





## Christ's Divinity in The New Testament

- Jesus claimed special dignity
- Jesus asked for the faith and love due only to God
- Jesus claimed to be the Son of God
- Jesus was aware of His divine power and used it: miracles

St John wrote his Gospel

*'so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, & that by believing you may have life in his name' (Jn 20:31)*

## THE *INCARNATION*

*He Was Conceived  
By the Power of the  
Holy Spirit, and Was  
Born of the Virgin  
Mary*





*The Annunciation, Pietro Perugino, 1489.*

# What is the Incarnation?

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*The Word became flesh (Jn 1:14)*

**Incarnation: the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation.**

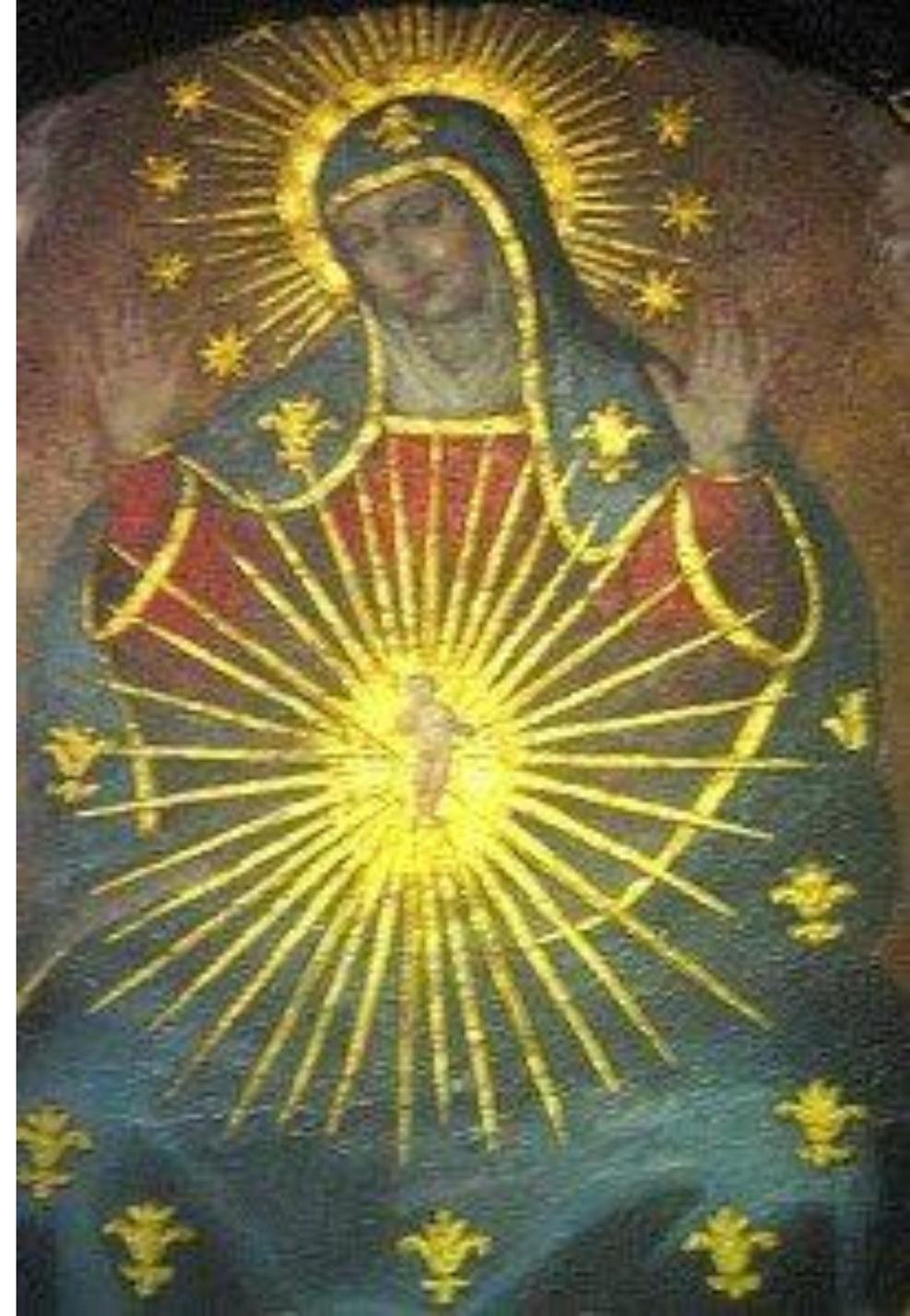
*Christ Jesus ... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself & became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:5-8)*

Belief in the Incarnation is the distinctive sign of Christian faith:

*By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. (1 Jn 4:2)*

# WHY DID THE WORD BECOME FLESH?

- 1. For us men and for our salvation:** "For us men & for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary & was made man." (*Nicene Creed*).
- 2. In order to save us by reconciling us with God:** God "loved us & sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins." (1Jn 4:10). "Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; dead, to rise again. We had lost the possession of the good; it was necessary for it to be given back to us. Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us the light; captives, we awaited a Saviour; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Are these things minor or insignificant? Did they not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state?" (St Gregory of Nyssa)
- 3. So that we might know God's love:** "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him." "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (Jn 3:16)
- 4. To be our model of holiness:** "Take my yoke upon you & learn from me"; "I am the way, & the truth, & the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." At the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!" Jesus tells us: "Love one another as I have loved you." (Jn 15:12)
- 5. To make us partakers of the divine nature:** "For this is why the Word became man, & the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word & thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God" (St Irenaeus). "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" (St Athanasius). "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods" (St Thomas Aquinas).





# Jesus Christ: True God & True Man

- ✗ Does **not** mean that Jesus Christ is part God & part man
- ✗ Does **not** imply that he is a mixture of the divine & the human.
- ✓ Jesus Christ became **truly** man while remaining **truly** God.
- ✓ Jesus Christ is **true** God & **true** man.

Jesus Christ is **one Person** with **two natures**.

- The Person is divine (the Word). At the Incarnation, the divine Person assumed, or took on, human nature: 'the Word was made flesh'. He became truly man while remaining truly God. He did not cease being divine.
- We refer to this as the 'Hypostatic Union' (*hypostasis* means person)

# True God & True Man: One Divine Person with Two Natures

## **Two natures:**

The Word, Christ the Son, has two natures, human and divine, without confusion, change, division or separation.

## **One Person:**

The distinction between the two natures was not abolished by their union. They were preserved as they came together in one person (*hypostasis*).

## **That Person is Divine:**

There is person, our Lord Jesus Christ, Second Person of the Trinity.

Everything in Christ's human nature is to be attributed to his divine person as its proper subject, not only his miracles but also his sufferings and even his death: "He who was crucified in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, is true God, Lord of glory, & one of the Holy Trinity."

**Jesus is inseparably true God & true man.**



*The Council of Ephesus, mosaic, Basilica of Notre Dame de Fourvière, Lyon, 19th c.*

# TRUE GOD & TRUE MAN: EARLY HERESIES & COUNCILS

During the first centuries, the Church had to defend & clarify this against heresies.

**X Gnostic Docetism**: Christ wasn't truly human. St John already had to combat this error: *for many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh (2 Jn 7)*.

✓ Council of Antioch (3<sup>rd</sup> century): Jesus Christ is Son of God by nature & not by adoption.

**X Arianism**: Christ wasn't truly divine.

✓ Council of Nicea (325): the Son of God is begotten, not made, of the same substance as the Father.

**X Nestorianism**: Mary is not the mother of God.

✓ Council of Ephesus (431): Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb.

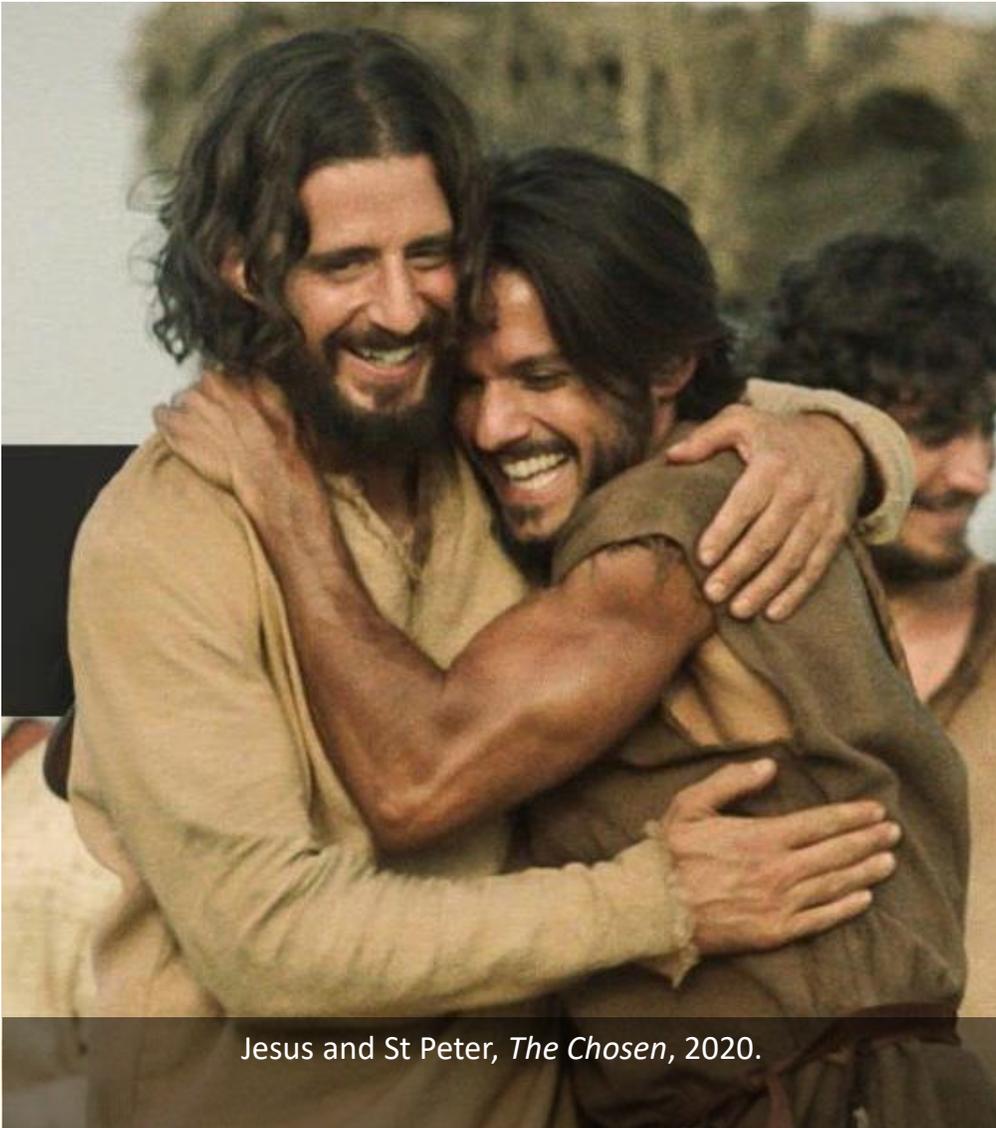
**X Monophysite heresy**: Human nature ceased to exist in Christ when the divine person of God's Son assumed it.

✓ Council of Chalcedon (451): Jesus Christ is one Person with two natures, human and divine.



# The Sacred Humanity of Christ

- Jesus Christ is true God and true man. The divine Person (the Word) became flesh.
- As Christ is true man, he had a human body and a human soul with its operation of intellect and will.
- Christ's human nature belonged to the divine person of the Son who assumed it. Everything that Christ is & does is as one of the persons of the Trinity.
- The Son of God
  - Worked with human hands
  - Thought with a human mind
  - Acted with a human will
  - Loved with a human heart
  - Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.



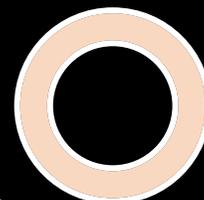
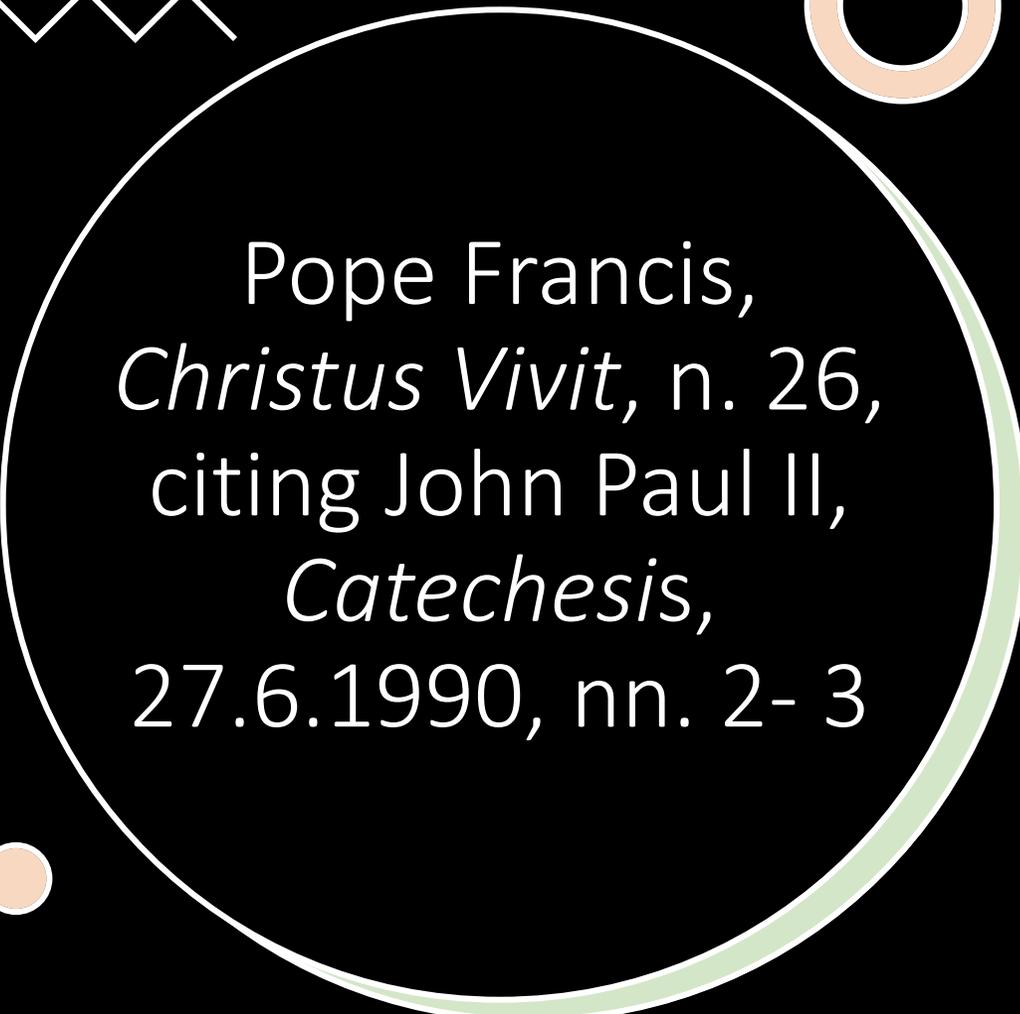
Jesus and St Peter, *The Chosen*, 2020.

# Christ's Human Soul & Knowledge

- Jesus fully assumed our human nature, not just a human body. He really had a rational, human soul. (The Word did not replace the soul or spirit) (471)
- Jesus' human soul was endowed with a true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space & time. This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, "increase in wisdom & in stature, & in favour with God and man", & would even have to inquire for himself about what one in the human condition can learn only from experience. This corresponded to the reality of his voluntary emptying of himself, taking "the form of a slave". (472)
- At the same time, this truly human knowledge of God's Son expressed the divine life of his person. "The human nature of God's Son, not by itself but *by its union with the Word*, knew & showed forth in itself everything that pertains to God." Such is the case with the intimate & immediate knowledge that the Son of God made man has of his Father. The Son in his human knowledge also showed the divine penetration he had into the secret thoughts of human hearts. (473)
- By its union to the divine wisdom in the person of the Word incarnate, Christ enjoyed in his human knowledge the fullness of understanding of the eternal plans he had come to reveal. What he admitted to not knowing in this area, he elsewhere declared himself not sent to reveal.
- Through sanctifying grace, Christ's soul was divinised by the transformation that raises the operations of the soul to the plane of the intimate life of God, giving to its supernatural operations a co-naturalness that it would not otherwise have possessed. His fullness of grace also implies the existence of the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.



*The Holy Family with a Bird*, Murillo, 1650.



Pope Francis,  
*Christus Vivit*, n. 26,  
citing John Paul II,  
*Catechesis*,  
27.6.1990, nn. 2- 3

Jesus did not only grow physically, but ... 'there was also a spiritual growth in Jesus', because 'the fullness of grace in Jesus was in proportion to his age: there was always a fullness, but a fullness which increased as he grew in age'.



# Christ's Human Will

Christ possesses two wills, divine & human. They do not oppose each other; the free human will was completely subject to the divine will.

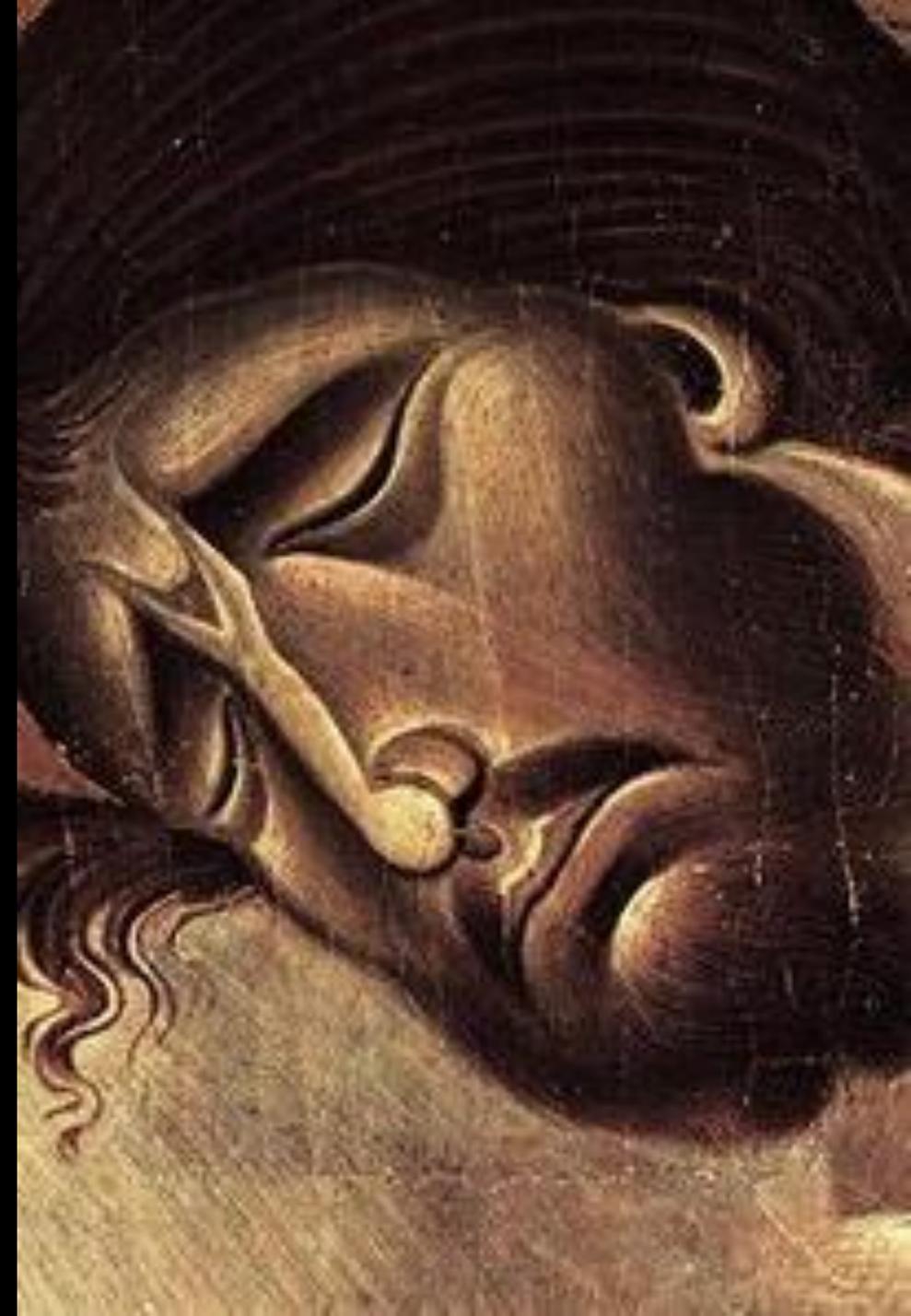
The human will of Jesus belonged to the divine Person and was infallibly subject to its influence, and thus always obeyed the Person of the Word.

But the human will of Jesus Christ is not identical to the divine Will.

They are not opposed but co-operate so that Jesus willed humanly in obedience to his Father all that he had decided divinely with the Father & the Holy Spirit for our salvation.

*I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me (Jn 5:30)*

*My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work (Jn 4:34).*





“ If we gaze into the interior life of Jesus, if we want to discover what it was that dominated and animated him, then it can be answered at once. The ultimate and most profound motive of all his actions was his Father’s will. There is nothing the brush of the evangelists has painted so movingly and strikingly, with such impressive strokes, as the burning love of Jesus for his heavenly Father, and for the mission on which he was sent. ”

KARL ADAM, *THE SON OF GOD*

We have a unique insight into the interior life of Jesus in seeing the loving manner in which he obeyed His Father in everything



*The Woman at the Well, Carl Bloch.*

# Christ's True Body

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- Christ's body, as a true human body, was finite.
- The human face of Jesus can be portrayed; its representation in holy images is legitimate. (476)
- In the body of Jesus "we see our God made visible & so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see."
- The individual characteristics of Christ's body express the divine person of God's Son. He has made the features of his human body his own, to the point that they can be venerated when portrayed in a holy image, for the believer "who venerates the icon is venerating in it the person of the one depicted".



# The Heart of Jesus Christ

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- Jesus knew & loved us each & all during his life, his agony & his Passion, & gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God. . . loved me & gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).
- He has loved us all with a human heart. The Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins & for our salvation, is the chief sign & symbol of that love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father & all human beings without exception. (478)
- Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus