

FOREWORD

THE new *National Catechetical Directory* states: "Text-books must present the authentic and complete message of Christ and His Church, adapted to the capacity of the learners, with balanced emphasis proportionate to the importance of particular truths." (264)

I have tried to follow this important principle of the American Bishops in preparing the four editions of THE NEW AMERICAN CATECHISM. To reach various age levels the Catechism has: The First Communion Catechism (Grades 1-2), the Primary Edition (Grades 3-5), the Middle Grade Edition (Grades 6-8), and the Expanded Edition (High School and Adults).

The text used for the answers was taken from "Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, January 11, 1973), which is now found in a revised form in "Chapter V: Principal Elements of the Christian Message for Catechesis" and "Chapter VI: Catechesis for a Worshiping Community" of *Sharing the Light of Faith*—National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States. References to the revised text are indicated.

In order to make the teaching of these truths more effective, I recommend the use of sketches and stories, which can be found in my two publications listed on the opposite page.

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Jesus told
the high
priest that
He is the
Son of God

CHAPTER

7

Jesus Christ, True God
and True Man

38. Why is Jesus true God?

Jesus is true God because he is God's only-begotten Son, and in him there is all fullness of divinity.

Jesus Christ is true God, the Son of the heavenly Father, the Divine Word of God made man. But he is only one Person; and that Person is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. St. John wrote: "In the beginning was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God" (Jn 1, 1).

Jesus said he was God. He said to the Jews, "These very works which I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me" (Jn 5, 36). "I tell what I have seen in the Father's presence" (Jn 8, 38).

At the trial of Jesus the high priest said to him, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus answered, "It is you who say it. But I tell you this: Soon you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mt 26, 63-64).

The night before Jesus died he prayed, "Father, the hour has come! Give glory to your Son that your Son may give glory to you, inasmuch as you have given him authority over all mankind, that he may bestow eternal life on those you gave him" (Jn 17, 1-2).

39. How does the creed express our faith in the divinity of Christ?

The Nicene Creed says of Jesus Christ: "God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father."

The chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus Christ is that he is God made man. It is Jesus Christ the God-Man whom we see and hear in the gospels and receive in the Eucharist. It is to him with the Father and the Holy Spirit that we pray: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

40. Why is Jesus Christ true man?

Jesus Christ is true man because he, the Son of God, was "manifested in the flesh" (1 Tm 3, 16). (1) As man, he thought with a human mind, acted with a human heart. (2) He joined himself with every human being except in sin.

(1) The Son of God became a real man, having real flesh, a human body and soul. He is a man just as we are. He felt the joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains that we feel as human beings. As man Jesus had a human mind, a human will, to know and to love as we do. This means that he was born into this world, and lived a real human life.

Mary was the mother of Jesus. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit within her. Joseph was Mary's husband and acted as foster father to Jesus during childhood. Jesus died just as the rest of us must.

(2) Jesus joined himself with us in all things except in sin. He is the all-holy God. The human nature he assumed never knew sin.

41. How did Jesus show his concern for men?

Jesus lived among men, was close to them, reached out to all—the virtuous and sinner, the poor and the rich, especially the suffering.

Jesus was kind to all people and spent his life helping them in their needs. He traveled all over Israel, teaching the people about his Father and working miracles. His whole teaching was about loving God with our whole heart and our neighbor for his sake. He loved especially the poor, the sick, and the troubled.

Jesus loved sinners and forgave their sins. He offered his life to save all mankind.

42. What do we see in Christ's concern for men?

In Christ's concern for men we see God's love for man.

We cannot see God, but when God sent his Son to live among us and to save us by his death on the cross, we can see how much God really loves us.

Teacher reference: Principal Elements, no. 89

A. FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Jesus is true God because and in him there is (38)
2. Jesus is true God from, begotten of one substance (39)
3. Jesus Christ is true man because he, the Son was (40)
4. As man, Jesus thought with a human, acted with a human, loved with a human (40)

5. Jesus joined himself with every human being except in (40)
6. Jesus was close to men, the virtuous and
the poor and, especially (41)
7. In Christ's concern for men we see (42)

B. BIBLE READING

John 11, 1-43

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus that Lazarus, their brother, was sick. Two days later Lazarus died.

Now Martha heard that Jesus was coming, and she went to meet him.

Jesus said to her, "Your brother shall be alive again."

"I know that he will be alive again in the resurrection, at the last day," said Martha.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Master," said Martha, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Now Mary came and bowed in sorrow at the feet of Jesus. And seeing her tears and the grief of friends who stood there, Jesus wept.

And he came to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone at the entrance.

"Take away the stone," said Jesus.

"But, Master!" cried Martha, "Lazarus has been dead and in the tomb for the past four days!"

Jesus said, "Have I not said to you, 'Believe, and you will see the glory of God?'"

So they moved away the stone. And Jesus turned to God in prayer. "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me; yet I say this because of the people standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."

Then he called with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

And the man who had been dead came out, though his hands and feet were still wrapped with linen. Jesus said to those who were near, "Unbind him, and set him free."