

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God

[W]e declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:3-4)

Insight

Who makes you a better person? How does this happen?

"I can't believe working so hard would make me feel so good!" Amanda exclaimed. "And you were the one who got me to come along with you and try it!" Amanda hugged her friend Loren.

"My muscles ache, but my heart feels so full," Amanda continued. "Spending the week side by side with the volunteers for Habitat for Humanity and fixing up that home makes me feel so good!"

Amanda would not have given up a week of summer vacation to help without her friend Loren inviting her along. She was so glad she was Loren's friend. She realized this friendship helped her become a better person.

For Reflection . . .

In the Gospel according to John, Jesus identifies his disciples as his "friends." Joined to Christ in Baptism, we too have become his friends and receive the grace to live as his friends.

In what way has your life changed because of faith in Jesus and your friendship with him?

How do you concretely show others your cooperation with grace?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 422–455, 479–483, 561–573, 665–682

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 79–85

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 80–84, 118–119

Church Teaching

The Heart of the Matter

Faith has a certain content and therefore a vocabulary. We can talk about it, learn of it, and share our understanding of it intelligibly. It is knowledge to be received, contemplated, probed for its significance, and lived. But at the heart of our faith is the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. Uniquely and perfectly, he is the Only Begotten **Son of God**. He became one of us without losing his divinity and lived among us. He is true God and true man.

Saying yes to Jesus means saying yes to him as the one person who accomplishes what none of us alone or together can do. He alone is **Savior** (the name *Jesus* means "God saves")—he delivers us from the power of evil and rescues us from sinfulness (see Acts 4:12). He alone is **Messiah**—the "anointed" Suffering Servant promised by God to fulfill the messianic hope of Israel (see Matthew 20:28). He alone is **Lord**—who shows his divine sovereign power over nature, demons, sin, and even death by his Resurrection. To him belongs the power, glory, and honor of God (see Philippians 2:9).

Savior, Teacher, and Guide

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit for us and for our Salvation. Jesus is the source of our Salvation, and he is the fullness of the Revelation of God. Divine love shines forth from him, teaches us, and guides us.

In Jesus, we are made sharers in that divine love, conformed to that love, and motivated by it to work on behalf of the Kingdom of God. Jesus makes us better than we could ever be on our own.