

Living the Spirit
Jesus Is All

In this insert I will bring to a conclusion the second part of the theme “Who God is.” I am sure that when we think of God we naturally think of Jesus. He is the Son of the Father Who became man and lived among us. He is the Lord Who still lives with us and never has abandoned us. He desires to be all we need to become united to Him.

I must leave it to each reader to meditate on the aspects of the life of Jesus that suits his or her needs in this Year of Faith. There are excellent sources that help the searcher find the truths needed for spiritual growth in a relationship of union with Jesus. Some of these can be daunting to one not versed in theological or religious knowledge. Yet there are many easier writings about Jesus that one can study to become knowledgeable about Him.

Pope Benedict, as you may know, wrote three books on *Jesus of Nazareth*. They are a wonderful source of knowledge about Jesus and have inspired me to want a greater union with God. Pope Benedict is an outstanding theologian and writes as such. But he also has a way of being pastoral. He gives us an answer to our question “Who God is.”

I have also used the life of Jesus written some years ago by Bishop Sheen as a source for my thoughts in this writing. He brings many truths to the mind of the reader in order to increase his or her faith, and live that faith. Many of the things he writes are familiar to those who recall his TV shows and his earlier radio addresses.

Writing in a chapter of his book *Kinships*, Father Sertillanges examined the meaning of perfect religion. I want to share this with you in summary fashion. I think he does well to focus on how Jesus brings together God and humankind in the search for what living a perfect religion (our faith) entails. [Do understand he wrote long before inclusive language became the norm.]

“The soul of Jesus alone contains more religion than humanity can muster throughout the length of its history; whatever proceeds from the latter belongs to Him as source of its inspiration and sole cause of its worth.” One finds the practice of faith -- of religion – by being united to the person of Jesus. He is our inspiration in living the Spirit, in living our faith.

“Jesus is the consubstantial glory of the Father.... He is able to effect a participation (in that glory) by the whole human race, whose authentic representative He is. Whoever unites himself to Christ and to His Spirit can apply to heaven with a power of adoration and of impetration measured only by the degree of his union with Christ.”

“We must understand that we cannot grow in faith and live out that faith without Christ. By ourselves we would not be able to produce true religion, not only because we are unworthy but because the supernatural does not belong to us. It is the work of the Spirit and the Spirit belongs to Christ. We receive it only to share it. We ourselves can only adore through Jesus Christ Who animated by the Spirit cried, “Abba, Father!”

“Through Jesus this wicked thoughtless world is in a position to provide its God with a pure consummate joy. It may have its somber valleys and sinister ravines; it has also its lofty summits where praise resounds and the smoke of a clean sacrifice ascends.” Christ can surmount the stench of evil and its noise; His adoration and ours united to His can be accepted for eternal life.

“It pertains to each one of us to recognize his proper rank and play his part in the concert of souls. United to Jesus Christ each of us may offer Him as he offered Himself in perfect, omnipotent homage. ... The fervent Christian wills to consecrate the whole of his life, offering for himself, his brothers, and all humankind united to his Christ a perfect holocaust. It is not in the details of every day that this amounts to something, not in some emotional outburst of imagination. We must give to God in every undertaking at every moment, the sum total and the small change of our life for Him to dispose of.... We can pay our debts to God only by a blank check; He fills in the amount and when He has done so we can only say: ‘Yes, Lord, that is just what I meant to give Thee.’ Supposing the gift is perfect, then our religion is perfect.”

When I read this, years ago, for the first time, I wrote in the book: “Receiving Christ within us and putting on Christ, that is the realization of the desire.” The Year of Faith cannot be lived, dear friends, without Christ. We need Him as our “everything.” We must allow him to be for each of us the Bread of Life, nourishing our souls with grace. We must let Him guide and guard us as our Good Shepherd. If we stray we must call out to Him to be rescued from our sinful waywardness.

We must unite ourselves spiritually to Jesus as close as the branches are tied to the Vine. From Him we receive our spiritual life. It animates and strengthens our very being. “We must entrust ourselves and be loyal. Union with God is our salvation. Let us accept it and the means to attain it. Accept Christ, His institution, His Spirit of faith and love, His Sacraments, His rule of life, all included in one word, the Church. That is the complete Way; receive it, cherish it, use it intensely.” It will assist you greatly in living the Spirit, in living true Faith.

I admit it has been difficult to know what to write about Jesus. I think that those who believe in Him must always feel that their knowledge of Him, their union with Him, cannot be a matter of words alone. There is so much more to our faith and love that always goes unwritten and unsaid.

I titled this insert: “Jesus Is All.” He really is. We often see the slogan: Jesus is the reason. It is a slogan that tells a great truth. I think there would be nothing worthwhile if we did not have Jesus as our possession. We have been blessed to be brought into a new life at our Baptism. That life comes with riches of grace beyond measure. We gradually (admittedly in an inferior way for most of us) come to where we realize as St. Paul did that “to live is Christ; to die is gain.”

May Jesus, our loving God and Lord, always be with us!

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