

Defending the Catholic Faith: The Who, What, Where, and How of It

Question: "Who is Jesus to you?"

Traveling to Orlando, my niece asked this question. I was not prepared for the answer. We will most often say that Jesus is someone I turn to in prayer, a friend, a confidant, He is my inspiration, He is my life, etc. But that will not convert someone (conversion meaning bringing someone into an encounter with Christ and/or our Church)! Tell your story: Tell what Jesus has done for you. Write out what your story is and tell it to your closest friend. Memorized it. With every encounter-add to it! People want stories. They want to hear what Jesus has done for you because the most important question we all have to answer is:

"Is there a being outside of myself, that exists, that is a spirit, that we usually call God; and if there is, then what will this Spirit do in my life?"

The next most important question is *"Who is Jesus to you?"*

Now, who is Jesus to you as a **Catholic**? Go to Sacred Scripture!

Last Supper: **Matthew 26**, Jesus held up the bread and said, *"Take and eat; this IS my Body"*. He did not say, "This represents my Body", or "This is a symbol of my Body!"

John 6: 22-59: The Bread of Life Discourse READ and KNOW!

I Corinthians 11:23 Tradition of the Institution. Two things- you must not partake unworthily and you must discern the body and blood of Christ and

CS Lewis: Liar, Lunatic or Lord *"You must make your choice," Lewis wrote. "Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."*

– **C.S Lewis, Mere Christianity**

Early Church Fathers:

The Didache (A.D. 98)

"On the Lord's own day assemble in common to break bread and offer thanks; but first confess your sins, so that your sacrifice may be pure . . . your sacrifice must not be defiled. For here we have a saying of the Lord: 'In every place and time offer Me a pure sacrifice' (Greek: *thysia*) . . . for I am a mighty king says the Lord and My name spreads terror among the nations.'"

St. Ignatius of Antioch (Circa 80-110 A.D.)

"Consider how contrary to the mind of God are the heterodox in regard to the grace of God which has come to us. They have no regard for charity, none for the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, none for the man in prison, the hungry or the thirsty. They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not admit that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, the flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His graciousness, raised from the dead."

"Letter to the Smyrnaeans", paragraph 6.

St. Justin Martyr (Circa. 155 AD)

"No one may share the Eucharist with us unless he believes that what we teach is true, unless he is washed in the regenerating waters of baptism for the remission of his sins, and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ.

We do not consume the Eucharistic bread and wine as if it were ordinary food and drink, for we have been taught that as Jesus Christ our Savior became a man of flesh and blood by the power of the Word of God, so also the food that our flesh and blood assimilates for its nourishment becomes the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus by the power of his own words contained in the prayer of thanksgiving."

From the First Apology of St. Justin Martyr

Question: Are you saved/born again?

“I’m saved according to Sacred Scripture, by water and the spirit.”

1) The first creation came from the the earth which was covered with WATER and the SPIRIT hovered over the waters and from the water emerged land and man and God’s first creation (Gen 1:1-2).

2) A new humanity was started with Noah through WATER and SPIRIT. The ark went through the water and a dove (representing the Spirit) hovered overhead with an olive branch. Peter said this represents baptism which “now saves us” (1 Peter 3:18-21).

3) The nation of Israel was created through the WATER of the Red Sea (baptism) with the cloud and fire of the Holy SPIRIT overhead — my oh my, again we have water and Spirit (Ex 14; 1 Cor 10:1-4).

4) Ezekiel then describes what the New Covenant will look like and he said we will be sprinkled with clean WATER and his SPIRIT will be placed in us (Ez 36:25). Born again, I suspect.

5) Then Jesus, right before saying you must be born of “water and the Spirit” had just gone down into the WATER of the Jordan and the SPIRIT came down and landed on his head. Again, water and the Spirit (Mt 3:16; Jn 1:29).

6) Jesus teaches Nicodemus that he must be born again, or from above which is accomplished through “WATER and the SPIRIT. “

7) When Jesus finished these words what was the first thing he did? He went down and baptized people in the Jordan with his disciples (Jn 4:1-2).

8) At the first Holy Ghost Gospel Revival meeting :-) Peter stood up at Pentecost and said, “Repent, and be baptized (WATER) every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy SPIRIT” (Acts 2:38).

9) Peter also says “Baptism now saves you” (1 Pet 3:18), and Paul is told “Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16), and Paul writes that we are saved “by the washing of regeneration (WATER) and renewal in the Holy SPIRIT” (Titus 3:5). Defenders of the Catholic Faith: Steve Ray

“I am also saved because I have the most intimate and personal relationship with Jesus, in that I can receive Him daily in the Eucharist, which provides eternal life (The Eucharistic Discourse Jn 6:22-59).”

“I am saved under the authority of God the Father, and I am saved with the power of the Holy Spirit, living in me”!

Jesus did everything under God’s authority, including his first appearance to the disciples after the Resurrection where He breathed the Holy Spirit on them and gave them the authority from God, the Father, and the ability to forgive or retain sin.

John 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Faith and Reason

- We are gifted with our reason and intellect to have knowledge about the Church that Christ established. Our intellect can see the ‘sense’ in its essence, nature. This sense is **Truth** that resonates from deep within, where we are one with God our Creator.
- We are gifted with Faith that is beyond understanding in that there exists a Being, outside of ourselves, that will affect our lives in ways that are beyond ourselves. Faith is a superpower! It allows us to move beyond our own capabilities

Stay Catholic!

Fall in love with the Faith!

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