

Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
March 24, 2019

Christology—First Presentation

**Three Points:**

The distinction among three Jesuses: (1) the Jesus “who lived back then,” (2) the Jesus of the historians (the “historical Jesus”), and (3) the Jesus Christ of Christian faith

The humanity and divinity of Jesus

What Jesus’ ministry was all about

**I. The Distinction Among the Three Jesues**

Jesus “who lived back then”: we don’t have immediate contact with this figure; we would have had to be his contemporaries, living near him.

The historical Jesus; the knowledge gleaned by historians about the past Jesus using criteria such as embarrassment, dissimilarity, multiple attestation, coherence, and rejection and execution.

The Jesus Christ of Christian faith: the Jesus Christ encountered in faith in the Church’s liturgy, in Scripture, in the Church’s witness, in personal prayer and in words and deeds of Christian discipleship. The Jesus Christ available for encounter in the here and now. (When I am praying with NT texts about him in his ministry, I am always engaging with the present risen one in real time.)

We can’t assume that a text about Jesus in his ministry is bare information about Jesus as he lived and act in the past. The memories have passed through filters and have been applied to situations in the early Church.

For example: two texts about Jesus speaking about divorce

Matt 19:3-12 and Mark 10:2-12 (woman divorcing her husband—Hellenistic world in Mark)

Jesus in Matthew says: “Go. therefore, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the holy Spirit.”

Miracles (deeds of power; signs): we cannot determine historically what event or events in Jesus’ earthly life lie at the origin of these narratives as we find them in the Gospels

## **II. The Humanity and Divinity of Jesus**

a. Is Jesus human in the ordinary sense or is Jesus human normatively?  
“Like us in all things but sin.”

If he is normative, then he is more human than you and I; we are less human than he

Jesus as the truly human one, Jesus as the true, authentic human, the human as God intends the human to be.

Was Jesus tempted or tested by Satan in the wilderness?

For the early Church Jesus was virginally conceived but was truly human because he had all the requisite parts: body, psyche, spirit

For us being truly human also means being genetically webbed into the human race. God had to supply the Y chromosome: an additional miracle, unknown to the early Church.

Finite in all his human words and actions; knowing some things humanely but not knowing lots; a child of his time; growing in wisdom, age, and grace.

Distinction between explicit awareness and implicit awareness. Jesus was implicitly aware of who and what he was, but could express that only by using, and stretching, what his culture gave him to use and stretch.

Jesus' humanity could not dip into his divinity to give him extra help. In him the creaturely relates to divine as infinite, incomprehensible Being

Jesus' being divine, his being the Word of God incarnate, means that Jesus' ultimate relationship to God-Abba and to the Holy Spirit is divine, is the divine Word.

I prefer to use relationship language rather than nature language when speaking of Jesus' full identity.

Our imaginations are useless, indeed terribly misleading, here.

### **III. What Jesus was trying to do in his ministry**

He was intent on the transformation of Israel, for its own sake and for the sake of all other people.

His parables and miracles were about the here and now. Not focused on our getting from here to heaven. That's how the Church expressed it later on.

What he was trying to do could not be completed in this life, and he was convinced that death was not the last word (he believed in resurrection of the dead, a recent concept in Judaism of his time). But he was intent on the transformation of humans and their life worlds beginning now.

He didn't live simply to die a self-sacrificing death to save us from our sins. His life mattered to him, to Abba, and to his fellow Jews, and to us.