

RCIA: INQUIRY SESSION TEN

THE INCARNATION

Week: 5/12/22 – 11/12/22

1. **Advent:** The third Sunday of Advent is celebrated this week. This Sunday is called *Gaudete Sunday*. *Gaudete* is a Latin word which means 'Rejoice'. The third candle, which is pink, is lit on the Advent wreath. This third candle symbolises joy and is called the 'Shepherd's Candle'. To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them, too. In the liturgy, the colour rose signifies joy.
2. **The Incarnation:** (a) "Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God who became man in the womb of Mary. The one who was born of Mary is the same one – the same person – who has existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit from all eternity."¹ Christians celebrate this event at Christmas.

(b) "In the Incarnation, we behold the mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of God's Son. Somehow, in a way we cannot completely grasp, Jesus had both human knowledge and a human will and divine knowledge and a divine will."²

(c) In Hebrew the name 'Jesus' means 'God saves'. "Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, will save his people from their sins."³

(d) The Greek word 'Christ' [*Christos*] is a translation of the Hebrew word 'Messiah', which means 'anointed'. "It became the name proper to Jesus ... because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that 'Christ' signifies."⁴

(e) "In all of his life, Jesus presents himself as our model. He is 'the perfect man', who invites us to become his disciples and follow him."⁵

(f) "Understanding that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine is very important. The Church has consistently defended this teaching against attempts to present one or the other as somehow less. If the Crucifixion and Resurrection were events that involved God only, then we are not saved. If Jesus was not divine, he would have been

¹ Irish Episcopal Conference, *Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults*, p. 92.

² *Ibid.* p. 95.

³ *Ibid.* p. 92.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 92.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 92.

just another good man whose death and Resurrection would not have saved us. It is necessary to believe that the mystery of the Incarnation means that Jesus was both fully God and fully man.”⁶

3. Gospel Reflection: Sunday 11/12/22 is the third Sunday of Advent (Year A) and the Gospel reading is Mt. 11:2-11. The text of the reading is below. The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute’s silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion. The following questions may be helpful: What does this mean to me? How does it make me feel? Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing? What images of God emerge for me? What do I think that God is saying in this text? What impact does this have on my life?

⁶ Ibid. p. 92.

GOSPEL READING

Reader: The Lord be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.