

# *Catholics and Jesus Christ*

## Intro:

John 1: 1 - 14

John 1: 35 – 42

## Theology:

As the sin of Adam and Eve offended the infinite dignity of God, the satisfaction due to God in atonement needed to be of infinite value. However, no mere creature could make such a satisfaction since no creature, however holy or exalted, could offer more than a finite reparation. There was a necessity, therefore, for the Redeemer to be both God and man – man, that he might suffer and die on our behalf; God, that an infinite merit might attach to His atonement. Such a Redeemer was sent by God – Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2, 5).

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children" (Gal. 4, 4-5). God the Son became the man Jesus Christ: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (St. John 1, 14). The word "*incarnation*" is derived from the Latin, meaning, "to put on flesh." Christ could not have become Redeemer of humanity without a human nature, for it was His assumed human nature that was the instrumental cause of our salvation. In therefore voluntarily giving her flesh to the Son of God the Virgin Mary in the most intimate way co-operated to bring into effect God's plan of redemption, hence her title of "*Co-Redemptrix*."

Jesus Christ is not only truly God, begotten of the Father in all eternity, but also truly man from the time He was conceived in His Mother's womb: "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" (Phil. 2, 6-7). Thus, Christ has a divine and human nature united in His one Person – this union is called the *Hypostatic Union*, "hypostatic" meaning person in Greek. This union will never be dissolved, and remains so today. When Our Lord's body lay in the Sepulcher, the Person of the Word still remained united to it, just as it remained united to His soul in Abraham's Bosom (1 Pet. 3, 19).

As Christ has a divine and human nature, so also has He a divine and human will. Yet His human will is ever in perfect accord with His divine will: "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (St. Matt. 26, 39). Likewise, Christ possesses both a divine and human intellect. In His divine intellect Christ possesses comprehensive knowledge of all things past, present and future, as well as the infinite array of possibilities. In His human intellect Christ possesses infused knowledge of all things past, present and future by virtue of the Hypostatic Union, as well as acquired, or experimental knowledge through His external senses.

Being the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God: "thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee" (Heb. 1, 5). For many, the thought that God can have a Son who has the same nature as Himself is anathema. Yet, Christ is not a separate God, but a distinct Person, God's image of Himself: "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (Col. 1, 15). Jesus Christ is the only Son of God by nature, whereas we become through Christ the sons of God by adoption: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8, 15). This adoption formerly begins with baptism, which infuses into our souls the indelible mark of a Christian, or *character*, and incorporates us into Christ's Body, the Church.

The name "Jesus Christ" means "Anointed Savior." Our Lord's name is one of power and confidence, and should invoke our deepest respect. It has always been part of Catholic piety to reverence the name of Jesus with at least a slight bow of the head when hearing it pronounced: "God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2, 9-11).

Jesus Christ has the threefold character of *Priest*, *Prophet* and *King*. He is a priest in once having offered Himself on Calvary for the redemption of the world, and continuing to offer Himself daily in the Mass: "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5, 6); He is a Prophet by being a teacher of truth, revealing the mysteries of God and foretelling of things to come: "The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you" (Acts 3, 22); He is King because He came down to earth to establish His Church, a spiritual kingdom over which He shall rule for all eternity: "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19, 16).

## **Summary:**

### *The Apostles' Creed*

The 'Apostles' Creed' is called by this name because it is considered to be a true summary of the beliefs of the Apostles themselves. It is the oldest Creed of the Church in Rome, to which St Peter himself brought the Christian faith. It is even older than the 'Nicene Creed' which we say at Mass every Sunday, and which is a fuller expression of the Catholic Faith. We follow the Apostles' Creed here because it allows us to focus on the basic beliefs of our Faith.

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Creator of Heaven and Earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated  
at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church,  
the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.