

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 101 – 107

IN WHAT SENSE IS THE LIFE OF CHRIST A MYSTERY?

The entire life of Christ is a revelation. What was visible in the earthly life of Jesus leads us to the *invisible mystery of his divine sonship*: “who-ever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Furthermore, even though salvation comes completely from the cross and the resurrection, the entire life of Christ is a *mystery of redemption* because everything that Jesus did, said, and suffered had for its aim the salvation of fallen human beings and the restoration of their vocation as children of God.

HOW DID GOD PREPARE THE WORLD FOR THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST?

God prepared for the coming of His Son over the centuries. He awaked in the hearts of the pagans a dim expectation of this coming and He prepared for it specifically through the Old Testament, culminating with *John the Baptist* who was the last and greatest of the prophets. We relive this long period of expectancy in the annual liturgical celebration of the season of Advent.

WHAT DOES THE GOSPEL TEACH ABOUT THE MYSTERIES OF THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS?

At *Christmas* the glory of heaven is shown forth in the weakness of a baby; the *circumcision* of Jesus is a sign of His belonging to the Hebrew people and is a prefiguration of our Baptism; the *Epiphany* is the manifestation of the Messiah King of Israel to all the nations; at the *presentation in the temple*, Simeon and Anna symbolise all the anticipation of Israel awaiting its encounter with its Saviour; the *flight to Egypt* and the massacre of the innocents proclaim that the entire life of Christ will be under the sign of persecution; the *departure from Egypt* recalls the exodus and presents Jesus as the new Moses and the true and definitive liberator.

WHAT DOES THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS IN NAZARETH TEACH US?

In the course of His *hidden life* in Nazareth Jesus stayed in the silence of an ordinary existence. This allows us to enter into fellowship with Him in the holiness to be found in a daily life marked by prayer, simplicity, work, and family love. His obedience to Mary and to Joseph, His foster father, is an image of His filial obedience to the Father. Mary and Joseph accepted with faith the mystery of Jesus even though they did not always understand it.

WHY DID JESUS RECEIVE FROM JOHN THE “BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS” (LUKE 3:3)?

To inaugurate his public life and to anticipate the “Baptism” of His death, He who was without sin accepted to be numbered among sinners. He was “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The Father proclaimed Him to be “His beloved Son” (Matthew 3:17) and the Spirit descended upon Him. The baptism of Jesus is a prefiguring of our baptism.

WHAT DO THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS IN THE DESERT TEACH?

The temptations of Jesus in the desert recapitulate the temptation of Adam in Paradise and the temptations of Israel in the desert. Satan tempts Jesus in regard to His obedience to the mission given Him by the Father. Christ, the new Adam, resists and His victory proclaims that of His passion which is the supreme obedience of his filial love. The Church unites herself to this mystery in a special way in the liturgical season of *Lent*.



Christ in the desert by Ivan Kramskoy

WHO IS INVITED TO COME INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD PROCLAIMED AND BROUGHT ABOUT BY JESUS?

All are invited by Jesus to enter the Kingdom of God. Even the worst of sinners is called to convert and to accept the boundless mercy of the Father. Already here on earth, the Kingdom belongs to those who accept it with a humble heart. To them the mysteries of the Kingdom are revealed.

It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk Department of Evangelisation and Catechesis.