

RCIA

The Life of Christ from Scripture and Tradition 9 - B

About 15 years before Jesus was born his mother Mary was conceived in the normal way in her mother Anne's womb, but without the stain of original sin. This special favor granted by God is known as the *Immaculate Conception*, and is celebrated by the Church on Dec. 8th, nine months before the Birth of Mary, which the Church observes on September 8. This special privilege was granted to Mary so that she would be preserved from the stain of original sin. She needed to be free from original sin because God was already preparing her to be the mother of Jesus (who is also God) and it is impossible that Jesus/God could have come into contact with any sin when he took on flesh. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary when the angel Gabriel announced to her that she would be the mother of the Savior. This "announcing" is known as the *Annunciation*, and Jesus' taking on of flesh is called the Incarnation. The Church celebrates the *Incarnation/Annunciation* on March 25th, nine months before December 25th, which we call *Christmas*.

The name "Jesus" in Hebrew means "God saves." The title "Christ" comes from the Greek meaning "the anointed one," a translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah." The same word gives us the English "chrism," which is the oil consecrated by the Bishop at the "Chrism" Mass on Holy Thursday morning. This oil is used for anointing in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and ordination.

The word "Lord" is from the Greek translation of the name YHWH (Yahweh) with which God revealed Himself to Moses.

Jesus Christ the Lord, the Second Person of the Trinity, also called the Son and the Word (Verbum), existed from all eternity with the Father (the First Person), and the Holy Spirit (the Third Person). When the Son took on flesh (became man) and was born of the Virgin Mary, He was named Jesus. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. The miraculous conception (taking on of human flesh) of Jesus is called the *Incarnation*. This word which comes from the Latin root (carne) gives us the words "carnivore" (a flesh eater) and "carnation" (a flesh colored flower).

The birth of Jesus is called the *Nativity* and the Scriptures tell us that it took place in Bethlehem (which means "House of Bread"), and that Jesus was born in a manger (which is a feeding trough for animals). These references to bread and food foreshadow the fact that Jesus will be the "Bread of Life" and "food for the soul".

Twelve days after the Nativity the Church observes the Feast of the *Epiphany* (Jan. 6th). Also known as "Three Kings Day", the three Wise Men, Magi, or Kings, came to worship the Lord Jesus and brought him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts symbolize (according to tradition) Christ's kingship (only kings had gold), divinity (incense was used in divine worship as it is today), and humanity (myrrh was used for embalming corpses). The word "epiphany" means a "manifestation" or "showing". At the Nativity, the Lord showed himself to the Jews, and at the Epiphany, to the Gentiles, i.e. everyone else.

Forty days after the Nativity, Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to fulfill two Jewish ritual laws. After giving birth to a son a Jewish woman needed to be "purified" since ritual impurity was incurred with childbirth. Furthermore, a sacrifice was offered to God, and the child "presented" to Him. This event is known as both the *Purification* and the *Presentation* and is celebrated on Feb. 2.

For the next 12 years we hear nothing of Jesus until he and his family are in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast, which they probably would have done every year. Jesus leaves his family as they are returning home to Nazareth and goes to the temple where he is found by Mary teaching the men at the Temple. This is known as the Finding in the Temple. From the age of 12 to the age of about 30, when he begins his public ministry, the Scriptures record nothing of Jesus' life. During these so-called *Hidden Years*, we may presume that Jesus was growing up as any Jewish boy of the time might have done. He probably learned his faith, went to the synagogue with his family, prayed his prayers, worked with his father Joseph, and helped his mother around the house.

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RCIA WKSH Class 9 B Life of Christ Part 1 (BCL#7-8)

When God the Son decided to become a man, He asked Mary if she would be His mother. We call God's becoming man in Mary the INCARNATION. Answer the following questions (the following terms will be helpful): Hidden Years, Pentecost, Easter, Ascension, Nativity, Finding in the Temple, Last Supper, Good Friday, Epiphany, Bethlehem, Palestine (Middle East)

- 1) When God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity became man, was he still God?
- 2) The angel _____ told Mary that she would be the mother of God. What do we call that announcement?
- 3) What do we call the birth of Jesus and when do we celebrate His birth?
- 4) What is the name of the town in which Jesus was born?
- 5) According to our calendar, in what year was Jesus born?
- 6) What do we call the visit of the Wise Men (Kings/Magi) to worship Jesus the newborn King?
- 7) When Jesus was 12 He was separated from His family while they were in Jerusalem for the Passover. What do we call the moment when they found Him teaching the religious leaders?
- 8) What was Jesus doing between the ages of 12 and 30 when he began His public ministry?
- 9) What do we call those years?
- 10) Who baptized Jesus in the Jordan River?