

Adult Catechism @ Immaculate Conception

Year 2 Creed

INCARNATION

Catechism Paragraphs 422-682

Aquinas College Online Catechist Formation Program VIDEO links Pt I 42:54 <https://vimeo.com/40818004>

Pt II 32:04 <https://vimeo.com/40914379>

Any Seeds Planted? Any Memories Provoked? Any Questions Raised? Any Actions Prompted?

422 *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 and daughters*
Gal 4:4-5. *This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God:* Mk 1:1 _____

423 We believe and confess that **Jesus of Nazareth**, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made human. _____

424 Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* St. Peter Mt 16:16 _____

425 The transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in **proclaiming Jesus Christ** in order to lead others to faith in him. From the beginning, the first disciples burned with the desire to proclaim Christ:
We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. Acts 4:20 _____

426 *At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a **Person**, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father. . .who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever.* _

427 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 is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips...
Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus. _____

428 Whoever is called to teach Christ must first seek the surpassing worth of **knowing Christ Jesus**; he must suffer the loss of all things... in order to gain Christ and be found in him, and to know him and the power of his resurrection, and (to) share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible (he) may attain the resurrection from the dead. Phil 3:8-11 _____

429 From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to evangelize, and to lead others to the yes of faith in Jesus Christ.
But at the same time the need to know this faith better makes itself felt. _____

430 **Jesus** means in Hebrew: **God saves**. At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made human, will save his people from their sins.
In Jesus, God recapitulates all of his history of salvation on behalf of humans. _____

433 **The name of the Saviour God** was invoked only once in the year by the high priest in atonement for the sins of Israel, after he had sprinkled the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies with the sacrificial blood. The mercy seat was the place of God's presence. _____

435 **The name of Jesus** is at the heart of Christian prayer. All liturgical prayers conclude with the words *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. The Hail Mary reaches its high point in the words *blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*. The Eastern prayer of the heart, the Jesus Prayer, says: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*. (See the book *The Way of a Pilgrim*) Many Christians, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died with the one word *Jesus* on their lips. _____

436 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**. Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of **priest, prophet and king**. _____

437 To the shepherds, the angel announced the birth of Jesus as the Messiah promised to Israel: *To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord*. From the beginning he was *the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, conceived as holy* in Mary's virginal womb. God called Joseph to *take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit*, so that Jesus, *who is called Christ*, should be born of Joseph's spouse into the messianic lineage of David.

438 *For the name **Christ** implies **he who anointed, he who was anointed and the very anointing with which he was anointed**. The one who anointed is the Father, the one who was anointed is the Son, and he was anointed with the Spirit who is the anointing.* St. Irenaeus _____

439 Many Jews and even certain Gentiles who shared their hope recognized in Jesus the fundamental attributes of the messianic *Son of David*, promised by God to Israel. Jesus accepted his rightful title of Messiah, though with some reserve because it was understood by some of his contemporaries in too human a sense, as essentially political. _____

440 Jesus accepted Peter's profession of faith, which acknowledged him to be the Messiah, by announcing the imminent Passion of the Son of Man. He unveiled the authentic content of his messianic kingship both in the transcendent identity of the Son of Man *who came down from heaven*, and in his redemptive mission as the suffering Servant: *The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*. Hence the true meaning of his kingship is revealed only when he is raised high on the cross. Only after his Resurrection will Peter be able to proclaim Jesus' messianic kingship to the People of God: *Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified*. _____

441 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. _____

443 **Peter** could recognize the transcendent character of the Messiah's divine sonship because Jesus had clearly allowed it to be so understood. _____

444 The Gospels report that at two solemn moments, the **Baptism** and the **Transfiguration** of Christ, the voice of the Father designates Jesus his **beloved Son**. Jesus calls himself the *only Son of God*, and by this title affirms his eternal pre-existence (Jn 3:16). In the centurion's exclamation before the crucified Christ, *Truly this man was the Son of God* (Mk 15:39), that Christian confession is already heard. Only in the Paschal mystery can the believer give the title **Son of God** its full meaning. _____

446 In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the ineffable Hebrew name YHWH, by which God revealed himself to Moses, is rendered as Kyrios, **Lord**. From then on, **Lord** becomes the more usual name by which to indicate the divinity of Israel's God. The New Testament uses this full sense of the title **Lord** both for the Father and - what is new - for Jesus, who is thereby recognized as God Himself. _____

447 Jesus ascribes this title to himself in a veiled way when he disputes with the Pharisees about the meaning of Psalm 110, but also in an explicit way when he addresses his apostles. _____

448 In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration: My Lord and my God! It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: It is the Lord!

450 From the beginning of Christian history, the assertion of **Christ's lordship over the world** and over history has implicitly recognized that humans should not submit personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Caesar is not *the Lord*. *The Church...believes that the key, the centre and the purpose of the whole of human history is to be found in its Lord and Master.* _____

451 Christian prayer is characterized by the title **Lord**, whether in the invitation to prayer (*The Lord be with you*), its conclusion (*through Christ our Lord*) or the exclamation full of trust and hope: Maranatha (*Our Lord, come!*) or Maranatha (*Come, Lord!*) - *Amen Come Lord Jesus!* _____

456 With the Nicene Creed, we answer by confessing:
*For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.* _____

457 **The Word became flesh** for us in order to save us...
*Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; dead, to rise again.
We had lost the possession of the good; it was necessary for it to be given back to us. Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us the light; captives, we awaited a Saviour; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Are these things minor or insignificant? Did they not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state?* St. Gregory of Nyssa _____

458 **The Word became flesh** so that thus we might know God's love. _____

459 **The Word became flesh** to be our model of holiness. _____

460 **The Word became flesh** to make us *partakers of the divine nature*.
*For this is why the Word became human, and the Son of God became the Son of man:
so that humans, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship,
might become a son/daughter of God.* St. Irenaeus
For the Son of God became human so that we might become God. St. Athanasius
*The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature,
so that he, made human, might make humans gods.* St. Thomas Aquinas _____

461 Taking up St. John's expression, **The Word became flesh** (Jn 1:14), The Church calls **Incarnation** the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. In a hymn cited by St. Paul, the Church sings the mystery of the Incarnation:
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, 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. Phil 2:5-8; cf. LH, Saturday, Canticle at Evening Prayer _____

464 The **unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God** does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly human while remaining truly God. **Jesus Christ is true God and true human.** During the first centuries, the Church had to defend and clarify this truth of faith against the **heresies** that falsified it. _____

465 The first heresies denied not so much Christ's divinity as his true humanity (**Gnostic Docetism**). The first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 confessed in its Creed that the Son of God is *begotten, not made, of the same substance (homoousios) as the Father*, and condemned **Arius**, who had 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. _____

466 The **Nestorian heresy** regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God's Son. The Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 that Mary truly became the **Mother of God** by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: **Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh.** _____

467 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 fourth ecumenical council, at Chalcedon in 451, confessed: *Following the holy Fathers, we unanimously teach and confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, composed of rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father as to his divinity and consubstantial with us as to his humanity; "like us in all things but sin". He was begotten from the Father before all ages as to his divinity and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, was born as to his humanity of the virgin Mary, the Mother of God.* **We confess that one and the same Christ, Lord, and only-begotten Son, is to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change, division or separation. The distinction between the natures was never abolished by their union, but rather the character proper to each of the two natures was preserved as they came together in one person (prosopon) and one hypostasis.** _____

468 After the Council of Chalcedon, some made of Christ's human nature a kind of personal subject. The fifth ecumenical council, at Constantinople in 553, confessed that *there is but one hypostasis [or person], which is our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Trinity.* _____

469 The Church thus confesses that Jesus is inseparably **true God and true man**. He is truly the Son of God who, without ceasing to be God and Lord, became a man and our brother: *What he was, he remained and what he was not, he assumed*, sings the Roman Liturgy. And the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom proclaims and sings: *O only-begotten Son and Word of God, immortal being, you who deigned for our salvation to become incarnate of the holy Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, you who without change became man and were crucified, O Christ our God, you who by your death have crushed death, you who are one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us!* _____

470 Because **human nature was assumed, not absorbed**, in the mysterious union of the Incarnation, the Church was led over the course of centuries to confess the full reality of Christ's human soul, with its operations of intellect and will, and of his human body. In parallel fashion, she had to recall on each occasion that Christ's human nature belongs, as his own, to the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it. Everything that Christ is and does in this nature derives from *one of the Trinity.* _____

The Son of God therefore communicates to his humanity his own personal mode of existence in the Trinity. In his soul as in his body, Christ thus expresses humanly the divine ways of the Trinity: *The Son of God...worked with human hands; he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.* Gaudium et Spes, 22 _____

471 Apollinarius of Laodicea 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.** _____

472 This **human soul** that the Son of God assumed is endowed with a true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space and time. This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, *increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man*, and would even have to inquire for himself about what one in the human condition can learn only from experience. _____

473 But at the same time, this truly human knowledge of God's Son expressed the divine life of his person. *The human nature of God's Son, not by itself but by its union with the Word, knew and showed forth in itself everything that pertains to God.* St. Maximus the Confessor
Such is first of all the case with the intimate and immediate knowledge that the Son of God made human has of his Father. The Son in his human knowledge also showed the divine penetration he had into the secret thoughts of human hearts. _____

474 By its union to the divine wisdom in the person of the Word incarnate, Christ enjoyed in his human knowledge the fullness of understanding of the eternal plans he had come to reveal. What he admitted to not knowing in this area, he elsewhere declared himself not sent to reveal. _____

475 At the sixth ecumenical council, Constantinople III in 681, the Church confessed that Christ possesses **two wills** and **two natural operations, divine and human.** They are not opposed to each other, but co-operate in such a way that the Word made flesh willed humanly in obedience to his Father all that he had decided divinely with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our salvation. Christ's human will *does not resist or oppose but rather submits to his divine and almighty will.* _____

476 Since the Word became flesh in assuming a true humanity, **Christ's body was finite.** Therefore the human face of Jesus can be portrayed; at the seventh ecumenical council (Nicaea II in 787) the Church recognized its representation in holy images to be legitimate. _____

477 At the same time the Church has always acknowledged that in the body of Jesus *we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see* (Roman Missal, Preface of Christmas I). The individual characteristics of Christ's body express the divine person of God's Son. He has made the features of his human body his own, to the point that they can be venerated when portrayed in a holy image, for the believer *who venerates the icon is venerating in it the person of the one depicted.* _____

478 Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us. He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, **the Sacred Heart of Jesus**, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, *is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that...love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings* without exception. Pope Pius XII, Enc. *Haurietis aquas* _____

484 The **Annunciation to Mary** inaugurates *the fullness of time*, The time of the fulfilment of God's promises and preparations. Mary was invited to conceive him in whom the *whole fullness of deity* would dwell *bodily*. The divine response to her question, *How can this be, since I know not man?*, was given by the power of the Spirit: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you.* _____

485 The Holy Spirit, *the Lord, the giver of Life*, is sent to sanctify the womb of the Virgin Mary and divinely fecundate it, **causing her to conceive** the eternal Son of the Father in a humanity drawn from her own. _____

486 The whole life of Jesus Christ will make manifest *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.* Acts 10:38 _____

487 What the Catholic faith believes about **Mary** is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ. _____

488 *God sent forth his Son, but to prepare a body for him*, he wanted the free co-operation of a creature. For this, from all eternity God chose for the mother of his Son a daughter of Israel, a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee: *The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in the coming of death, so also should a woman contribute to the coming of life.* _____

489 Throughout the Old Covenant **the mission of many holy women prepared for that of Mary.** At the very beginning there was **Eve**; despite her disobedience, she receives the promise of a posterity that will be victorious over the evil one, as well as the promise that she will be the mother of all the living. By virtue of this promise, **Sarah** conceives a son in spite of her old age. Against all human expectation God chooses those who were considered powerless and weak to show forth his faithfulness to his promises: **Hannah**, the mother of Samuel; **Deborah**; **Ruth**; **Judith** and **Esther**; and many other women. _____

490 To become the mother of the Saviour, *Mary was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role.* The angel **Gabriel** at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as *full of grace.* In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was **necessary that she be wholly borne by God's grace.** _____

491 Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that *Mary, full of grace* through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the **Immaculate Conception** confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: *The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.* _____

492 The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person *in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places* and chose her *in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.* _____

493 The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God **the All-Holy (Panagia)**, and celebrate her as *free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.* By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long. *Let it be done to me according to your word...* _____

494 Giving her consent to God's word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God's grace:

Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race....

The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience:

what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith. St. Irenaeus

Death through Eve, life through Mary. St. Jerome _____

495 Called in the Gospels *the mother of Jesus*, Mary is acclaimed by Elizabeth, at the prompting of the Spirit and even before the birth of her son, as *the mother of my Lord*. In fact, the One whom she conceived as man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father's eternal Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. Hence the Church confesses that Mary is truly **Mother of God** (*Theotokos*). _____

496 From the first formulations of her faith, the Church has confessed that Jesus was conceived solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, affirming also the corporeal aspect of this event: Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit without human seed. The Fathers see in the virginal conception the sign that it truly was the Son of God who came in a humanity like our own. *You are firmly convinced about our Lord, who is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, Son of God according to the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin,...he was truly nailed to a tree for us in his flesh, under Pontius Pilate...he truly suffered, as he is also truly risen.* St. Ignatius of Antioch _____

497 The Gospel accounts understand the virginal conception of Jesus as a divine work that surpasses all human understanding and possibility.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. The Prophet Isaiah _____

498 People are sometimes troubled by the silence of St. Mark's Gospel and the New Testament Epistles about **Jesus' virginal conception**. Some might wonder if we were merely dealing with legends or theological constructs not claiming to be history. To this we must respond: Faith in the virginal conception of Jesus met with the lively opposition, mockery or incomprehension of non-believers, Jews and pagans alike; so it could hardly have been motivated by pagan mythology or by some adaptation to the ideas of the age. The meaning of this event is accessible only to faith, which understands in it the *connection of these mysteries with one another* in the totality of Christ's mysteries, from his Incarnation to his Passover. *Mary's virginity and giving birth, and even the Lord's death escaped the notice of the prince of this world: these three mysteries worthy of proclamation were accomplished in God's silence.* St. Ignatius of Antioch

499 The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess **Mary's real and perpetual virginity** even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made human. In fact, Christ's birth *did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it*. And so the liturgy of the Church celebrates Mary as **Aeiparthenos**, the **Ever-virgin**. _____

500 Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that **the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus**. The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, *brothers of Jesus*, are the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls *the other Mary* (Mt 13:55; 28:1; cf. Mt 27:56). They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression. _____

501 Jesus is **Mary's** only son, but her **spiritual motherhood** extends to all humans whom indeed he came to save. _____

502 The eyes of faith can discover in the context of the whole of Revelation the mysterious reasons why God in his saving plan wanted his Son to be born of a virgin. These reasons touch both on the person of Christ and his redemptive mission, and on the welcome Mary gave that mission on our behalf.

503 **Mary's virginity manifests God's absolute initiative in the Incarnation.**
Jesus has only God as Father. *He was never estranged from the Father because of the human nature which he assumed... He is naturally Son of the Father as to his divinity and naturally son of his mother as to his humanity, but properly Son of the Father in both natures.* Council of Friuli _____

504 Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary's womb because he is **the New Adam**, who inaugurates the new creation. _____

505 By his virginal conception, Jesus, the New Adam, ushers in the new birth of children adopted in the Holy Spirit through faith. The acceptance of this life is virginal because it is entirely the Spirit's gift to humanity. The **spousal character of the human vocation** in relation to God is fulfilled perfectly in Mary's virginal motherhood. _____

506 Mary is a virgin because **her virginity is the sign of her faith unadulterated by any doubt**, and of her undivided gift of herself to God's will. *Mary is more blessed because she embraces faith in Christ than because she conceives the flesh of Christ.* St. Augustine _____

507 At once virgin and mother, Mary is the symbol and the most perfect realization of the Church: *the Church indeed...by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and Baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse.* _____

511 The Virgin Mary uttered **her yes in the name of all human nature**. St. Thomas Aquinas
By her obedience she became **the new Eve**, mother of the living. _____

512 **Concerning Christ's life** the Creed speaks only about the mysteries of the Incarnation (conception and birth) and Paschal mystery (passion, crucifixion, death, burial, descent into hell, resurrection and ascension). It says nothing explicitly about the mysteries of Jesus' hidden or public life, but the articles of faith concerning his Incarnation and Passover do shed light on the whole of his earthly life. *All that Jesus did and taught, from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, is to be seen in the light of the mysteries of Christmas and Easter.* _____

514 Many things about Jesus of interest to human curiosity do not figure in the Gospels. Almost nothing is said about his hidden life at Nazareth, and even a great part of his public life is not recounted. 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. Jn 20:31 _____

515 The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith and wanted to share it with others. Having known in faith who Jesus is, they could see and make others see the traces of his mystery in all his earthly life. From the swaddling clothes of his birth to the vinegar of his Passion and the shroud of his Resurrection, **everything in Jesus' life was a sign of his mystery**. _____

516 **Christ's whole earthly life** - his words and deeds, his silences and sufferings, indeed his manner of being and speaking - **is Revelation of the Father**. Jesus can say: *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father*, and the Father can say: *This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!* _____

517 **Christ's whole life is a mystery of redemption.**
Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of his cross, but this mystery is at work throughout Christ's entire life: -already in his Incarnation through which by becoming poor he enriches us with his poverty; - in his hidden life which by his submission atones for our disobedience; - in his word which purifies its hearers; - in his healings and exorcisms by which *he took our infirmities and bore our diseases*; - and in his Resurrection by which he justifies us. _____

518 **Christ's whole life is a mystery of recapitulation.**

All Jesus did, said and suffered had for its aim restoring fallen humanity to our original vocation:

When Christ became incarnate and was made human, he recapitulated in himself the long history of mankind and procured for us a "short cut" to salvation, so that what we had lost in Adam, that is, being in the image and likeness of God, we might recover in Christ Jesus. For this reason Christ experienced all the stages of life, thereby giving communion with God to all humans. St. Irenaeus

519 All Christ's riches are for every individual and are everybody's property. St. John Paul II

Christ did not live his life for himself but for us. _____

520 In all of his life Jesus presents himself as **our model**. He is the perfect human, 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. ____

521 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 human.

We are called only to become one with him:

We must continue to accomplish in ourselves the stages of Jesus' life and his mysteries and often to beg him to perfect and realize them in us and in his whole Church... For it is the plan of the Son of God to make us and the whole Church partake in his mysteries and to extend them to and continue them in us and in his whole Church. This is his plan for fulfilling his mysteries in us. St. John Eudes _____

522 **The coming of God's Son to earth** is an event of such immensity

that **God willed to prepare for it** over centuries. He makes everything converge on Christ:

all the rituals and sacrifices, figures and symbols of the *First Covenant*.

He announces him through the mouths of the prophets who succeeded one another in Israel.

Moreover, he awakens in the hearts of the pagans a dim expectation of this coming. _____

523 **St. John the Baptist** is the Lord's immediate precursor or forerunner, sent to prepare his way.

Prophet of the Most High, John surpasses all the prophets, of whom he is the last.

He inaugurates the Gospel, already from his mother's womb welcomes the coming of Christ,

and rejoices in being *the friend of the bridegroom*, whom he points out as *the Lamb of God*,

who takes away the sin of the world. Going before Jesus *in the spirit and power of Elijah*,

John bears witness to Christ in his preaching, by his Baptism of conversion, and through his martyrdom.

524 When the Church celebrates **the liturgy of Advent** each year,

she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation

for the Saviour's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. _____

525 Jesus was **born in a humble stable**, into a poor family.

Simple shepherds were the first witnesses to this event.

In this poverty heaven's glory was made manifest.

The Church never tires of singing the glory of this night:

*The Virgin today brings into the world the Eternal
and the earth offers a cave to the Inaccessible.*

The angels and shepherds praise him

and the magi advance with the star,

For you are born for us,

Little Child, God eternal! Kontakion of Romanos the Melodist _____

526 **To become a child in relation to God** is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become *children of God* we must be *born from above* or *born of God*. Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us: *O marvellous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity.* January 1 Evening Prayer Antiphon _____

527 Jesus' **circumcision**, on the eighth day after his birth, is the sign of his incorporation into Abraham's descendants, into the people of the covenant. It is the sign of his submission to the Law and his deputation to Israel's worship, in which he will participate throughout his life. This sign prefigures that *circumcision of Christ* which is Baptism. _____

528 The **Epiphany** is the **manifestation** of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Saviour of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (magi) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee. The Epiphany shows that *the full number of the nations* now takes its *place in the family of the patriarchs*, and acquires *Israelitica dignitas* (is made worthy of the heritage of Israel). St. Leo the Great _____

529 The **presentation of Jesus in the temple** shows him to be the firstborn Son who belongs to the Lord. With Simeon and Anna, all Israel awaits its *encounter* with the Saviour - the name given to this event in the Byzantine tradition. _____

530 The **flight into Egypt** and the massacre of the innocents make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light. Christ's whole life was lived under the sign of persecution. Jesus' departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents him as the definitive liberator of God's people. _____

531 During the greater part of **Jesus' hidden life** Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human beings: a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labour. His religious life was that of a Jew obedient to the law of God, a life in the community. _____

532 The **obedience** of Christ in the daily routine of his hidden life was already inaugurating his work of restoring what the disobedience of Adam had destroyed. _____

533 **The hidden life at Nazareth** allows everyone to enter into fellowship with Jesus by the most ordinary events of daily life: **The home of Nazareth** is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus - the school of the Gospel. First, then, a lesson of silence. May esteem for silence, that admirable and indispensable condition of mind, revive in us...; A lesson on family life. May Nazareth teach us what family life is, its communion of love, its austere and simple beauty, and its sacred and inviolable character...; A lesson of work. Nazareth, home of the "Carpenter's Son", in you I would choose to understand and proclaim the severe and redeeming law of human work. . . To conclude, I want to greet all the workers of the world, holding up to them their great pattern their brother who is God. Pope Paul VI at Nazareth _____

534 The **finding of Jesus in the temple** is the only event that breaks the silence of the Gospels about the hidden years of Jesus. Here Jesus lets us catch a glimpse of the mystery of his total consecration to a mission that flows from his divine sonship. Mary kept all these things in her heart during the years Jesus remained hidden in the silence of an ordinary life. _____

535 **Jesus' public life begins with his baptism** by John in the Jordan. _____

536 The baptism of Jesus is on his part the **acceptance and inauguration of his mission** as God's suffering Servant. *The Lamb of God*, already he is anticipating the *baptism* of his bloody death.

537 **Let us be buried with Christ by Baptism to rise with him;**
let us go down with him to be raised with him;
and let us rise with him to be glorified with him. St. Gregory of Nazianzus
Everything that happened to Christ lets us know that, after the bath of water,
the Holy Spirit swoops down upon us from high heaven
and that, adopted by the Father's voice, we become sons of God. St. Hilary of Poitiers _____

538 The Gospels speak of a time of **solitude** for Jesus in the desert immediately after his baptism by John. Driven by the Spirit into the desert, Jesus remains there for forty days without eating. _____

539 Jesus is **the new Adam** who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfils Israel's vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Jesus' victory over the tempter in the desert anticipates victory at the Passion, the supreme act of obedience of his filial love for the Father. _____

540 **Jesus' temptation** reveals the way in which the Son of God is Messiah, contrary to the way Satan proposes to him and the way men wish to attribute to him. By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert. _____

541 *Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying:*
'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe in the gospel.' _____

543 **Everyone is called to enter the kingdom.** To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word:
The word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field; those who hear it with faith and are numbered among the little flock of Christ have truly received the kingdom.
Then, by its own power, the seed sprouts and grows until the harvest. _____

544 The kingdom belongs **to the poor and lowly**, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus is sent to *preach good news to the poor*; he declares them blessed, for *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. To them - **the little ones** the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned. Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation. Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom. _____

545 Jesus invites **sinners** to the table of the kingdom: *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.* _____

546 Jesus' invitation to enter his kingdom comes in the form of **parables**, a characteristic feature of his teaching. Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything. Words are not enough, deeds are required. The parables are like mirrors for us: will we be hard soil or good earth for the word? What use has he made of the talents he has received? Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables. One must enter the kingdom, that is, become a disciple of Christ, in order to *know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven*. For those who stay *outside*, everything remains enigmatic. _____

547 Jesus accompanies his words with many **mighty works and wonders and signs**. _____

548 The **signs** worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him. But his miracles can also be occasions for *offence*; they are not intended to satisfy people's curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons. _____

549 By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness and death, Jesus performed **messianic signs**. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below, but to free all from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts humans in their vocation as God's sons and daughters and causes all forms of human bondage. _____

550 The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: *God reigned from the wood.* _____

551 From the beginning of his public life Jesus chose certain men, twelve in number, to be with him and to participate in his mission. He gives **the Twelve** a share in his authority and *sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal.* _____

553 Jesus entrusted a specific authority to **Peter**: *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* _

555 At the **Transfiguration**, *the whole Trinity appeared: the Father in the voice; the Son in the man; the Spirit in the shining cloud.* St. Thomas Aquinas *You were transfigured on the mountain, and your disciples, as much as they were capable of it, beheld your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified they would understand that your Passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that you truly are the splendour of the Father.* Byzantine Liturgy _____

556 The **Transfiguration** *is the sacrament of the second regeneration: our own Resurrection.* St. Thomas Aquinas *Peter did not yet understand this when he wanted to remain with Christ on the mountain. It has been reserved for you, Peter, but for after death. For now, Jesus says: 'Go down to toil on earth, to serve on earth, to be scorned and crucified on earth. Life goes down to be killed; Bread goes down to suffer hunger; the Way goes down to be exhausted on his journey; the Spring goes down to suffer thirst; and you refuse to suffer?' St. Augustine _____*

557 *When the days drew near for him to be taken up [Jesus] set his face to go to Jerusalem.* He was going up to Jerusalem prepared to die there. _____

559 How will Jerusalem welcome her Messiah? Although Jesus had always refused popular attempts to make him king, he chooses the time and prepares the details for his messianic entry into the city of *his father David*. The acclamation, *Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord*, is taken up by the Church in the *Sanctus*. _____

560 **Jesus' entry into Jerusalem** manifested the coming of the kingdom that the King-Messiah was going to accomplish by the Passover of his Death and Resurrection. _____

561 **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 actualization of his word and the fulfilment of Revelation.* St. John Paul II _____

571 **The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection** stands at the centre 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* by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ. _____

574 From the beginning of Jesus' **public ministry**, certain Pharisees and partisans of Herod together with priests and scribes agreed together to destroy him. He is accused of blasphemy and false prophecy, religious crimes which the Law punished with death by stoning. _____

575 Many of Jesus' deeds and words constituted a **sign of contradiction**. _____

576 In the eyes of many in Israel,
Jesus seems to be acting against essential institutions of the Chosen People:
- submission to the whole of the Law in its written commandments
and, for the Pharisees, in the interpretation of oral tradition;
- the centrality of the Temple at Jerusalem as the holy place where God's presence
dwells in a special way;
- faith in the one God whose glory no human can share. _____

592 Jesus did not abolish **the Law** of Sinai, but rather fulfilled it with such perfection
that he revealed its ultimate meaning and redeemed the transgressions against it. _____

593 Jesus venerated **the Temple** by going up to it for the Jewish feasts of pilgrimage,
and with a jealous love he loved this dwelling of God among men. the Temple prefigures his own
mystery. When he announces its destruction, it is as a manifestation of his own execution and of
the entry into a new age in the history of salvation, when his Body would be the definitive Temple. _____

594 Jesus performed **acts**, such as pardoning sins, **that manifested him** to be
the Saviour God himself. Certain Jews, who did not recognize God made human,
saw in him only a man who made himself God, and judged him as a blasphemer. _____

596 The religious authorities in Jerusalem were not unanimous
about what stance to take towards Jesus. _____

597 The historical complexity of Jesus' trial is apparent in the Gospel accounts. The personal sin of
the participants (Judas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate) is known to God alone. Hence we cannot lay responsibility
for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole, despite the outcry of a manipulated crowd and
the global reproaches contained in the apostles' calls to conversion after Pentecost. Jesus himself,
in forgiving them on the cross, and Peter in following suit, both accept *the ignorance* of the Jews of
Jerusalem and even of their leaders. Still less can we extend responsibility to other Jews of different
times and places, based merely on the crowd's cry: *His blood be on us and on our children!*, a formula
for ratifying a judicial sentence. As the Church declared at the Second Vatican Council: *Neither all Jews
indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his
Passion... Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture.* _____

598 In her Magisterial teaching of the faith and in the witness of her saints,
the Church has never forgotten that **all sinners were the authors and the ministers
of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured**:
*We must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our sins made the Lord
Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify
the Son of God anew in their hearts (for he is in them) and hold him up to contempt. And it can be seen
that our crime in this case is greater in us than in the Jews. As for them, according to the witness of the
Apostle, 'None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified
the Lord of glory.'* *We, however, profess to know him. And when we deny him by our deeds,
we in some way seem to lay violent hands on him.* Roman Catechism
Nor did demons crucify him; it is you who have crucified him
and crucify him still, when you delight in your vices and sins. St. Francis of Assisi _____

599 Jesus' violent death was not the result of chance in an unfortunate coincidence of
circumstances, but is part of the mystery of God's plan. This does not mean that those
who handed him over were merely passive players in a scenario written in advance by God. _____

600 **To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy.** When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of predestination, he includes in it each person's free response to his grace: For the sake of accomplishing his plan of salvation, God permitted the acts that flowed from their blindness. _____

603 Jesus did not experience reprobation as if he himself had sinned. _____

604 God *shows God's love for us in that **while we were yet sinners** Christ died for us.* _____

605 At the end of the parable of the lost sheep Jesus recalled that God's love excludes no one. *There is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer.* _____

618 **The cross** is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the *one mediator* between God and humans. In his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every human. *Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven.* St. Rose of Lima _____

620 Our salvation flows from God's initiative of love for us, because *he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins* (1 Jn 4:10). *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself* (2 Cor 5:19).

621 Jesus freely offered himself for our salvation. Beforehand, during the Last Supper, he both symbolized this offering and made it really present: *This is my body which is given for you* (Lk 22:19). _____

622 The redemption won by Christ consists in this: **He came to give his life as a ransom for many** (Mt 20:28), that is, he *loved [his own] to the end* (Jn 13:1), so that they might be *ransomed from the futile ways inherited from [their] fathers* (1 Pt 1:18). _____

623 By his loving obedience to the Father, *unto death, even death on a cross* (Phil 2:8), Jesus fulfils the atoning mission (cf Is 53:10) of the **suffering Servant**, who will *make many righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities* (Is 53:11; cf. Rom 5:19). _____

625 God [the Son] did not impede death from separating his soul from his body according to the necessary order of nature, but has reunited them to one another in the Resurrection, so that he himself might be, in his person, the meeting point for death and life, by arresting in himself the decomposition of nature produced by death and so becoming the source of reunion for the separated parts. St. Gregory of Nyssa _____

626 *By the fact that at Christ's death his soul was separated from his flesh, his one person is not itself divided into two persons; for the human body and soul of Christ have existed in the same way from the beginning of his earthly existence, in the divine person of the Word; and in death, although separated from each other, both remained with one and the same person of the Word.* St. John Damascene _____

627 Christ's death was **a real death** in that it put an end to his earthly human existence. But because of the union which the person of the Son retained with his body, his was not a mortal corpse like others, for *it was not possible for death to hold him* and therefore *divine power preserved Christ's body from corruption*. St. Thomas Aquinas
Jesus' Resurrection *on the third day* was the sign of this also because bodily decay was held to begin on the fourth day after death. _____

628 **Baptism**, the original and full sign of which is immersion, efficaciously signifies the descent into the tomb by the Christian who dies to sin with Christ in order to live a new life. _____

629 To the benefit of every man, Jesus Christ **tasted death** (cf Heb 2:9). It is truly the Son of God made human who died and was buried. _____

630 During Christ's period in the tomb, his divine person continued to assume both his soul and his body, although they were separated from each other by death. For this reason the dead Christ's body **saw no corruption** (Acts 13:37). _____

631 *Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth.*
He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens.
The Apostles' Creed confesses in the same article **Christ's descent into hell**
and his Resurrection from the dead on the third day,
because in his Passover it was precisely out of the depths of death that he made life spring forth. _____

632 The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was **raised from the dead**
presuppose that the crucified one sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection.
He descended there as Saviour, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there. _____

633 Scripture calls **the abode of the dead**, to which the dead Christ went down, *hell*
- **Sheol** in Hebrew or **Hades** in Greek - because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God.
Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation,
but to free the just who had gone before him. _____

638 **The Resurrection of Jesus** is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ,
a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community;
handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by the documents of the New Testament;
and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross. _____

639 The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event,
with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. _____

640 **The empty tomb** in itself is not a direct proof of Resurrection; the absence of Christ's body from
the tomb could be explained otherwise. Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all.
Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection. _____

643 Christ's Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order,
and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an **historical fact**. It is clear from the facts
that the disciples' faith was drastically put to the test by their master's Passion and death on the cross,
which he had foretold. The shock provoked by the Passion was so great
that at least some of the disciples did not at once believe in the news of the Resurrection. _____

644 Even when faced with the reality of the risen Jesus the disciples are **still doubtful**,
so impossible did the thing seem: they thought they were seeing a ghost. _____

645 By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, **the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with
his disciples**. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify
that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified,
for it still bears the traces of his Passion. Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses
the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and
when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only
to the Father's divine realm. For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of
appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples,
precisely to awaken their faith. _____

646 **Christ's Resurrection was not a return to earthly life**, as was the case with the raisings from
the dead that he had performed before Easter: Jairus' daughter, the young man of Naim, Lazarus. _____

647 **The Resurrection remains at the very heart of the mystery of faith**
as something that transcends and surpasses history.
This is why the risen Christ does not reveal himself to the world, but to his disciples. _____

650 The Fathers contemplate the **Resurrection** from the perspective of the divine person of Christ who remained united to his soul and body, even when these were separated from each other by death: *By the unity of the divine nature, which remains present in each of the two components of a human, these are reunited. For as death is produced by the separation of the human components, so Resurrection is achieved by the union of the two.* St. Gregory of Nyssa _____

651 *If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.* St. Paul _____

654 By his Resurrection, Christ opens for us **the way to a new life.** _____

659 *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was **taken up into heaven,** and sat down at the right hand of God.* _____

663 Henceforth Christ is **seated at the right hand of the Father:** *By 'the Father's right hand' we understand the glory and honour of divinity, where he who exists as Son of God before all ages, indeed as God, of one being with the Father, is seated bodily after he became incarnate and his flesh was glorified.* St. John Damascene _____

669 *The kingdom of Christ (is) already present in mystery, on earth, the seed and the beginning of the kingdom.* _____

670 *Already the **final age** of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real but imperfect.* _____

671 *Until there be realized **new heavens and a new earth** in which justice dwells, the pilgrim Church, in her sacraments and institutions, which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and she herself takes her place among the creatures which groan and travail yet and await the revelation of the sons/daughters of God.* _____

675 **Before Christ's second coming** the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the *mystery of iniquity* in the form of a religious deception offering humans an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which the human glorifies the self in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh. _____

676 The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgement. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism, especially the *intrinsically perverse* political form of a secular messianism. Pope Pius XI _____

680 Christ the Lord already reigns through the Church, but all the things of this world are not yet subjected to him. The triumph of Christ's kingdom will not come about without one last assault by the powers of evil. _____

681 **On Judgement Day** at the end of the world, Christ will come in glory to achieve the definitive triumph of good over evil which, like the wheat and the tares, have grown up together in the course of history. _____

682 When he comes **at the end of time** to judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts and will render to each human according to his or her works, and according to the acceptance or refusal of **grace.** _____