

Day 5, Lesson 1

Christ in Spiritual Life

This lesson is fundamental because it speaks about Jesus, and Jesus is the Cornerstone of our Faith, the heart and Centre of our Spiritual Life.

1- Relationship with the other lessons

Lesson 1 : the goal of Spiritual life (union with Christ, and his imitation till giving our life to him). He is the Way, at each step.

Lesson 2 : Mary : perfect subject to reach Christ in fullness.

Lesson 3 : Dogma : all aims at Incarnation-Redemption, the Temple to dwell in.

Lesson 4-5 : *Lectio divina* : to listen to Christ, to his Word, leave it grow in us.

Lesson 6 : Act of Faith: in Christ, Hoping to receive his fullness, to Love Him, head and body.

Lesson 7 : Ups and downs, Temptation, Synergy : all is linked to Jesus.

Lesson 8 : Transfiguration : Christ is the Centre of Spiritual Life, seeing his divinity is the Goal.

2- What is the angle of this lesson : its relationship with our spiritual life

Subject vs. Object (and not object tout-court)

Manducatio (nourishment, food). Mystical entrance in Him.

“these [signs] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31) It is the structure of the entire Gospel of saint John.

3- What is the goal of this lesson ?

Practical. Non Dogmatical.

- Know : Understand Christ's place in our spiritual life? (how do I relate to Him) His place is central: unique mediator.

- Means : to know how to reach Christ (enter in Him, receive him, be in communion with him) ?

- Outcome : Allow Christ to grow in us, until we reach the full Union with Him.

4- The Incarnation and its impact on our life

His mystical/real union with us. **From His side: from the moment of his incarnation in Mary's womb, his Baptism, Passion (Cross), Death, Resurrection, Ascension.**

Christ is our Way: **Incarnation, Baptism, Temptation, Crucifixion**

5- Jesus has different layers. Therefore we can know him in different levels of depth (“even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him thus no longer” 2 Co 5:16)). Body, Soul, Spirit, Divinity. The Goal of this Lesson is to help the student enter deeper in Jesus, explore him more, discover more depths in him. Jesus is the object of our act of Faith. We are invited to enter deeper in Him. We need to have recourse to Jesus, using the “ligaments”, “connections” and “channels of the Grace of God”. Outcome of this teaching is to focus totally on Jesus putting all our energy on him.

The Act of Faith: The act of faith in Christ: entering through the narrow Gate. Saint John of the Cross' text: do you want consolation? do you want a vision? Do you want an answer? Look at Jesus (I] says the same: look at Jesus). To look at Jesus is a choice. Mechanism of the act of Faith: I see one layer in Christ, and go to a deeper one.

6- What is “Spiritual Life”? It is to have a Personal Relationship with Jesus, meet the Risen Lord, live with him, follow him, become transformed in him. “Building Jesus' Body” (Ephesians 4:12)

7- We are members of His Body (Ephesians 5:30), He is our Head, and the Head of each one of us.

Jesus, in his human nature, is seated, victorious, at the Right hand of the Father. This means that he nourishes his Body and makes it grow, in him.

8- Who is Jesus for us? He is the Icon of the Father (Heb 1:1ss), all the Father is in Him (John 14:10). He is the Stain glass/Icon that allows us to enter in the Trinity, find God, receive God. Because he is the Son incarnate, he is the Sacrament of the Father: in his humanity, he is the ‘Silver’ polish that covers the ‘Gold’ of the Divinity. We don't need to go elsewhere to find God, he is the only way to the fullness of

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God. Whoever wants to reach the Father bypassing him, is a thief (John 10). Whoever wants to eat/receive God from another source (religion, way of devotion), is going astray and trying to find Divine Water (the Grace of God) in “broken cisterns” (false means to God): *“for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”* (Jeremiah 2:13) *“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you Living Water.”* (John 4:10) He is the Divine Well. Even at the highest levels of Union.

- Perfect God, Perfect man. Our All. Our everything. (become ‘obsessed’ by Jesus like the saints)
- Mediator.
- Jesus is the **Door** that allows us to enter in the Trinity. John 10: the Door of the sheepfold. (See S Teresa of Avila on the Humanity of Jesus Life 22, 23:27, 24:1-2; 6M7 (see other file: Readings))
- Jesus is our **Saviour**. He takes us from the land of darkness to the land of Light. The one who was elevated on the Cross (and who remains elevated, whom we are called to contemplate).
- Jesus is our **Temple** (John 2:21), our dwelling place (John 14 :1-3).
- Jesus is our **All**, everything for us: because he is all together: Perfect God and perfect Man. “Only Jesus IS” (TChJ) nothing else exists out of him. He is the only reality! In the Transfiguration: only Jesus remains, nothing else (*“And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”* (Matthew 17:8)). What matters says saint Paul is the Body (Col 2:17: the reality is Jesus’ Body).
- Jesus is our **Way** (John 14:6). He opened the Way for us to reach the Father (on the Cross) (see Heb 10), he walked our way (his Baptism; Temptations), step after step, winning for us, allowing us to do acts that make us grow and reach the Father. He prepares for us a Place in Himself (him being the Father’s House) (see John 14:1-4). He is the Gate-Way-Crossing/Exodus.
- Jesus is the **Giver** of the “**Words** that are Spirit and Life” (where else to go? (John 6:68)) (John 6:63). He opens his mouth (Mt 5:1-2) to utter these words. His words are part of him, and are meant to generate Him in us, and make Him grow in us.
- Jesus **Gives** us his **Body** and his Blood. To enter in Him requires our transformation in Him: purification, illumination, union.
- Jesus **sends** us the Holy Spirit, so all what he did and said becomes alive in us.
- Jesus **Gives** us his Mother to be our Mother: perfect Disciple, perfect believer in Him. His Will when he dies. Jesus is Mary’s only Fruit. (in us as well)
- Jesus is the **Groom** who deserves all our heart. We will see this at lesson 11 (Day 6, Lesson 1).
- **Christ** (Messiah) anointed, has the Holy Sprit, he give him.
- He is my **Doctor** (healer).
- Leader, (**guide**)/head. Shepherd.

9- ‘Only Jesus IS’ (St Thérèse of the Child Jesus) / Christ fullness of the God’s Revelation and centre of spiritual life.

10- The whole Christ: Head & Body. Consequence: the apostolic goal that impregnates our acts

- What do we mean by the Total/whole Christ ?
- We can’t separate the Head from the Body, this bond is the strongest bond after the one between the two natures of Jesus in his Person (Incarnation).
- To love the Hear, to love the Body. In Prayer, they are inseparable. The apostolic component that impregnates each one of our acts.
- Bond between head and body:
- ‘Are they all Jesus’ Body ?’

Remark for the classical music lovers.

Relationship with prayer and with daily life.

Reading: Emile Mersch, “The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition”, 2018.