

## **SEGMENT SEVEN**

### **THEME: JESUS CHRIST – THE WORD MADE FLESH**

#### **OPENING PRAYER / SCRIPTURE READING:**

“But when the fullness of time has come, God sent 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 children of God” (Galatians 4: 4-5)

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...and from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace” (John 1: 14, 16)

#### **INSTRUCTORS’ SUMMARY STATEMENTS:**

“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” (John 3:16). The heart of Christian belief is the Incarnation (God becoming human) of the person of Jesus Christ who we believe is the redeemer of the world and the center of human history.

All the promises God made throughout the history of salvation – to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Moses and David, to the prophets and kings of Israel – come to fulfillment in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The history of salvation reaches its completion and perfection in the person of the “Word Made Flesh,” Jesus Christ who is the Son of God.

As the Word of God made visible in human form, Jesus Christ fully reveals God’s love and saving plan for humanity. In Christ each of us discovers our full Christian dignity as creatures made in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the ‘Word made flesh.’ In the life, death and resurrection of Christ we understand the deepest meaning and purpose of our existence as children of God.

The Word was made flesh so that we might know God’s love and be reconciled to God who “loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins” (1 John 4: 10). Not only is Jesus Christ a great teacher, prophet, liberator and founder of the Christian faith. He is the Incarnation of God, the “invisible made visible,” true God and true man, God’s only Son.

- ❖ Central to Christian faith is belief in the mystery of the “Incarnation” by which the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. In the Incarnation, God the Father reveals the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. (CCC 461 – 463).
- ❖ The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus is part God and part man. Nor is he a mixture of the divine and the human. Jesus became truly man while remaining truly God: He is true God and true man. The Incarnation is the mystery of the union between the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ, the “Word made flesh.” (CCC 464)
- ❖ Jesus is the one mediator between God and man. During the early centuries the Church had to defend and clarify this central Christian belief against numerous opposing views (CCC 464 – 469)
- ❖ The Gospels give us the record of the whole life of Christ from his birth, his miracles and teachings, his examples of love and compassion, to his passion and death on the cross and his glorious resurrection.
- ❖ The “Word became flesh” in Christ to be our model of love, forgiveness and holiness. “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 15: 12). To be a disciple of Christ is to love God and to imitate Jesus’ actions as we follow his teachings of love, mercy and compassion for others.
- ❖ The names given to Jesus tell us about his mission and his work for our salvation: “Jesus” means “God saves” (CCC, 430 – 435); the word “Christ” means “Messiah” or the One Anointed and chosen by God (CCC, 436 – 440); the title “Son of God” reflects his divine origin and identity; and the name “Lord” indicates his divine power over the world. (CCC, 446 – 451).
- ❖ The Church believes that the “key, the center, and the purpose of the whole of human history is to be found in Jesus Christ” (CCC 450)
- ❖ The chief mysteries of Christ’s life are his birth, the “Paschal mystery” of his sufferings and death on the Cross, and his victory over sin and death in the resurrection. (CCC 512 – 658)
- ❖ “The whole of Christ’s life was a continual teaching: his silences, his miracles, his gestures, his prayer, his love for people, his special affection for the little and the poor, his acceptance of the total sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world, and his Resurrection are the fulfillment of divine Revelation” (CCC, 561)

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and not merely as a wise teacher or liberator, so central to Christianity?
2. How can you deepen your personal relationship with Christ? How can you grow in your understanding of Jesus' life, his teachings and his saving death and resurrection?
3. "Who do you say that I am?" is Jesus' question to his disciples. Peter answers, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16) How would you answer Jesus' question – "Who do you say that I am?"
4. If God assumed human nature in the Incarnation of Jesus, what does that say about the dignity of our human nature?

## **SCRIPTURE REFERENCES/QUOTATIONS:**

1 John 1: 1-4

Philippians 2: 5-8

Hebrews 10: 5-7

Acts 8: 37

I John 2: 23

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped at, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." Philippians 2: 5-8

"Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued out of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom" (St. Leo the Great, *Christmas Sermon*, 1)

“Human beings cannot live without love. They remain beings who are incomprehensible to themselves if love is not revealed to them, if they do not encounter love, if they do not experience it and make it their own...This is why Christ “fully reveals man to himself”...in Christ we find again the greatness, dignity and value that belongs to our humanity.” Pope John Paul II, *Redeemer of Man*, 10

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:**

Universal Catechism, “*I Believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God*” Part One, Chapter Two, 422 - 682

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, Chapter I

Pope John Paul II, *The Redeemer of Man, Redemptor Hominis*. Encyclical Letter, March 4, 1979

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

John 1: 1

1 John 1: 1-4