blessed Sacrament and Eucharistic devotions.



How do you come to know and love Jesus through the holy Eucharist?



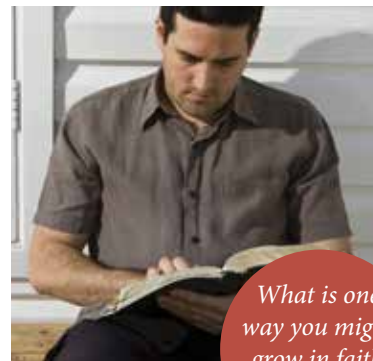
Who in your life has been a personal witness of Christ for you?

Personal Witness.

The personal witness of a good, holy person is one of the best ways to come to know Jesus.

Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

Reading Scripture and meditating on biblical passages are excellent ways to grow in knowledge and appreciation of Jesus. So is the study of Jesus in sacred Tradition, Church teaching, and solid theology.



What is one way you might grow in faith through study?

A Final Word

Christian hope rests on God's promise to always love us. As John says, "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 Jn 3:1).

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Jesus Christ The Son of God



"I am with you always ..."

— MATTHEW 28:20

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Late afternoon shadows engulfed a young man, standing quietly inside the door of my room on the third day of “Catholic Beliefs and Practices” class. I asked, “Can I help you?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “My name is Mike. I’m in your class. I wonder if I should drop the class. I really like it but don’t understand much.”

“Give me an example of what you don’t understand,” I replied.

“Well, you talk a lot in class about someone I don’t really know.”

Curious about who it was, I asked, “Who?”

Mike replied, “You keep talking about Jesus. Who is he?”

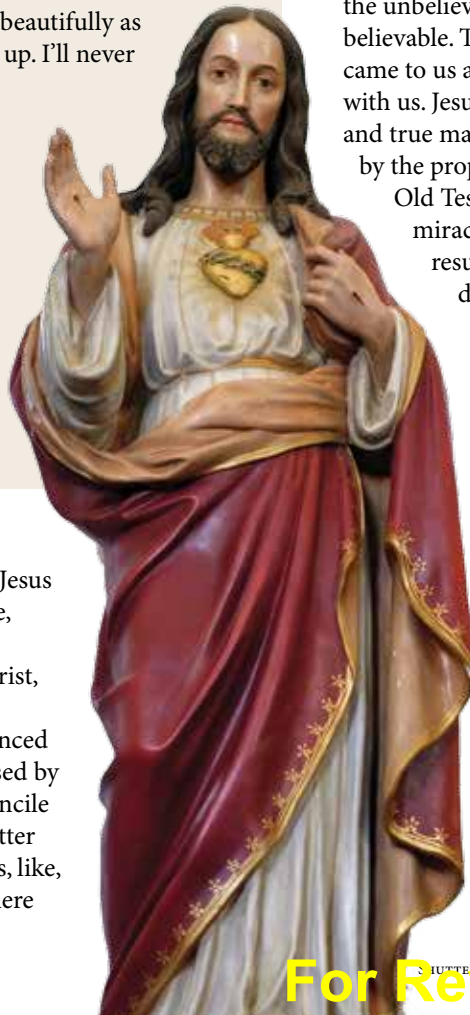
I couldn’t believe my ears, but he was serious.

Mike stayed in class. He responded beautifully as he learned what he missed growing up. I’ll never forget the joy on his face when he came to know Jesus, went through the RCIA, and entered the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

Most of us know that Jesus was born, died, and rose from the dead and that we believe he is God, we worship him, and receive him in communion. Like Mike, though, we ask ourselves: What difference does he make in our lives?

God Comes to Us

To address the question about who Jesus is and what difference does he make, we begin with Mark’s Gospel, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1). These words reveal that Jesus is our hope, announced by prophets, like Isaiah, and witnessed by John the Baptist. Jesus came to reconcile us with the Father, help us lead a better life, and address life’s deep mysteries, like, “Why do we suffer?” and “Why is there evil in the world?”



To appreciate Jesus, we need to begin with the Old Testament. It contains God’s gradual revelation to the Israelites. He gives them the Law and Commandments, establishes a covenant with them, and promises to send a savior to atone for the original sin of Adam and Eve and the sins of all humankind.

Basic Beliefs

The New Testament testifies to Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection and reveals the Church’s beginning. Here, we learn of the New Covenant, which God established through the blood of Jesus.

Before Jesus came, the Jewish people had no idea that God would send his own son to save them. That’s the great thing about our faith. We believe that in Jesus the unbelievable becomes believable. The Son of God came to us and remains with us. Jesus is true God and true man — foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. His miracles, teaching, and resurrection from the dead testify that he is God.

The New Testament, especially the four Gospels, reveal the mystery of the Trinity as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit — three divine persons in one divine nature. It also reveals the mystery of the Incarnation — namely, that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity (God the Son), while retaining his divine nature, assumed a human nature and became man to accomplish our salvation. He became a man like us in everything but sin. As the Letter to the Colossians says, “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (2:9).



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The Nicene Creed

Based on the New Testament and sacred Tradition, the Nicene Creed summarizes the early Church belief about Jesus. Here, we read:

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. 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.

This is the heart of the Church’s faith in Jesus. It’s an amazing belief, revealed by a loving God who wishes us to live a happy life here and enjoy eternal blessedness hereafter. Jesus, the God-man of love, mercy, and forgiveness, helps us clarify life’s mysteries through his teaching.

Why Did Jesus Come?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (457-460) summarizes why Jesus came. The “Word became flesh”:

- “In order to save us by reconciling us with God”
- “So that thus we might know God’s love”
- “To be our model of holiness”
- “To make us ‘partakers of the divine nature’”

Humankind needed to be reconciled with God after the original sin of Adam and Eve and the personal sins humans commit. Jesus brought about this reconciliation.



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His life, death, and resurrection (the Paschal Mystery) testify to the great love that God has for us, and so do creation, his continued presence in the Church, the sacraments — especially the Eucharist — and his promise to come again at the end of the world.

Jesus invites us to be holy by imitating him. In so doing, we reflect God’s holiness and witness to Trinitarian love. By sharing in God’s divine nature through sanctifying grace, we become holy. Great saints and ordinary holy people — fathers, mothers, friends — through the ages testify to the holiness that God shares with those who love him.