

Friend For Life

A Booklet for 14-15 Year Olds

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1st Point - WHO JESUS IS

CHRISTMAS 1975 WAS FOLLOWED BY a holiday appearance of John Paul Young at Miami's Great Hall on the Gold Coast. Like so many -pop stars, J.P.Y. will shine for a while, will fade and will then be forgotten. How many of you remember much about Col Joy, The Shadows, Judy Stone, Chubby Checker - all "stars" of yesterday?

THIS PAMPHLET IS ABOUT A PERSON who never fades (hardly, he's the Light of the World), a Person who never goes out of date (he's the Joy of every human heart), a Person who demands that we love and serve him (or else!). He is our Greatest Friend in Life: JESUS CHRIST.

DEPENDING ON WHICH EYE YOU USE (and it's best to use both most of the time), Jesus is like \$10,000,000 [make that \$10 Billion] or like "Jaws". Imagine someone is knocking at the door of your classroom. Your teacher opens the door and hears Jesus say: "I'm looking for..." (= you). "I want to give him/her \$10,000,000" (= true happiness and peace in this life and happiness unlimited in the life to come). How could anyone refuse such an offer? Only a very silly person could ignore or reject such a tremendous gift and say "so what; can't be bothered; doesn't concern me; tell him I'm not here".

ON THE OTHER HAND IMAGINE YOU ARE sitting on a surfboard 200 metres from shore and someone shouts to you: "Head for the beach; JAWS is in the next wave". How could anyone say "so what; can't be bothered; doesn't concern me; tell him I'm not here"? Only a maniac would say such a thing - shortly before being turned into shark salad.

Well, that is what ignoring and rejecting Jesus is like. If we refuse to give him a hearing and to accept him, then some-day he will utterly crush us. (see Lk. 20.18).

STRONG WORDS: "Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it". -Jesus (Mt. 10.37-39).

WHY DOES JESUS MATTER? This is one of the many Big Questions about life you now have to ask and investigate: Did Jesus really exist as an historical Person? Where did he come from? What did he do? How can he possibly be important in 20.... (= this year)? Does he care about me?

IF YOU ARE AN ORDINARY SECONDARY STUDENT, by now you will have seen enough of life to know that our world is sick: things go wrong, people do bad things, you yourself have many faults and commit sins. Like all the billions of other occupants of this planet, you need a guide in life, a healer, a Saviour - to rescue and save you from unhappiness and sin and to lead you to a full and happy life. Because of the sin of our First Parents, every human person (except Our Lady) has been born sick - spiritually sick. As the Bible says: "Man's heart contrives evil from his infancy" (Gen. 8.21). Only JESUS can save us from doing wrong and going wrong.

WHEN YOU READ ABOUT JESUS IN THE GOSPEL and hear him speak through the Eyewitness Good News Team, you find that his words make a deep impression on you - they hit home. Jesus knows us as no other person ever has - he reads our minds and hearts.

These famous words were written by a prisoner in the Iowa State Penitentiary (U.S.A.):

HERE is a young man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman.

HE grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30, and then for three years he was a travelling preacher.

HE never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college.

HE had no credentials but himself.

WHILE he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away.

HE was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

WHILE he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth and that was his coat.

WHEN he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

NINETEEN wide and full centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race, and the leader of the column of progress.

I AM far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the Parliaments that ever sat, and all the Kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that one solitary life.

THIS IS YOUR captain speaking: At the moment you are cruising at 107,220 kph (66,620 mph). This is because you happen to be on a planet called Earth which is moving in its orbit around the Sun at about 182 miles per second. I hope you are enjoying your flight! -From the Guinness Book of Records.

Tributes to Jesus would fill an encyclopaedia; no other person in History has received tributes like these:

- "Without Jesus, no one understands life".

-Thomas a' Kempis.

- "Young people: seek Christ in order to remain young".

-St. Augustine.

- "Because of Christ, I have come to consider all the advantages I had as disadvantages. Not only that, but I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ".

-St. Paul (Phil. 3.7-8).

- "Ignorance consists in knowing many things without knowing Christ".

-Thomas a' Kempis.

- "Friendship with Jesus is the greatest possession of youth. Never give it up".

-Pope Paul VI.

- The police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees who said to them, "Why haven't you brought him?" The police replied, "There has never been anybody who has spoken like him".

-Jn. 7.45-46.

- "Never tire of hearing him spoken of, never weary of it. No subject ought to be dearer to us and none can be more useful".

-Abbot Marmion.

- "The material universe is like a code from God - to which Christ holds the key ... As far as I'm concerned it's Christ or nothing".
- Malcolm Muggeridge.
- "Jesus is the goal of human history, the focal point of the longings of history and of civilization, the centre of the human race, the joy of every heart, and the answer to all its yearnings".

-Vatican Council II.

- "Jesus is that truth which we are seeking; Jesus is that life of which we have need".

-Pope Paul VI.

- "Jesus is the Teacher of Mankind... He is the One who knows us and who loves us; He is the companion and the friend of our life. He is the man of sorrows and of hope."

-Pope Paul VI.

- "When we have found Jesus he begins to challenge us to improve our lives and solve our problems. He challenges our views on the meaning of life, on war and peace, on permissiveness and pornography, on crime and suicide; he challenges the individual ridden with anxiety and fear, he challenges the society disturbed by anarchy; he challenges the

family beset with unhappiness; he challenges the student who can't find a motive for study: all of these situations, all of these people, all of these aspects of life - are challenged by the teaching and life of Jesus. To all of them Jesus can bring help and strength; to all of them he has an answer; to all of them he is the Answer".

-Dan Rethson.

TRIBUTES TO JESUS HAVE BEEN paid in blood as well as in words. In every century since Jesus' time hundreds and sometimes thousands of Christians have willingly and gladly suffered death rather than deny or betray their friendship for Jesus. Jesus is worthy of tributes and praise for many reasons, four of which are the following:

He rose from the Dead
He lets me share in his "Paschal Mystery"
He is God as well as Man
He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

2nd Point - JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD

YOU HAVE PROBABLY HEARD THE BLACK SABBATH SONG "After Forever" which has the words:

" Have you ever thought about your soul, Can it be saved? Or do you think that when you are dead you just stay in your grave? Is God just a thought within your head or is he a part of you? Is Christ just a name that you read in a book when you were at school? When you think about death do you lose your head or do you keep your cool?"

Well, what is your attitude to death? This after all is one of the Big Questions you have to ask about as you prepare to live your "Day" (= life). What does death mean? Is it the end of my life? Is there a life to come? Should I be scared to die?

ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO a man was brutally executed in a city called Jerusalem. For over 24 hours he lay dead in a tomb. Then, to the bewilderment of his enemies and the tremendous joy of his friends, he came back to life. Just think of it: someone once came back to life from the dead! It wasn't a trick; it wasn't a stunt; it really happened: a dead Man came back to life! We say he "rose" (= "came up from") the dead and we speak about his "Resurrection".

DURING HIS LIFETIME THIS SAME MAN had brought other people back from death: the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5.41), the Widow's Son (Lk. 7.14) and Lazarus (Jn. Ch. 11). This same Man - Jesus - has promised that you too can make a come-back after death, that you too will rise again. He says:

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. IF ANYONE BELIEVES IN ME, EVEN THOUGH HE DIES HE WILL LIVE, AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER DIE. -Jn. 11.25-26.

Jesus kept his word: He rose from the dead. He rose from the dead to "re-open" Heaven and to show us that there is a life after death. His own resurrection is the proof and guarantee that his promise to us is a real promise.

AS WE WILL SEE IN MORE DETAIL LATER, Jesus teaches that there is a future life for us human beings. When you die, your body will decay and rot but your soul will go to Heaven, Purgatory or Hell. Then, at the end of the world, your body will rejoin your soul in Heaven or Hell. This will be fully explained later. What concerns us here is the fact that there is a life to come - the fact that there is more to our existence than this life on earth.

SMILE: As the funeral went through town, someone forgot to close the back door of the hearse. Before long the precious cargo had fallen out and went rolling down the street. It rolled into a chemist shop and the corpse sat up and asked: "Have you got anything to stop this coffin?"...

SOME DAY YOU WILL DIE. If you are not sure of anything else in life this is one thing of which you can have absolute certainty: you are going to die. This is why Jesus' resurrection is such Good News: it shows that death is not the end - there is a life to come. When you understand this News it's not hard to "keep your cool" at the thought of dying.

THE THING YOU SHOULD WORRY ABOUT is not dying, but missing out on Heaven - this is dying with a capital D, eternal Death, Dying Forever. How lucky we are to have Jesus' promise that if we keep his commandments - and especially if we receive Holy Communion - then we will escape this eternal Death and will live for ever. These are his own words:

I AM THE LIVING BREAD WHICH HAS COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. ANYONE WHO EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOR EVER... ANYONE WHO EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD HAS ETERNAL LIFE, AND I SHALL RAISE HIM UP ON THE LAST DAY. -Jn. 6.51-54.

THESE WORDS ARE SURELY EXCITING! Death is not the end! Death has been defeated by Jesus Christ and he will help us defeat it too! This was hot news in the Mediterranean world of Jesus' time (where many people did not believe in an after-life); today it is still the greatest news item our ears can hear. Is it any wonder that we Christians attach great importance to Sunday! Sunday is the day Jesus rose from the dead - so each Sunday we solemnly and joyfully celebrate Jesus' resurrection. For a Christian, Easter Sunday is the most important day of the year.

NOW YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT preparing for life means preparing not only for adult life, but even more importantly it means preparing for a life after death: preparing to rise again, preparing to live for ever in Heaven. So you must live now in such a way as not to miss out on rising to eternal life in the world to come. The fact that you are going to live for ever means that you must try really hard to live properly on earth in order to qualify for Heaven. Every time you see a coffin say: "Lord, I look forward to the day when you will raise me from the dead!"

3rd Point - JESUS LETS ME SHARE IN HIS "PASCHAL MYSTERY"

Section A HAS ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU that you look like a bucket of cold water? Shortly we'll see how each one of us is a bucket of cold water (and I don't just mean looking pale...). To do this we must go back in history to something that God did for the Jewish people. Those of you who have seen the film "The Ten Commandments" (or who have read the Bible-Book of Exodus upon which it was based,) will remember how God sent plagues on Egypt to help Moses free the people from Pharaoh's control: God turned the rivers into blood; he sent grasshoppers on them, sent

darkness, hail and other plagues too. His great final plague - the tenth one - was to strike down the firstborn of all the Egyptians - animals as well as human beings. To prevent the plague hitting the Israelites, God instructed them to kill a young lamb and spread its blood on their doors so that when God's "destroying angel" came to the house of an Israelite, the angel would see the blood and would not destroy the firstborn in the house. The angel would see the blood and instead of going inside to kill, would "pass over" that house - would spare the eldest and go somewhere else.

THAT "PASSING OVER" (not passing out) of the angel led to the Israelites having the Feast of the Passover, celebrating the fact that they had been spared. Each year they celebrated this Feast with great solemnity and sacrificed what was called a "passover lamb" - to remind them that by the blood of a lamb they had been saved from death and also that they had been rescued from Egypt (Pharaoh let them go after the tenth plague). In time, the word "paschal" was developed from the word "passover". So there was the "Paschal Feast" at which the "Paschal Lamb" was eaten.

Section B NOW WE COME TO THE TIME OF JESUS. He is our Paschal Lamb - for two reasons.

First, he chose to die at the Feast of the Passover (on Good Friday) and so associated himself with the killing of the Paschal Lamb.

Secondly, by his blood the whole human race has been saved and the way to Heaven re-opened. Jesus' blood has saved us, just as a lamb's blood once saved the Israelites. This is why John the Baptist described Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1.29). St. Paul, too, describes Jesus as "our passover" (1 Cor. 5.7).

JESUS' DYING AND RISING AGAIN from the dead are referred to as his "Paschal Mystery" ("mystery" here means something great which we cannot fully understand; we can only partly understand how anyone could come back from the dead; we can only partly understand the fact that Jesus - the Son of God - actually experienced death). Put simply, "Paschal Mystery" just means "Jesus' dying and rising": Jesus died - and then rose from the dead.

JESUS' DYING AND RISING constitute the greatest event in the history of the world, and it's an event - a happening - in which he lets you share. This has tremendous importance for you as you prepare for life because it's by taking part in Jesus' dying and rising that you can become a better person. Just as Jesus died and went down into the tomb and then rose again and came up from the tomb, so you are meant to "die" - to "go down" - to what is wrong, bad and sinful in your life. Then you are meant to "rise" again - to "come up" to what is good, to what is right. For example, we all need to do away with our selfishness - we need to "die", to "go down" to it - and then to "rise" to being kinder and more generous in our lives. We are meant to do away with everything negative about us and rise up to more positive attitudes and values in life.

JESUS WENT DOWN AND CAME UP - and he wants you to do the same. He wants you to die to what is wrong and to rise to what is good. And he himself gives you the strength and the energy to do this. Just as ordinary food gives you energy to keep on living and growing, so Jesus gives you spiritual energy to live and grow spiritually - to become a better person, to live properly, to prepare for life as well as you can. He does this by coming into your life and influencing your life in many ways - especially by means of the Sacraments.

THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN SAY you are like a small/ medium/large bucket of cold water. "Cold" stands for "not so good/bad/sinful"; "warm" stands for "good". Your aim in life is to become a

bucket of warm water. Your aim in life is to become a better and better person - to increase your supply of goodness, to become more aware of the meaning of life, to live as a "work of art", to realize that "life means community", to be responsible. Growing in all these aspects means growing in "warmth". And it is Jesus who warms up us buckets of cold water.

Section C EACH TIME JESUS COMES INTO OUR BODIES at Communion time, it is as if a red hot iron were being lowered into a bucket of cold water. And the longer the iron stays and the more often it comes in, the warmer the water becomes. Jesus warms us up a bit at a time - and this is where we get the energy to improve, the energy to "die" to what is wrong and "rise" to what is right. Jesus died and rose; we die and rise. We do what he did. We take part in what he did as our dying and rising Paschal Lamb. We share in, take part in, his "Paschal Mystery". This life-long process of change for the better is Jesus at work in our lives. (As in the sign: "Be patient: God isn't finished with me yet".) Jesus applies his death and resurrection to our lives. He is the Lamb whose blood takes away the sin of the world. He applies his saving victory in our lives through his Paschal Mystery by which we die to what is wrong and rise to what is right.

YOUR AIM RIGHT THROUGH LIFE must be to co-operate with Jesus as he offers you his help. If you let him help you then your life will take on a new dimension - your world will light up. With Jesus' help you will be changed, transformed and continually become a better person. No doubt you will have your slip-ups, set-backs, let-downs, hang-ups (our remarkable English language...) - but through them all you will keep on improving. Jesus has commanded you to become saint (= a saint), for he says: "YOU MUST THEREFORE BE PERFECT, JUST AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT" (Mt. 5.48). So as you prepare for life, try to get involved as much as you can in Jesus' Paschal Mystery - his unbeatable process for help and improvement. Keep on trying to "die" to what is wrong and "rise" to what is right more and more each day. This is what your Greatest Friend wants you to do.

THIS IS your captain speaking once again. You may be interested to know that our whole solar system (to which the Sun, Earth and Moon belong) is at this moment revolving around the centre of the Milky Way once in every 225,000,000 years at a speed of 774,000 kph (= 481,000 mph). I hope you are still enjoying your flight...

With his dying breath Jesus cried out on the Cross:

"I THIRST"

I thirst for God the Father's will to be carried out;

I thirst for all people to be saved and reach Heaven;

I thirst that you will take part in my victory and "rise" to a better life here on earth;

I thirst that you will rise eventually to eternal life in Heaven.

4th Point - JESUS IS GOD AS WELL AS MAN

SO OFTEN WHEN WE HEAR ABOUT JESUS we tend to think of him as just a man. This is what "Mary Magdalen" sings in "Jesus Christ Superstar": "He's just a man". But in fact Jesus is NOT just a man. He is GOD as well as man. The Bible teaches us that God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, came down on Earth and was born as a man, Jesus Christ. Jesus is therefore God and man at the same time.

MANY OF LIFE'S QUESTIONS HAVE a solution in your mind: you can think them out. But in the case of how Jesus can be both God and man, or the case of how there can be three Persons in one God (the Trinity) the solution is not only in your mind; the solution is also partly in your heart, in your faith, in your trust that something is true because someone else has told you it is true. That someone is God himself - and he asks you to trust and believe in what he has told you.

THINK BACK TO THE TIME when you were a baby. From watching your baby brother or sister or some other baby, you know that a baby's intelligence and mind are very limited; they have not yet developed and grown. A baby cannot be expected to understand the workings of a car engine; a baby cannot be expected to appreciate the joy and beauty of married love. All a baby can do is understand and appreciate a bottle!

WELL, WITHOUT MEANING TO INSULT YOUR great intelligence, I'm afraid I must inform you that we human beings are like infants when it comes to understanding everything about God. Some day we hope to see the full picture in Heaven. But for the moment we cannot expect fully to understand such great facts like Jesus being both God and Man, great facts like the three Persons making up the Blessed Trinity.

PEOPLE SOMETIMES SAY: Why doesn't God come down on Earth and tell us about himself? To which you must answer: "HE HAS!" God has in fact come down on Earth: God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, has done this. In the Bible, God the Son is sometimes called "the Word" and we read in St. John's Gospel (Jn. 1.14) that "the Word became flesh" (= became a man). He has come down on Earth and taken a human body and soul - a human nature - and has been born as a man, Jesus Christ.

ALWAYS REMEMBER WHO JESUS IS when you hear him spoken of, when you pray to him, when you read about him. He is GOD-ON-EARTH, GOD-MADE-MAN.

REALIZE THAT JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD. He claimed to be the Giver of Life, equal to God the Father. He claimed to have the power to forgive sins (which only God can do). Here are his -own words:

"THE FATHER AND I ARE ONE" (Jn. 10.30). When Jesus said this, his audience was shocked. They fetched stones to stone him and said to him: "We are not stoning you for doing a good work but for blasphemy: you are only a man and you claim to be God" (Jn. 10.33).

THIS IS WHERE YOU MUST ASK ONE OF THOSE "Big Questions" that will help you prepare for life: What about Jesus' claim - is it true? Is Jesus really God? Well, a claim can only be true or false. If you claim to be the best bike rider in your class then your claim is either true or false. Some claims - like claiming to be a millionaire - can be said to be half-true or half-false if you have half a million dollars. But claims of identity, claims of personality can be only true or false. If you claim to be some famous person (the President of the United States or Miss Australia), then either you are that person or you are not that person. You can't "half" be that person. Your claim can be only true or false; it can't be half right and half wrong.

IF YOUR CLAIM IS FALSE, then you are either mad (insane) or you are a deceiver (trying to fool and mislead people). False claims of identity fall into these two categories.

NOW, JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD! So, if his claim is false, then he must be a deceiver or insane. But a simple reading of the Gospels shows us that Jesus was neither insane nor a deceiver. His whole life, his teachings, his miracles rule out every possibility of deception and insanity. Could a deceiver do such great miracles in God's name? Would God let a deceiver or an insane person be the greatest and most profound Teacher about God and about human life that the world has ever known? Would a deceiver undergo the Crucifixion just to fool us? Could an insane man have possessed the wisdom, the knowledge, the unsurpassed insights into human nature that Jesus displayed? No, Jesus cannot be said to be a deceiver or to be insane. Therefore his claim is not false. Therefore it is true.

THIS LITTLE PIECE OF MENTAL GYMNASTICS means that this Jesus Person - Jesus Christ ("Our Lord") is GOD! It means that God has come down on earth - he has come down and told us about himself and told us how to live properly. He has given us all the advice and help we need in order to live life to the full. This should boost your confidence and give you great optimism as you prepare for life. This should give you tremendous joy in living every day. Jesus is not just a man; he is God as well as man. He is indeed the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE for each one of us. He is my God!!!

At each Mass we say: BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.
HOSANNA (= a shout of adoration) IN THE HIGHEST.

These words were addressed to Jesus as he entered Jerusalem. The crowd greeted and acclaimed him as their hero, their Saviour. At each Mass we greet and acclaim Jesus as he is about to become present on the altar by the words of Consecration ("This is My Body ... This is My Blood ...").

5th Point - JESUS IS THE SECOND PERSON OF THE BLESSED TRINITY

SO FAR YOU HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT how much Jesus can help you live your life properly and happily. Following Jesus' teaching is the secret to growing and developing as a human person. Following Jesus and becoming involved in his Dying and Rising Program for improvement means you are on a Freeway right through the journey of life.

WE HAVE SEEN THAT JESUS IS ABLE TO help us so powerfully because he is God. He is God the Son-on-Earth-in-human-flesh. Now we have to ask another Big Question: What do we mean by the "Blessed Trinity"? How can more than one Person be God?

BY THE "BLESSED TRINITY" we mean that in one God there are three really distinct Persons equal in all things, and having only one and the same Divine "Nature". The First Person is God the Father, the Second Person is God the Son, the Third Person is God the Holy Spirit. The word "Trinity" just means a group of three.

EACH OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS is God, yet together they are one God. There are not three Gods; there is only one God, but there are three Persons in the one God. The one God is not made up of three parts or sections; God the Father is not one-third of God, etc.

I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO USE A COMPARISON to help you understand these facts about God, but in this case there isn't any comparison available. The old three-leaf clover comparison is not suitable because it has the idea of three "parts" making up the "whole".

WE CAN ONLY JUST ACCEPT the great fact and mystery of the Trinity in this life. Once again, we cannot expect to know everything about God this side of Heaven - just as a baby cannot be

expected to understand the workings of a car engine. The Trinity is a secret which God the Son on Earth - Jesus - has told us about. If he hadn't told us we wouldn't have known about it. Out of love for us he has made known to us the greatest secret there is: There are Three Persons in the one God!

THE TRINITY IS THE HIGHEST TRUTH, the greatest fact, that we can think about and try to understand. From what Jesus has taught us, we know that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are very close to us. In fact, if you haven't driven God out of your life by serious sin, the three Divine Persons are closer to you right now than is the person next to you in class! This is exactly what the Bible teaches us:

"IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD, AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE HIM, AND WE SHALL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM." (Jesus speaking in Jn. 14.23)

"...The SPIRIT OF GOD HAS MADE HIS HOME IN YOU." "YOUR BODY, YOU KNOW, IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO IS IN YOU SINCE YOU RECEIVED HIM FROM GOD" (= God the Father). (St. Paul in Rom. 8.9 and I Cor. 6.19)

WHAT A STAGGERING FACT THIS IS! God is living inside you! God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have made their home in you! Not just you but every good person (= someone who is following a formed conscience) has God living inside him or her! This means it is quite a serious thing to say something unkind about someone, to hurt someone, to show disrespect to someone - because GOD is living inside that person.

DID YOU KNOW: The first newspaper appeared in England in 1622. On the top of the sheet were printed the points of the compass - showing that the paper told of events in all parts of the world. Soon a publisher arranged the first letters of North, South, East and West at the top of his sheet to spell the word "NEWS". (And his Bulletin told of New happenings from around the world.) So these bulletins were called "newspapers" and soon every publisher copied the idea.

NOW YOU CAN UNDERSTAND JESUS' WORDS on the day when St. Paul lost a few points from his pony club licence. St. Paul had been persecuting Christians in Jerusalem and he was riding to Damascus to arrest other believers when suddenly he was struck from his horse and a light from heaven surrounded him. He heard a voice saying "Saul, Saul (= his former name), why are you persecuting ME?". "Who are you, Lord?" he asked, and the voice answered, "I AM JESUS, AND YOU ARE PERSECUTING ME" (Acts 9.4). Notice that Jesus didn't say that Paul was persecuting Christians, but persecuting "ME" (= Jesus). This is because those Christians were people inside whom God lived.

REMEMBER ALSO THE WORDS: "I was hungry and you gave ME something to eat" (Mt. 25.35). When we give poor people something to eat, we are actually making our gift to God - because God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are living inside people. A human person is indeed a work of art ! ! Showing disrespect to ourselves or to others is therefore a sacrilege (look it up in the dictionary).

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT YOU EXIST because of the Blessed Trinity. The three Divine Persons - out of love - decided to share their life by giving existence to other beings. The Trinity created the angels and ourselves. This means that your whole purpose for living here on earth is to get to Heaven and live with these Three Persons for whom you were made. They are the reason why you are alive!

THE PERSONS OF THE BLESSED TRINITY are the three most exciting Persons in your life. Multiply by a million the happiness you have got out of seeing or meeting a famous person - and you'll still have only a faint idea of the happiness awaiting you when you meet the Trinity face to face!

THE THREE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY love you, they care about you, and they are living inside you if you are living a good life. To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, it doesn't matter what you are like: whether you are sick or healthy, poor or rich, happy or sad, have few friends or many or whatever - these Three Persons love you with an infinite love. They created you out of love and out -of love they want you to come to them.

PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASK: "Why did God go to the trouble of giving life to creatures like us? What was God doing before He created us? The Three Persons must have been very lonely before the world was made." Well, think here for a moment how the Three Persons can be compared with your parents. Perhaps you're a marvellous bundle of joy as a son or daughter and you think that you have made your parents' lives very happy - and I hope you have. But I'm sure your mother and father would smile if you were to ask them "What were you doing before I was born? It must have been boring, living before I was born; you mustn't have had anything to do; it must have been terribly dull; aren't you glad I came along?"...

GOD WASN'T BORED OR LONELY before we were created. He was and is perfectly happy. He decided to create us for the same reason that our parents gave life to us - out of love for each other and out of love for us. Because of his great love, God has shared his life, shared his existence, with creatures (= us). How lucky we are to exist!

SO, AS YOU PREPARE FOR LIFE, as you face up to life, as you decide what are the most important things in life and the things that are really going to matter, always remember: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the Three Persons who created you, the Three Persons from whom you received the gift of life, the Three most important Persons in your life, the Three Persons in whose life your life is a participation, a sharing, and in whose life every creature shares.

MAKE SURE THEN THAT AT THE START and end of each day - and often during the day - you very respectfully and carefully say (while making the sign of the Cross very slowly): IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - meaning that everything you do, think or say is done for the honour and glory of the blessed Trinity.

6th Point - BECOMING A FRIEND OF JESUS

THINK OF HOW MUCH ENERGY is contained in the mighty ocean surf which pounds towards the shore along thousands of miles of coastline around the world. Jesus has more power than all

those waves put together! As God the Son he gave those waves their energy! As God the Son-on-Earth he controlled the forces of nature:

"Then it began to blow a gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. They woke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are going down!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped, and all was calm again. Then he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?' They were filled with awe and said to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him'." (Mk. 4.37-41)

JESUS IS THE GREATEST MIND-READER the world has ever known. Right now he knows exactly what I am thinking: See: Jn. 2.25, Mt. 9.4, Mt. 12.25

THE LATIN WORD FOR "FLESH" IS "CARO". From "caro" come several English words: "carnage", "carnal", "carnivorous", "carnify" (look them up in your dictionary). The Bible tells us that "The WORD" (= God the Son) became incarnate (= flesh, man) in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. So we speak of the INCARNATION of God the Son.

The more you read about Jesus' life, the more you understand Jesus' life, the more you will see that Jesus was and is the greatest example of a Person who loves life. He is the Person most powerfully able to help you in life; he is the Person most powerfully able to give you life and to let you have it to the full (see Jn. 10.10).

YOUR FINGERPRINTS ARE UNIQUE. No two people have the same set of fingerprints. But every human person -man, woman, child - has the same set of human features: mind, heart, face, legs, arms, eyes etc. The features themselves may be different (different colour eyes for example) but every human person has obviously been made and formed according to one design, one blueprint, one plan, one image.

That image, that plan, that model is a living image, a Person. This is what you'd expect, since copies of anything always resemble the original, and in this case the copies (= us!) are persons.

This Person is God the Son who came down on Earth and was born as a Man - Jesus Christ:

"He (God the Son-on-earth) is the image of the unseen God and the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers (= angels) - all things were created through him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. (St. Paul - Col. 1.15-18)

- Jesus died on a Cross and rose from the grave to save me. I'll repay him every Sunday by going to Mass.
- God didn't die on the Cross; just his human nature did.
- I receive Jesus by going to Holy Communion.
- Jesus Christ is God; he is Man.

As God he can say "The Father and I are one" (Jn. 10.30) As Man he can say "The Father is greater than I" (Jn. 14.28)

- When we were baptized, God the Father, God the Son (= Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit came and began living in us. To keep them in our hearts we must live good lives.

SINCE JESUS CHRIST IS GOD THE SON in human flesh, he existed as God the Son before the universe was created. So we read:

The Jews said to him, "You are not even 50 years old - and have you seen Abraham?" "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied: "Before Abraham was born, I AM." (Jn. 8.57-58)

A saying guaranteed to fill your life with unhappiness: "Get out of my life" (King Herod to Jesus in "J.C. Superstar").

JESUS DID NOT HAVE A HUMAN FATHER. He was conceived in Mary's womb by the power of God the Holy Spirit.

He was formed in Mary without Mary and Joseph having intercourse.

St. Joseph was Jesus' Foster Father. Those of you who are adopted should notice that Jesus was therefore the adopted son of St. Joseph.

Match after match, Greg Chappell saved Queensland from defeat by his batting, bowling and captaincy.

Year after year, hundreds of people are saved from drowning by life savers.

Once and for all, Jesus SAVED the whole human race from defeat and drowning (= sin and death) by dying and rising. He is our Redeemer, our SAVIOUR.

Which is what his name means: "Jesus" = "The Lord Saves".

JESUS WAS AN APPRENTICE AND LEARNT A TRADE. When he grew up, he became a carpenter. "This is the carpenter"... (Mk. 6.3) "This is the carpenter's son"... (Mt. 13.55)

Jesus' foster father - St. Joseph - was a builder. So, too, was his Divine Father - God the Father - who created the universe. The voice of God the Father is recorded in the Gospels:

"Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain.... Suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow and from the cloud there came a voice which said 'THIS IS MY SON, THE BELOVED; HE ENJOYS MY FAVOUR. LISTEN TO HIM'." (Mt. 17.5)

WHO JESUS IS:

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. ANYONE WHO FOLLOWS ME WILL NOT BE WALKING IN THE DARK; HE WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE." - Jn. 8.12.

"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD: THE GOOD SHEPHERD IS ONE WHO LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS SHEEP." - Jn. 10.11.

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. NO ONE CAN COME TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME." - Jn. 14.6.

"I AM THE LIVING BREAD WHICH HAS COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. ANYONE WHO EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOR EVER: AND THE BREAD THAT I SHALL GIVE IS MY FLESH, FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD." - Jn. 6.51.

HAPPINESS: People - young and old - search high and low for happiness in life. Some think that plenty of \$ brings happiness. Some think that happiness is to be found in drugs, an irresponsible use of sex, excessive alcohol, political -or organizational power etc.

Jesus' words completely revolutionize these ideas of happiness:

"HOW HAPPY ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT: THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

HAPPY ARE THE GENTLE: THEY SHALL HAVE THE EARTH FOR THEIR HERITAGE.

HAPPY THOSE WHO MOURN: THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

HAPPY THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR WHAT IS RIGHT: THEY SHALL BE SATISFIED.

HAPPY THE MERCIFUL: THEY SHALL HAVE MERCY SHOWN THEM.

HAPPY THE PURE IN HEART: THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

HAPPY THE PEACEMAKERS: THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF GOD.

HAPPY THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED IN THE CAUSE OF RIGHT: THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN." - Mt. 5.1-10.

"THERE IS MORE HAPPINESS IN GIVING THAN IN RECEIVING." - Acts 20.35.

Have you ever had to go to Court and stand trial? Some day you will!

"FOR THE SON OF MAN (= Jesus) IS GOING TO COME IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER WITH HIS ANGELS, AND, WHEN HE DOES, HE WILL REWARD EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS BEHAVIOUR." - Mt. 16.27.

Here is a description of your trial:

"WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES IN HIS GLORY, ESCORTED BY ALL THE ANGELS, THEN HE WILL TAKE HIS SEAT ON HIS THRONE OF GLORY. ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE ASSEMBLED BEFORE HIM AND HE WILL SEPARATE MEN ONE FROM ANOTHER AS THE SHEPHERD SEPARATES SHEEP FROM GOATS. HE WILL PLACE THE SHEEP ON HIS RIGHT HAND AND THE GOATS ON HIS LEFT. THEN THE KING WILL SAY TO THOSE ON HIS RIGHT HAND, 'COME, YOU WHOM MY FATHER HAS BLESSED, TAKE FOR YOUR HERITAGE THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD: I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME DRINK: I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU MADE ME WELCOME: NAKED, AND YOU CLOTHED ME, SICK AND YOU VISITED ME, IN PRISON AND YOU CAME TO SEE ME'. THEN THE VIRTUOUS WILL SAY TO HIM IN REPLY, 'LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY AND FEED YOU: OR THIRSTY AND GIVE YOU DRINK? WHEN DID WE SEE YOU A STRANGER AND MAKE YOU WELCOME: NAKED AND CLOTHE YOU: SICK

OR IN PRISON AND GO TO SEE YOU?'. AND THE KING WILL ANSWER, 'I TELL YOU SOLEMNLY, IN SO FAR AS YOU DID THIS TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE BROTHERS OF MINE, YOU DID IT TO ME'.

NEXT HE WILL SAY TO THOSE ON HIS LEFT HAND, 'GO AWAY FROM ME, WITH YOUR CURSE UPON YOU, TO THE ETERNAL FIRE PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS. FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU NEVER GAVE ME FOOD: I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU NEVER GAVE ME ANYTHING TO DRINK: I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU NEVER MADE ME WELCOME, NAKED AND YOU NEVER CLOTHED ME, SICK AND IN PRISON AND YOU NEVER VISITED ME'. THEN IT WILL BE THEIR TURN TO ASK, 'LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY OR THIRSTY, A STRANGER OR NAKED, SICK OR IN PRISON, AND DID NOT COME TO YOUR HELP?'. THEN HE WILL ANSWER, 'I TELL YOU SOLEMNLY, IN SO FAR AS YOU NEGLECTED TO DO THIS TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE, YOU NEGLECTED TO DO IT TO ME'.

AND THEY WILL GO AWAY TO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, AND THE VIRTUOUS TO ETERNAL LIFE." - Mt. 25.31-46.

THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST

= God exists, God made me, God loves me. = Life is everlasting and death is nothing to fear if I have faith and try to live a good life here on Earth. = God the Son has come on Earth to be our Saviour, to teach us how to live, to teach us the meaning of life, to teach us all we want to know. = God can help me in all my troubles. = Everything in life makes sense. = God made me to know him, love him and serve him here on Earth and to be happy with him for ever in Heaven.

- Jesus warns you about the danger of false guides and false friends in life. Included in his warning is a simple but sure character test that anyone can use. Read Mt. 7.15-20.
- Money and greed can make your heart grow cold and can deaden your conscience. Jesus' advice for life will help you have a proper attitude to wealth. Read Lk. 12.15-34, Lk. 16.13.
- here, as in so many situations, Jesus helps me to "keep a close watch on this heart of mine".
- As we saw in "Preparing for Life" * [PREPARING FOR LIFE, A.C.T.S. Pamphlet No. 1688. - you can read it, or down-load it at www.icafe.com.au/cts], your life is like a building. Your job now while at school is to lay the foundations for your adult life. Ask yourself what type of foundation you are actually laying - as you read again the words of the "Builder's Son" in Mt. 7.24-27.
- Jesus often reminds us of the solemn and serious obligation to keep the Sabbath holy. But some people who go to church on Sunday are anything but Christian for the rest of the week. Jesus also therefore warns us against being superficial and insincere (read Mt. 7.21). Jesus demands that we practise what we preach (read Jn. 14.15).
- Without air, you will die. Without Jesus, you are worthless. As God the Son, Jesus created you in his image, and it is only by his creating and sustaining power that you are kept alive. Only by uniting your life to his can you grow as a person. Read Jn. 15.5.
- To say that Jesus is irrelevant is like saying that food is irrelevant. If Jesus is unimportant and irrelevant in your life, you can't be leading a proper life. If you are deliberately leaving Jesus out of your life you must be leading a very unhappy life.

Accepting Jesus as your Friend and Saviour means living up to the standard of life that he sets. It means trying to avoid sin and wrongdoing. It means a continual turning away from evil and a continual conversion of heart. Read Mt. 4.17.

- Jesus is the greatest Exorcist the world has ever known. He can keep Satan's influence out of your life, too, if you ask him to. Read Mk. 5.1-20.
- Like anything worthwhile in life, friendship with Jesus requires effort on your part. Read Lk. 9.23-26.

Jesus was the most peaceful Person ever to walk our Earth. At his birth millions of angels sang "peace to men of good will". At the end of his life, peace was his gift to his followers (see Jn. 14.27).

Yet Jesus himself always lived under the shadow of violence. At his birth an evil king killed all the baby boys of Bethlehem in an attempt to kill Jesus (see Mt. 2.16). At the end of his life he experienced the cruellest and most violent death the world has known.

Throughout history, Jesus' followers have been persecuted and put to death. Wars have been fought in Jesus' name and even among his own followers (e.g. Northern Ireland). Such wars happen when some people (usually on both sides of a conflict) are Christian in name rather than in fact. They can also happen when people misunderstand Jesus' teaching.

Realize, too, that although Jesus does not aim to cause conflict, conflict sometimes becomes inevitable as a result of the strict alternatives which Jesus offers (if your friend wants you to help steal a car each night you might eventually have to break off your friendship with him because Jesus teaches us that stealing is wrong).

SMILE: Did you hear about the exorcist who couldn't pay his bills? He was re-possessed....

JESUS INVITES YOU TO BE HIS FRIEND. He invites all people everywhere to accept him as their Lord and Saviour. Read his "Great Appeal" (as it is called) in Mt. 11.28-30.

- ACCEPTING JESUS AS A FRIEND MEANS BEING A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH WHICH HE HIMSELF BEGAN. THE CHURCH CONTINUES THE WORK OF -
- Giving us God's message for life, and
- Giving us God's grace and strength through the seven sacraments.

We'll see this in more detail later. For the moment read again these two very important sections of the Gospel:

Mt. 16.13-19 - where the name "Peter" comes from. Mt. 28.19-20 - every human being is meant to be a Christian.

- Being a friend of Jesus means following the example of Jesus.

Like Jesus you are meant to use your 'Day' (= life) to help people less fortunate than yourself. Read Acts 10.38.

- Later we will study the importance of what Jesus did at the Last Supper. Just notice here that having Jesus as a friend means receiving him in Holy Communion as he commanded us to: see Jn. 6.52-58.
- Jesus is physically present in the Tabernacle. You should visit him every school day. (AND every other day you can!)
- Words like "Passive", "Compassionate", "Compatible", "Impassionate", "Impassibility" (check them in your dictionary) all have the basic idea of "something been done to" = "something being suffered". "Suffer fools gladly" = "put up with fools". "Putting up with" gets us closer to the original meaning of "Passion" = "suffering". So we speak of the "Passion" of Jesus - the time when he was betrayed by a friend, given a false trial, whipped and scourged, and nailed to a cross on which he died. Jesus experienced this terrible suffering out of love for you - to enable you to get to Heaven. To show you he is your friend he died for you. How could you refuse to be his friend in return?

-Try to make the "Stations of the Cross" (especially during Lent). - Wear a Cross or Medal to remind yourself of how much Jesus loves you. -Have a Crucifix in your own room at home. -Read Jn. 15.13.

- After he had risen from the dead, Jesus spent some time giving further teaching to his disciples and then he went back to Heaven from where he had come about 33 years earlier. Read Acts 1.1-11.
- About "40 days" after his Resurrection, he went back to Heaven, then Jesus (= God the Son) and God the Father sent, 10 days later, God the Holy Spirit to be with Jesus' followers and to carry on the work of spreading the Good News to the ends of the Earth. Read Acts 2.1-13 after reading Jn. 14.16.
- Some day you may have some letters after your name - B.Sc., B.A., etc. Right now you can put an impressive "D.R." after your name. "D.R." stands for something you are involved in, a process for improvement, something you are meant to be doing every day. I won't insult your intelligence by repeating it here. (See "3rd Point - Section B".)
- No other Person in history has been the subject of as much literature, art, sculpture, music, drama, radio, TV, films - as Jesus.

PROJECTS

- Make a Map of Palestine as it was in Jesus' time.
- Compose a song or prayer addressed to Jesus.
- File a report on the Shroud of Turin.
- Collect some well-known prayers to Jesus (e.g. the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi).
- Make an Easter Poster.
- Collect some prayers addressed to God the Father.
- Collect some prayers addressed to God the Holy Spirit.
- File a report on how Jesus has been portrayed in art or sculpture etc....
- Stage a mini "Passion Play".

- Outline the main ideas found in the Mass of Corpus Christi, The Sacred Heart, Christ the King etc.
- Arrange a Day of Prayer (on a class roster basis) with "Exposition" of the Blessed Sacrament.
- Talk and Pray to Jesus every day of your life. He is not just a figure of history; he is not just an image on a Crucifix; he is alive today. He is LIFE ITSELF - he is keeping you alive by letting you share in his life! Pray every day also to God the Father and to God the Holy Spirit. Not to speak to the Trinity each day is like not speaking to your parents.

Jesus does make a difference:

- "I felt his voice take the sword (= anger) out of my hand."
- "He gave me heart to live."
- Judah Ben Hur in "Ben Hur".

THIS PAMPHLET HAS TRIED TO HELP YOU begin to understand who Jesus is. As you prepare for adult life, keep on trying to increase your knowledge of Jesus and your love for Jesus. Read about him, pray to him, help him by helping other people. Jesus is your greatest Friend in life; he died for you. Realize therefore that your friendship with him is meant to be something alive and active - a personal relationship.

AS YOU GO THROUGH LIFE, REALIZE THAT YOUR friendship with Jesus is infinitely more important than wealth or possessions or power or pleasure or fame or any other earthly thing. No other person has influenced the world as much as Jesus; no other person should influence you as much as Jesus.

TRY TO LIVE ALWAYS AS JESUS WANTS YOU TO LIVE - as he has taught you to live. Our next pamphlet - titled "Commandments For Life" - will study in detail the way Jesus wants us to live.

REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE A DUTY to help other young people discover who Jesus is:

"Remember, you who belong to this new generation, that it is your role to help those around you, to help our modern world... discover its real Christ, its Messiah Jesus" (Pope Paul, 5.4.71).

Try to work out some way in which you can help some of your non-Christian/non-Catholic friends discover who Jesus is.

THIS PAMPHLET BEGAN WITH JESUS ("Christmas"). It now ends in his praise (see Lk. 1.28).

HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU. BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB - MY GREATEST FRIEND IN LIFE -

JESUS.

Summary Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we believe You are God the Son, eternally begotten of God the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with God the Father.

Through You all things were made. For our sake You came down from Heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit You became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and were born as a man. For our sake You were crucified under Pontius Pilate; You suffered death and were buried. On the third day You rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures. You ascended into Heaven and are seated at the right hand of God the Father.

You will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and Your Kingdom will have no end. We believe, O Jesus, that You are our Paschal Lamb and took away the sin of the world. You give us life when we eat Your Flesh and drink Your Blood. You are with us always in Your Church. We adore You, Jesus, God the Son.

We adore You, God the Father, Maker of Heaven and Earth. May Your name be held holy, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us. And do not put us to the test, but save us from the evil one.

We adore You, God the Holy Spirit. You proceed from God the Father and from God the Son. Fill our hearts with the fire of Your love. Give us courage to live our Christian lives to the full. Inspire us to help others discover who Jesus is.

O Blessed Trinity, we believe You made us to share in Your life for ever. We believe that even here on earth You make Your home in our hearts. We worship you and say:

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. AS IT ALWAYS WAS, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

Nihil Obstat: BERNARD O'CONNOR, Diocesan Censor Imprimatur: + T. F. LITTLE, Archbishop of Melbourne. 11 February, 1977.
