

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
RCIA Class Transcript
The Life of Christ
Lecturer: Father Francis Peffley
Date: November 2, 2004

Tonight we'll talk about the Nativity of Christ, His hidden life, His public life, His Passion, Death, Resurrection, and His Ascension.

Just to summarize a few things we talked about last week, and to mention a few additional things. We talked the titles of Christ. We talked about how the name Jesus is the Hebrew word meaning "Savior." Jesuah means "God saves." We talked about His title, which is Christ, which means "The Anointed One," or "The Messiah." But Jesus has many other titles in Scripture. One of them is "The Son of God." The one that Jesus referred to Himself mostly was as "The Son of Man." You might remember when you read Scripture, it talks about how "The Son of Man will come in glory to judge the living and the dead." The title Son of Man comes from the Old Testament, the Book of Daniel. But there's other titles for Jesus, namely "The Lord." Sometimes people called Him "Master." Sometimes they called Him "Rabbi," which meant "Teacher." Jesus gives Himself the expression "Good Shepherd." He says, "I am the Good Shepherd. I know My sheep and they know Me."

The Bible also calls Jesus "The Messiah," "The Prince of Peace," "The King of Kings," "The Lord of Lords." Another title for Jesus is "The Suffering Servant of Isaiah," because Christ was going to take upon Himself the sins of the world. A title that St. Paul gives Jesus is "The Second Adam." The first Adam sinned – the New Adam (Christ) came to make up for the sins of the entire world. Christ is also "The Mediator." The Scripture says that, "Christ is the only Mediator between us and the Father." That's a true statement, that He's the One who reconciles us with God the Father. He's also "The Intercessor," who sits at the right hand of the Father, who from Heaven now, is interceding for us before His Heavenly Father.

However, you and I are also intercessors. Every time we pray for somebody, we're interceding on their behalf. If somebody gets sick, we pray for them. When we pray for that person, we're actually being intercessors and mediators. Don't think that when it says that Christ is the only Mediator between us and the Father, that's true, but He incorporates other people as His co-intercessors and co-mediators. It doesn't take anything away from Christ. In fact, Christ wants us to pray for each other, to intercede for each other, and to be an instrument of God's grace in each others' lives.

Another great title for Christ is "The Redeemer." You might have heard that beautiful title "Redeemer." The word redeem means "to buy back." If something is redeemed, it belonged to another person and then is bought back. When I was

growing up, I used to collect a lot of things – baseball cards, stamps, and coins. We used to get these Green Stamps, and then we would go and redeem them for a toaster, or a blender. They didn't have microwaves back then! Redeeming is something where you buy back. Christ bought us back. Because of Original Sin, mankind had strayed away from God, so Jesus came as the Redeemer to buy us back. What He did was He bought us back with His own Blood. Now when you go to a store and you see a very expensive jacket or coat, you see the price tag that's on that. Your price tag for your salvation and my salvation is the Blood of God, that Jesus Christ paid the price for our salvation. He bought us back, and paid that infinite debt.

When some of the great theologians talk about how sin is an offense against an infinite being, therefore, we could not make up for that. God, in His wisdom and justice and mercy, decided to send His Son into the world to pay the price for our salvation. In that way, because it would be God Himself that would be reconciling us with the Father, He could make up for a sin against an infinite God. Again, that's an interesting thought to think about – that even though we as humans had sinned, because God was offended and God is infinite, how could anyone make up for a sin against God's infinite goodness? God was able to figure out a way to do that, namely, sending His Son into this world to die for each one of us. Therefore, He redeemed us; He bought us back; and He saved our souls, dying for us, saving us from ultimate death, saving us from sins, saving us from eternal separation from God (which we call Hell). He paid the price. Since Christ is God, He can pay that infinite debt. He's man, so He represents humanity. But, He's also God, so He can actually make up for a sin against an infinite goodness of God.

We talked last week about the Incarnation, which means "How God Became Man." Why did the Incarnation take place? First of all, to save us from sin and death. Also, to show us God's love for us. That's another reason why God became man. If you ever doubt that God loves you, just look at a Cross, look at a Crucifix, and you then see how much God loves you. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that He sent His only Son into the world." Also, Christ came to give us an example on how to live, to be just, loving, charitable and forgiving. He came to give us a share in the Divine Life, which we receive through Baptism.

Could God have saved us in another way? The answer is yes. Did Jesus have to be scourged, and crowned with thorns, then crucified and die on the Cross to save us? The answer is no. Even shedding one little drop of His Blood would have redeemed the entire world, and did redeem the entire world. Why did Jesus go to that extent of being mocked, and beaten, and crowned with thorns, and spit upon, and crucified? That was to show us the fullness of His love. He did not need to go through all that to save us. Even one drop of His Blood would have saved the entire world from all the sins, from the beginning of time, until the end of time. Christ came into the world. He's God. He assumed a perfect human nature. His nature, was just like ours in every way, except for sin, which means

He did not have a darkened intellect. He did not have a weakened will. He did not have concupiscence, which is unruly passions. He assumed the perfect human nature, but He was still God. He's truly God and truly man. He proved that He was God by working miracles, and the greatest miracle we'll talk about tonight is His own Resurrection. That's our Lord's greatest miracle.

Something we did not mention last week was the knowledge of Christ. How much did Christ know about Himself, about His mission? Because you will find some so-called theologians these days saying, "Jesus didn't know who He was", which of course is ridiculous, because Christ is God. He certainly knew who He was. Even at the age of 12, He told Mary, "That I must be about my Father's business." "His Father" is referring to God the Father. When we talk about the knowledge of Christ, Christ has two kinds of knowledge: *human knowledge* and *Divine knowledge*. There are three kinds of human knowledge. There's the Beatific Vision, which is seeing the Father face-to-face, which is the direct Vision of God the Father. Christ always had that. He also had infused supernatural knowledge, which is similar to what the prophets had in the Old Testament, being able to be divinely inspired. And third, Christ, in His human knowledge, had acquired or experiential knowledge, namely, reasoning power and sense experience.

Christ had human knowledge, and He had Divine knowledge. His human knowledge was free from all error. Christ had access to All Knowledge. Even though His human knowledge was not infinite, anything Christ wanted to know, He could know, because remember, He is one person, a Divine Person, who assumed a human nature. Christ is truly God and truly man, and Christ had the Beatific Vision of His Father, even from the moment of His conception. Even from the time He was in Mary's womb, Christ had the Beatific Vision of the Father and the Holy Spirit. That's an important question, because you will read in some sources, "O, that Jesus that didn't know who He was, until He woke up on the Resurrection," and said, "Oh my, I'm the Lord!" And that, of course, is ridiculous. Christ knew who He was, certainly from the age of 12, but the Church teaches that Christ knew that He was God – He had this knowledge even from his mother's womb.

Now we move into a little bit more about the Incarnation. We talked about that word last time, the Incarnation. In Latin, you know, carnal means "flesh," "becoming enfleshed." This is found in John Chapter one. It says, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." The Word is the eternal Son of God, who while remaining God, assumed a human nature, took upon Himself a human body, and a human soul, like ours – except for the fact that it did not have sin.

We look now at the life of Christ. The first thing we want to talk about is the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary. The Incarnation we celebrate on March 25th. Whether it occurred on that exact day we don't know, but it's the day that the Church has chosen to celebrate the Annunciation, and also the

Incarnation. They occurred at the exact same time. If you know March 25th, nine months later we have Christmas. That's the easy way to remember it. One's the feast day of the Annunciation, exactly nine months to the day before Christmas. The Incarnation is the work of the Blessed Trinity, and the Angel Gabriel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, the power of the Most High would overshadow her, and the child to be born will be the Son of God. The Trinity was revealed to Our Lady at the Annunciation. Our Lady was asked would she consider being the Mother of the Lord, and Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word."

What's also neat is to know is that when the Angel first spoke to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." Now the word "full of grace" is actually a Greek word (when the New Testament was written in Greek) is *Kecharitome*, which is the perfect passive participle meaning "hail one who has been perfected in grace." We'll talk about this more when we do the topic on Mary. But the Angel Gabriel was addressing Mary as somebody who has already been perfected in grace, which we of course call the Immaculate Conception. The Angel Gabriel was sent from God on a mission; he was the "Henry Kissinger" of those days. He was the ambassador that God sent to reconcile humanity with Himself.

Think about this: here we have sinful humanity, which strayed away from God over the course of thousands and thousands of years. The Jewish People were praying for the Messiah, waiting for the Messiah. It was every young woman's dream to be the Mother of the Messiah. They knew that the Messiah was going to be born from the Jewish People. The Annunciation was when Our Lady perhaps was kneeling in prayer, and the Angel Gabriel came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." Among all women, Mary is the most blessed. And then he asked her about being the Mother of the Lord, and she said of course, "Behold, I am the servant girl, the slave of the Lord, let it be done to me according to thy word." And at that moment, the Incarnation happened. The Son of God became Incarnate in Mary's womb, and Mary became the Mother of the Lord at that very moment.

Christ had no human father. St. Joseph was His foster father, but He had no human father. Mary was His human mother, but we say that God the Holy Spirit would be the One by which Christ was conceived in Our Lady's womb. It was a miraculous, spiritual event in which the Son of God became present in Mary's womb. Since Christ is God, we can call Mary the Mother of God.

St. Joseph's role in all this was to protect and watch over, and to be the guardian of Our Lady. The Church always honors St. Joseph, because he's called the Just Man, the Holy Man. He was such a pure, holy person that God selected him to be the virginal spouse of Mary, and to take care of the Christ Child. Because the Christ Child was going to go through some difficult times – King Herod was going

to try to kill Jesus, so God had to choose a very good foster father for His own Son.

Now we move onto the birth of Christ. The Church celebrates this on December 25, whether or not it occurred on that day, we don't know (it could have). The Church has selected this day, on which we celebrate the Nativity of Christ.

We know that Christ was born in Bethlehem, and Bethlehem means "the House of Bread" in Hebrew. And I think that's very interesting because Jesus Himself, when He was born, was placed in a manger, which is a trough from which the animals would eat out of. It was going to show that Christ was going to become the food of all humanity.

Every time we come to Mass on Sunday, we get to receive Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. Our Lord said in John Chapter 6, "I am the Bread of Life. He who eats My Body and drinks My Blood has life eternal. I will raise him up on the last day." It's so appropriate that the town that Jesus was born in is called "the house of Bread," because Christ Himself would become the Bread of Life.

We know that Christ was born between 7 and 5 BC, according to the scholars today. There was an error made centuries ago, way back in about the year 800 when they were working out the calendar. It might have even been before that. It doesn't say exactly in my reading when they devised the calendar that we use today, but there was an error, and we of course go with BC, being before Christ, Anno Domine the year of Our Lord. They miscalculated the year when they started the calendar, which of course starts with 1 AD, but we know historically, based upon when King Herod lived, and when the slaughter of the Holy Innocents occurred, and when Caesar Augustus lived, that Christ was actually born between 7 and 5 BC. The calculation had gotten a little bit messed up in the early days of Christianity. The main point is that Christ was born among the Chosen People, the Jewish People. He was born during the time under the reign of King Herod.

That also fulfilled Sacred Scripture, because it said in the Bible that, "The Scepter would depart from Judah around the time of the Messiah." The Jews always had Jewish kings, but in 64 BC, the Romans took over, and at that point, the Jewish nation was under Roman occupation. Because of all the fighting, the Romans put in a Gentile leader, King Herod, to be the leader of the Jewish People at that time. From that standpoint, since Herod was not purely Jewish, the Scepter had been taken away from Judah, and this predicted that the Messiah would soon arrive. That's in the Old Testament.

Christ was born in Bethlehem. He born there, because Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth, up in the north, up in Galilee, and remember the edict of Caesar saying that everybody had to register at that time, because Caesar Augustus wanted the census of the whole world. He wanted to know how many people he

had in the Roman Empire. Out of obedience to the civil law, Joseph and Mary left Nazareth, up in the north, and traveled for about a four or five-day journey down into the south, to the land of Judah, and to Bethlehem, which was the City of David, the town of David, where King David had been born and raised. You had to actually go to your ancestral home to register for the census. Joseph was of the House of David, and most likely Mary was from the House of David as well, since you normally married within your own class, your own family group. Mary at this point was about eight and three-quarters months pregnant. She was just about to give birth to Christ. They traveled down to Bethlehem, and it was in Bethlehem that Christ was born. And again, that fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures, the book of Micah, that said “the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem.” Isn’t it interesting to see how God works? He used a pagan ruler (you know, Caesar Augustus). Even in God’s plan, a pagan ruler decreed a census would be taking place, and that’s how the Messiah was born in Bethlehem.

We know from Scripture that St. Joseph tried to find a worthy place for Christ to be born, but there was no room at the inn; so they found a cave, a stable, and Christ was born in this cave, in this stable.

Have any of you been to Bethlehem? Did anybody ever go to Bethlehem on a pilgrimage, or to Jerusalem? Of course, right now I wouldn’t go, because it’s always very tumultuous, sometimes very dangerous. Especially, as you know, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem had a 38-day siege; it was just a terrible thing. I’ve been there twice, on two different pilgrimages. We had a chance to pray at the spot in Bethlehem that Tradition tells us was the actual birthplace of Christ, because they have the beautiful Church built right over the place where that cave was at that time.

Scripture tells us that two interesting groups of people came to adore the Christ Child – the Shepherds and the Wise Men. The Shepherds, represent the poor people; the Wise Men represent the wealthy. Both the poor and the rich came to adore the Christ Child. The Shepherds represented the Jewish People. The Wise Men represented the Gentiles, and they both came to adore Christ. It tells us that a star led the Wise Men from wherever they were from, most likely Persia, to Bethlehem. Again, it was predicted in the Old Testament that a star would announce the coming of the Messiah.

We celebrate this feast day of the Wise Men coming to the Christ Child; it’s called *Epiphany*, which is the word that means “a manifestation,” or “a revelation.” The Messiah was revealed to the Gentiles and to the pagans, as represented by the Wise Men, by the Magi. The feast day on which we celebrate this is January 6th, which is about two weeks or so after Christmas.

The Wise Men came; they offered very valuable gifts - gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gold is a beautiful gift fit for a king. The frankincense was for Divinity,

representing the Divinity of Christ. The myrrh would represent a gift for the humanity of Christ, because myrrh, as you know, is burial fluid; it's embalming fluid. Try going to a baby shower and taking some myrrh along as a gift, and see if you get invited back. It's an interesting gift for a baby. I mean, the gold, of course, is very valuable. The gold is a beautiful gift for a king. The incense, the frankincense, was used in the temple for the worship of God. That would be a gift for the Divinity of Christ, and the myrrh for His humanity, the fact that He was going to suffer and die as the Messiah.

We, of course, see very rich symbolism in these gifts, as well as the historical fact that these Wise Men came and offered Christ these very special gifts. We offer Christ the gold of our love, the myrrh of our sacrifices and mortifications, and the incense of our prayers, which drift up to God in Heaven.

Years later, the Church would establish many customs and traditions, such as the Nativity scene, like setting up a crèche. I'm sure many of you have those in your own houses. Does anybody know what saint invented the Nativity scene? St. Francis of Assisi invented the Nativity scene in the year 1223. He traveled to Rome, met with the Pope, and explained his idea. The Pope gave approval for a Nativity scene. And St. Francis used live animals, and he had a beautiful Nativity set up; and this was in Assisi, Italy in the year 1223. From there that tradition spread all over the world, and now you can go into peoples' homes, and you see a beautiful Nativity scene, or the manger, the crèche.

Also, we have a lot of other beautiful Christmas traditions, beginning with Christ, namely the giving of Christmas presents. The presents represent a gift, obviously, reminding us of the gift that God gave us in giving us His Son. Christ is the gift sent to us from the Father. Christ came wrapped in swaddling clothes; we wrap our presents in very nice wrapping paper. But the idea behind that is to remind us of the gift, the ultimate gift that was given to the world, namely Jesus Christ.

And of course, we have Santa Claus. Santa meaning "saint"; Claus short for "Nicholas." St. Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra, in the 4th century. Bishops wore red, so of course this got transferred onto Santa, with the red suit. And, in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, this St. Nicholas became very popular. They used to give gifts on his day, December 6th, St. Nicholas Day. And when the Dutch came to New York in immigration, they passed this tradition on, and St. Nicholas became shortened as Santa Claus. Santa Claus is a real person, infallible statement; because St. Nicholas is a true saint, a canonized saint in the Catholic Church.

But then, after the birth of Christ, we know that a couple of other events took place, namely His Circumcision, which occurred when Jesus was eight days old. It was always required for the male child to be circumcised on the eighth day, and that's when He was given His name. That's when St. Joseph had the great

privilege of naming Christ. St. Joseph named Him the name that the Angel Gabriel said, that He would be Jesus. The Bible says, "The Angel told Joseph he was to name the Child Jesus, because He was to save His people from their sins."

Forty days after the Birth of Christ, we have what's called the Presentation in the Temple. This was done for every male child at 40 days of age. They were taken to the Temple, and they were offered and dedicated to God. And then the Child had to be redeemed. The parents would then either have to take a lamb and give it to the high priest, and they would buy their child back; or if they were poor, they would give two pigeons or two doves. The Bible says, "Mary and Joseph gave two doves," because obviously, they were poor. They didn't have a lamb. It's appropriate because Christ Himself is the Lamb of God. Mary and Joseph were a poor family. They could not afford a lamb, so they had to give their Child (Christ) into the Temple. He was dedicated to God, and then they had to buy Him back, by giving these doves. They give the Son back to the parents, and then they did animal sacrifice, and killed the lamb, or in this case, killed the doves. That's called the Presentation of the Baby Jesus in the Temple when He was 40 days old. This is also one of the Mysteries of the Rosary. We celebrate this date on February 2nd.

It's also called the Purification of Our Lady. Our Lady was pure, but in Hebrew times, after a woman gave birth, she was considered ritually impure, until she came to the Temple, and certain prayers were said. At that point she could come back and worship in the Synagogue, and in the Temple. For the 40 days after the birth of a son, they could not enter the Temple. They were considered ritually impure after giving birth, primarily because of the blood flow that comes forth during childbirth. See, in the minds of the Jewish People, blood is something that is the life-giving principle of the body, and the Jews have many laws that if you touched a corpse, or if you touched human blood, you were considered ritually impure for a certain period of time, until certain prayers were said and rituals were done. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple was also called the Purification of the Mother that would occur at the same time.

Then we have another event in the life of Christ, and that is King Herod trying to kill the baby Jesus, and Joseph was warned in a dream to go to Egypt. That's when Joseph took Mary and Jesus and went to Egypt, and they spent probably between three to five years in Egypt, trying to escape King Herod. Then the news came that King Herod had died, and Joseph was told to go back, and he settled in Nazareth.

(A question). Mary and Joseph weren't just keeping the gold, frankincense, and myrrh and not telling anybody. Remember the Presentation occurred when Christ was 40 days old. And King Herod, once he was deceived by the Magi, killed every male child two years and under. That would indicate to us that the Magi came sometime between when Christ was 40 days old and two years old. I think

we can say almost definitely that the Magi came after the Presentation in the Temple.

(A question). The Magi? We celebrate that January 6th, which of course could be the following January 6th, when Christ was one year old. For example, it could have been at that time, but you're right, the January 6th doesn't necessarily mean that it took place 12 days or so after Christmas. Another evidence for this would be in the Bible. It says, "When the Magi came, they found Mary in the house." It uses the word "house," in Greek, which does not mean "stable." Obviously after Christ was born, and after the census, people would have left Bethlehem and gone back to their homes, which would have opened up proper housing. So Joseph and Mary continued to live in Bethlehem for quite a while, perhaps up to a year, or two years, after the birth of Christ. Joseph must have set up shop in Bethlehem, and worked there until when the Magi came. I think most scholars would say the Magi probably came within a year after Christ was born, and certainly if the Magi had come before the Presentation, which would be before 40 days of age, then Mary and Joseph would have been able to afford a lamb for the Presentation.

(A question). The word "magi" meant more like "astrologers," "philosophers," - what we would consider university professors, people that studied the stars, ancient philosophy, and world religions. What's also interesting is that the Bible never mentions that there were three, it just says there were three gifts. Tradition tells us that there were three men that gave the gifts. But the Bible just says gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but it just talks about "Wise men from the East." It could have been more than three - the Bible doesn't tell us. But Tradition has been three. If you buy a Nativity scene it comes with three Wise Men.

(A question). The Epiphany meant a manifestation or revelation, and this is the revelation to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi. Remember the Magi were pagans, and yet they came; and they came to worship Christ the Son of God. The shepherds represented the Jewish People worshiping Christ. The Magi represent the pagans, or the Gentiles, coming to worship Christ the Messiah.

(A question). Did the Presentation in the Temple occur 40 days after the birth of a child? Say you were living in Cana, or Jericho, or the Dead Sea, and you gave birth to a child. You'd have to travel to Jerusalem and present the child in the Temple of Jerusalem. Every parent had to do that. If you were a devout Jew, you would present the child to the high priest. The high priest would dedicate it to God, and then you had to redeem the child. You had to buy it back, either with a lamb, or with two pigeons or two turtle doves. I'm very happy that I live in the New Testament times. The priests of the Old Testament, their real jobs were actually being butchers - you know, killing the lambs, and the goats, and other animals. They were doing animal sacrifices all the time. I'm very happy to be a New Testament priest, rather than an Old Testament priest. Of course, the animal sacrifices ended with Christ's death on the Cross, because they don't do

those kinds of sacrifices anymore. They don't do animal sacrifice anymore, as you know.

(A question). The 12 Days of Christmas has a lot of neat stories about that, how it was a way to teach children the catechism lessons during the time of persecution of the Church in England in the 1580's under Queen Elizabeth. They said that was how they taught children the catechism. The "two turtle doves," from what I remember, represents the Old and New Testament. "Four calling birds," I think, is the four Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I forget what all of them stand for, but I think it's on my web site. Somebody sent it to me so I put it on the web site, but it's the 12 Days of Christmas. It tells you what each of those represent. A "partridge in a pear tree," I believe, was Mary being pregnant with Christ. I think 12 "lords a leaping" was the 12 Apostles. "Five golden rings," I believe, was the five wounds of Christ: hands, side, head, and feet.

(A question). I believe it was just the first-born male who would be presented, because that was the child that was dedicated to God. Subsequently, they would not need to do that. That also goes back to the Old Testament, of how the Passover, remember God said to get the Chosen People out of Egypt to the Promised Land, and told Pharaoh "I'm going to strike down the first-born in every family." The first-born was saved, so there was always a debt that the first-born was dedicated to God, even at that time.

(A question). I think primarily it was the death of King Herod, which I believe occurred in 4 BC. I believe that's the crucial point. Obviously, you had to have King Herod alive to order to have the slaughter of the Innocents. And it said when Herod died, that's when Jesus came back into the Holy Land. I don't know how they messed that up, you know, in the 800's or 600's whenever they were working on the calendar. But I think in more recent evidence, they have determined that He was probably born between 5 and 7 BC.

Now we talk for a few minutes about what's called the "Hidden Life of Christ." You can sort of divide the Life of Christ into three parts:

- His childhood, from the time of His birth until He was 12 years of age
- The "Hidden Life," which is the time He was 12 until the time He was 30 years of age
- His "Public Life," which is the last three years of His life

Christ lived in Egypt perhaps, for the first three, maybe five years of His life. The Holy Family eventually moved back to Nazareth, where Mary and Joseph had been from. We know very little about what happened at that time, except when Christ was 12 years of age. The Holy Family went, as was their custom, to Jerusalem. This was for the time of the Passover, very important for the Jews to travel once a year to Jerusalem. It says that, "The Child Jesus stayed behind without His parents knowing." They could think, "How could that happen?" You

know, how could they lose this Son, the Son of God entrusted to their care? It says, "Thinking He was in the caravan, they began their journey home." See, all the times people would travel with a large group. It was too dangerous to travel just with a small number, because of all the robbers and how dangerous it was in those days. It was imagined that they probably would have had maybe 10, 20, 50, or 100 people traveling down, large groups traveling down from Nazareth for the Passover, and traveling back.

It was thought that He was in their caravan, and that they traveled a day's journey, which makes sense because that night, at nightfall, because often times the moms would walk together, the dads would walk together, and the kids would walk together. At night they would then have camp, and setup the camp, and then the kids would find their own mom and dad. After the first night, it was found that Christ was not there. They had to wait until the next morning, perhaps, and then walk a day's journey back. That's why it says, "They found Him the third day, in the Temple." It's also a tradition that, when people left the city of Jerusalem, the women would exit from one gate of the city, and the men from another gate, and a child could go either with the mother or the father. That's probably when Our Lord slipped away, because He knew this was His chance. The mom's going out this way, and Mary thought Joseph had Him; and Joseph thought Mary had Him. They said "I thought you had Him" when they got together. They would have been traveling in large caravans, and eventually they discovered He was not there.

They found Jesus in the Temple, sitting amidst all the great scholars, all the great teachers, of the Law. It said, "He was asking them questions, and people were amazed at His responses." What did Jesus say when Mary said, "How is it, that we've been searching for You in sorrow?" He says, "Did you not know I must be about my Father's business?" He knows who He is, He's the Son of God. But then it says, "He came down with them, and was subject to them." Jesus went back to Nazareth, and was subject to them, and you don't hear another word about Christ until He's 30 years old. Eighteen more years go by without us knowing much about what happens during that time period.

A couple of interesting things about the "Finding in the Temple," as we call it. That it also can help support the teaching that Mary had no other children. There's no other children mentioned at all in this scene. It seems that it's just that Christ is their only son. That seems to be the sense of the Scriptures. Then it says that Christ came back, and says, "He went down with them." Scripture always says "they went down" because Jerusalem is a city built on the hill. It's very high up. So whenever you leave Jerusalem, you have to go down. They went down, and eventually went to Nazareth. Then, "Jesus was subject to them. He advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and man."

Eighteen years go by, of the "Hidden Life." Why did Jesus do that? Why did he spend 18 years in silence and solitude, and just being an ordinary worker? That's

what Jesus did; He worked in the carpenter's shop with St. Joseph for 18 years. He gives us an example, an example of obedience to His parents. Jesus could have started His mission when He was 12 years old, but apparently, Our Lady and St. Joseph did not want Him to. See, in those days, if you were 12 years old, you were considered an adult among the Jewish People. He'd come into manhood, and had the Bar Mitzvah, which is held around that age. But, Jesus apparently knew that Mary and Joseph did not want Him to begin His public mission. He came down, and He showed obedience; He showed humility; and then He lived a life of obscurity, for the next 18 years. We can learn a lot about the Spiritual Life, and this gives us a little bit of indication on why we have certain religious orders in the Church, like the Poor Clare's, and the Carmelites. You have men and women that go off in monasteries, and they'll spend the rest of their lives in prayer and solitude. The world can't figure that out. They can't understand. They think "what a waste"! You know, why would they go and spend their whole day in prayer and spiritual reading, and things like that? Solitude and obscurity is actually

(the first side of the tape ended and resumes below)

and as far as we know, Christ did not even travel during that time. You can read some New Age Books that say this is when Christ went to India, and this is where He met the Buddah, and this is when He traveled all around; but that's never been a teaching of the Church. The teaching is that Christ remained in Nazareth. He just did the ordinary, daily grind, just as we all do each day, getting up, working, earning money, and going to the Synagogue every Saturday to pray. There's no evidence He ever went off to India and studied Hinduism or anything like that.

(A question). That's true. There's a couple of reasons why it was okay for Christ to stay in Jerusalem. One of them was that, for example, Joseph was not His father. God was His Father. He said, "Did you not know I must be about My Father's business?" Namely, going out preaching and beginning His public ministry, which would have been amazing – He could have began the public ministry at age 12. He was considered an adult in the Jewish sense at that time, so it seems that's one of the reasons why it was not obviously a sin.

We see His eagerness or His willingness to be about His Father's business, but after Mary and Joseph, who was, as you know, the foster father of Christ, after they expressed their wishes that He come back with them, it says, "He was subject to them and came back with them." Then, it seems that it was at the wedding feast of Cana, that He wasn't even planning on starting His "Public Ministry" at that point. He was sort of waiting for Our Lady to say "go ahead and start it." That's why she said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." And then Jesus worked His very first miracle, eighteen years after the Finding in the Temple.

(A question). Yes, but He's giving us an example of honoring our parents, and an example of obedience and humility in that. You're right, He would have known that, but I think it's His way of showing people obedience to their parents, that He was obedient to them. It's a good example for all of us as followers of Christ.

(A question). John was only six months older than Christ, so it is true, that's probably one of the reasons why, in God's timing, the perfect timing would be to wait until Christ was 30 years of age. See, once you're 30, that's considered a very mature person. Twelve, of course, wasn't. Imagine Jesus going out preaching at 12. He might not have gotten too many people to listen to Him. But, it also does make sense that He was waiting for John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah.

(A question). Yes, in those days the word brother or sister did mean "other relations" as well. It meant aunts, it meant uncles, and it meant cousins. In fact, there's a good quote here from the Book of Genesis, Chapter 13, Verse 8, and it talks about how Abraham referred to Lot as his brother. But we know that actually, Lot was Abraham's nephew. It's a good example of, in Scripture, about there was an uncle/nephew relationship, and yet they were called brothers throughout the Book of Genesis. We would understand the word brother and sister as meaning "cousins."

(A question). That's right. We're all brothers and sisters in Christ.

(A question). It's true. It could be that the fact that they did need help in the carpenter shop would have been a very good thing for Christ to be obedient to that.

(A question). Oh no, there were trees, because they had to make a cross out of wood. And that's how they made their mangers. Somebody had said there weren't trees in the Holy Land.

(A question). How I would answer that is, first of all, the Bible does refer to Joseph as a carpenter. There's a couple times in Scripture where people say, "Isn't this the carpenter's son?", referring to Jesus. We know for a fact that Joseph was a carpenter, and their houses did have wooden doors. We know that they had tables and chairs, and they had plows. It talked about yolks that were put on the animal's backs. Yes, there were carpenters and there are plenty of trees. It even says in the Bible that Zacchaeus climbed up a tree to see Jesus when He was going through Jericho. There's all sorts of trees, lots of trees. Jesus cursed the fig tree. The crosses were all made of wood from trees, so I'm not sure what your friend was referring to, because I think trees are all over the Holy Land.

Let me just spend a moment or two now on the "Public Life" of Christ. This is a fascinating part of Our Lord's life. He was 30 years old when He began his Public

Life, which began at the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Two years before Jesus began his Public Ministry, John the Baptist began preaching. John had about two years to prepare the way for the Messiah. When Christ was baptized, He came up out of the water. The voice of God the Father said, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the Holy Spirit descended in what looked to people like the form of a dove.

Then Christ went into the desert and fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. He was tempted or tested by the Devil, which shows that temptations are not sins, because even Christ was put to the test. Even then, He rebuked the Devil three times.

Then we have Our Lord's Public Life lasting about three years, preaching, working miracles, teaching and doing good. This is when Christ began calling His disciples. Jesus had as many as 72 disciples. Later on, in the second year of His ministry, He chose 12 of them to be His Apostles. But in the first year, He chose His disciples. In the first year of Our Lord's ministry, He did the Wedding Feast of Cana miracle, and He drove out the money changers from the Temple. It seems He did that twice, once at the beginning of His ministry, and once at the end. In the second year, as I mentioned, He chose His 12 Apostles, which is also when He gave His Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus worked many miracles, like the Multiplication of the Loaves, again which He did twice, on two different occasions. He Walked on the Water, He cured the centurion's servant, raised the son of the widow of Nain. In the third year, Jesus spent most of that time up in Galilee and in the north. The first two years, He spent a lot in the Jerusalem area, but things got too heated down there.

The Scribes and the Pharisees were trying to plot His death, so He spent most of His third year up in the north, up in Galilee and even into Phoenicia, which was pagan territory. In the third year of Our Lord's ministry, He was Transfigured on Mt. Tabor, in the presence of Peter, James, and John, thus revealing His glory and His Divinity. This is when he cured the 10 lepers, the man born blind from birth was cured, and where He gave St. Peter the primacy upon which He would build His Church. He told the parable of the Good Samaritan at this time, and the Prodigal Son. One of His last miracles was the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

Then we know at the very end of Our Lord's Public Ministry, that on Palm Sunday, which we call the Sunday before His death, He rode the donkey into Jerusalem, which was a fulfillment of the Old Testament, on how the Messiah would come through the Eastern Gate of the Temple riding on a colt. Then we have the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist. That brings us up to Holy Week. So the purpose of Our Lord's Public Ministry was to teach the truths that the Father wanted taught, to establish His Church, and to work miracles to prove what He was saying was true.

The Bible actually talks about only 33 of Our Lord's miracles. He probably worked hundreds or even thousands of miracles, but the 33 miracles that are described in the New Testament occurred between Cana and Calvary. Eight of them had to do with power over nature. These would be things like changing water into wine, calming the storm, walking on the water, having large catches of fish (which occurred twice), the multiplication of the loaves and fish (which occurred twice), and then cursing the fig tree. Those are the eight that show His power over nature. Twenty-five miracles have to do with human beings. Six times He cast out demons; 15 times He healed diseases or other physical defects. One time He restored a severed ear. Remember in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was about to be arrested, and St. Peter took his sword (St. Peter was a fisherman; he wasn't a very good swordsman), and almost completely missed the guy, just cut off his ear. Jesus restored his ear. Then three times He raised people from the dead. Who can tell me the names of the three people He raised from the dead? Does anybody know? Lazarus, good! He was the most famous one. Then how about the others? Yeah, the daughter of Jairus, very good. And then, one other person He raised from the dead. Himself? That's coming up later. Yes, the only son of the widow of Nain. He raised three people from the dead, two men and a young girl.

His 34th miracle that is mentioned in Scripture is His own bodily Resurrection. That of course, is the great Miracle of Miracles. There are only two times when Jesus worked a miracle that something got destroyed. Can anybody tell me what two miracles they were, when something was damaged or destroyed? All the other ones were healings and things like that. One was the cursing of the fig tree; and the other one was when Jesus cast out the demons into 2,000 swine, and they went rushing down the bluff and drowned into the Sea of Galilee. So it's easy to remember: the figs and the pigs – those are His two miracles of destruction.

The Holy Week began on what we now call Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Our Lord was crucified. Jesus came into Jerusalem in a very humble way. He didn't come in on a big war horse. He came in probably in the most humble of ways, riding on a donkey. Then at the Last Supper, which the Jews would normally celebrate on that day where Christ, instead of using things like lamb at the Last Supper, what He did was use something very unique. He used bread and wine. Then, at the Last Supper, He did something very different. He told the Apostles, He said, "This is My Body; this is My Blood." We're going to have a whole class on the Eucharist coming up right after Christmas, so I won't go into it in much detail; but it was when the great miracle took place of Jesus giving Himself to us under the appearances of bread and wine. It's a wonderful thing. Also, at the Last Supper, Jesus washed the Apostles' feet, to again teach humility and service. But the greatest event that occurred at the Last Supper was the institution of the Eucharist; and also that's where He instituted the Priesthood, when He told the Apostles, "Do this, in memory of Me." He gave them the power to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

When we look at the Crucifixion of Christ, we know that Christ died for each and every person. He didn't just die for Catholics, or Christians, or Jewish People. He died for everybody. He paid the price, redeemed everybody that ever lived, that was living at the time, and will ever live. Will everyone be saved? We don't know, probably not, because not everybody accepts what Jesus did for them. Other people might accept certain things, but they don't live holy lives. We don't know how many will be saved. We hope and pray that the majority of people will be saved, and make it to Heaven; but Christ paid the price for everybody, and earned their salvation, merited their salvation. They themselves have to respond. They have to play a part as well, to accept that in their life.

What were the primary sufferings of Christ? How did He save us? Again, He didn't have to do this, but He went through the Agony in the Garden, where He actually sweat blood. The medical phenomenon called hematidrosis, I believe you pronounce it that way, is where the capillaries under the skin burst, and the person, instead of sweating sweat, actually sweats blood. It has actually occurred in our own country in recent years, when somebody goes through intense trauma or tragedy. Jesus was cruelly Scourged at the Pillar. He was Crowned with Thorns. He was Crucified, and died on the Cross. He went through the Agony in the Garden in Gethsemane, which we call the Garden of Olives. This is where he was betrayed by Judas, and then led by the soldiers before the high priest, condemned to death for claiming to be the Son of God. That's why they said they wanted Him killed, because He claimed to be the Son of God; and that was blasphemy in their eyes.

He was taken before Pontius Pilate, who was the Roman governor of Judea. And Pilate tried to please the crowds by having Jesus scourged, trying to save Jesus' life; but the crowd would not hear of it. They wanted Him crucified. We know that Jesus was cruelly tied to a pillar and scourged from head to toe. The soldiers made fun of Him. They kept slapping Him, spitting on Him, crowned Him with a Crown of Thorns, and mocked Him. Then He was again brought before the crowds, and they demanded Him to be crucified. Jesus then carried the Cross to Calvary at least for part of the way. We know He fell probably a number of times on the way. Simon of Cyrene was chosen from the fields to come in and carry the Cross for Christ the rest of the way.

We know that Christ spoke seven times from the Cross:

- "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."
- "Amen, I say to you, this day you will be with Me in Paradise." He said that to the good thief.
- "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your Mother." He said that to Mary and to John.
- "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (quoting Psalm 22).
- "I thirst."
- "It is finished."

- “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.”

He only spoke seven times from the Cross over the course of the three hours.

The place where Jesus was crucified was called Golgotha, which means “the place of the skull.” It was a hill shaped in the form of what looked like a human skull. When Christ died, the Sun was darkened; the Earth quaked; and the Veil in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This showed the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven, opening of the Gates of Heaven, and ending the Old Testament and beginning the New Testament; and now establishing a new religion of Christianity. The Veil in the Temple was about 100 feet tall, and 60 feet wide, and it was torn in two, not from bottom to top, but from top to bottom. God Himself had to open it, and then open up the Holy of Holies; and that was done right at the time when Christ died, and when the soldier pierced His heart with a lance. All this occurred on what we call Good Friday. Our Lord’s body was taken down from the Cross, and laid in Mary’s arms. It was then placed in the Tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, and the stone was placed over the Tomb.

What can we learn from the sufferings of Christ? We learn, first of all, how much God loves us. When you see what Christ did for us, in suffering so much, He didn’t have to go through that. We also see the evil and the horror of sin. That’s how terrible sin is, that Jesus suffered so much to redeem us from our sins. I think we also learn, the example of how to handle suffering. Jesus’ example of forgiveness, and how to deal with suffering.

That’s not the end of the story. We talked about last week, how after Jesus died, His soul descended into hell, which was not Hell with the Devil and the demons. It was Sheol, the abode of the dead, where Christ went to see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the great saints of the Old Testament. This is found in First Peter 3:19, where it says, “Jesus, brought to life in the Spirit, in which also He went and preached to those spirits that were in prison,” referring to the Limbo of the Fathers.

On Easter morning, the great miracle occurred of Jesus being raised from the dead, gloriously and triumphant, after three days in the Tomb, from Friday afternoon through Sunday morning. This was closer to maybe 40 hours, not three full days. But in the Jewish calendar, Friday, Saturday, Sunday: “He was three days in the Tomb”; it didn’t necessarily mean three full days. Obviously, He wasn’t buried until Friday before sunset, and rose early Sunday morning. But Jesus had foretold His own Resurrection. He told the people, “Destroy this Temple; I will rebuild it in three days.” The temple He was referring to was His body. Even the enemies of Christ knew that He was going to rise, because that’s why they stationed guards. They said to Pontius Pilate, “we remember that that Deceiver said while He was yet alive, ‘After three days, I will rise again.’” They wanted a guard posted at the Tomb.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to the Apostles on a number of different occasions. In fact, He spent 40 days on Earth after His Resurrection. He did this to prove that He was risen, and also to instruct the Apostles, and to guide them in the early Church. We know that Christ truly did die, and He truly did rise. He died for a number of reasons. We know that the soldier thrust the spear into Christ's side, opening up His Heart, out flowed blood and water. The soldiers knew that Christ was already dead. That's why they did not break His legs, because on the Cross, in order to breathe, you had to be able to push up on your legs, and pull up on the nails in your hands. Christ was already dead; they already thrust the spear into His Heart. But Christ truly rose from the dead, and there are witnesses: not only Mary Magdalene, but the 12 Apostles, and it even says 500 of the disciples saw Christ at once, after He had been raised from the dead.

We'll probably end there tonight, at the Resurrection. Next week, before we get into the next topic, on the Holy Spirit and Grace, I'll talk about the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, and just mention a little bit about the four Gospels, and why each of the Gospels are a little bit different. Each one gives us some different facets of Christ's life.

The Shroud of Turin is a wonderful gift we have in the world today. I've done a lot of research on the Shroud. There's so much evidence supporting its authenticity. I won't go into this now, because on Good Friday I usually give a talk right here in the Chapel. If you want to come this year, we spend some time going through the entire sufferings of Christ, which are shown to us on the Shroud. Also, make sure you take a copy of this, some other very good information about the Shroud. You can actually see what the Roman scourge looked like, what the Crown of Thorns looked like historically. Then, we also have two articles about the Shroud showing its authenticity, and also the history of the Shroud. If you have a chance to read these over; it's so powerful, when you read how much Jesus loves us, and how much He suffered for us.

For example, if you look at Our Lord's back, every one of those white marks, sort of criss-crossing, are scourge marks. They can count exactly how many scourges He had. There are about 120 scourge marks on Our Lord's body. In other words, he was scourged three times with 40 lashes, or 39 lashes. There's so much you can tell from here. You can see the wound in the side, where the soldier thrust through His Heart. You can see the nail prints, the nails going through the wrist. Again, we'll have the whole talk just about the Passion of Christ on Good Friday. You can see where the Crown of Thorns was – very, very, very powerful.

(A question). In the Roman times, yes, that was very common. In fact, when Christ was about five years of age, there was an uprising among the Jews, and the Romans put it down. They crucified 2,000 Jews in that area. Their bodies were left on these crosses, 2000 crosses; and they say after a while, on certain

days, when the wind blew a certain direction, you could smell the terrible stench of that, even as far as Nazareth. The Romans would only use crucifixion for their worst enemies. If you were a Roman citizen, you were not allowed to be crucified. That's why St. Paul was beheaded, and not crucified; whereas St. Peter was crucified. Sometimes they used rope; sometimes they used nails. We know for a fact on the Shroud, they used nails on Christ, which was an act of mercy. If you used ropes, the person would live longer. He would normally survive three to four days on the cross, if they used ropes. Our Lord had gone through the bloody sweat, Agony in the Garden, and He was so weakened, dehydrated, with great loss of blood, that He lived for three hours on the Cross. Normally, those that were crucified were prisoners, revolutionaries, traitors, and slaves – that's who they were crucifying.

(A question). According to the archeological evidence, when they found bones from those that were crucified, the nails did go through the wrists. A lot of studies, like Dr. Barbet, who did a lot of research on this, found that if the nails went through the hand, they would not support the weight of the body, and would just be pulled right through. But a nail going through the wrist, through this place right here (in fact, you can feel that one little hole, especially on this side of your wrist). The nails went through there; it would actually support the weight of the body. That's the evidence from the Shroud that Jesus was crucified through the wrists, and archeological evidence too, when they found fragments of bone.