



# Christ Lives in Me

*Jesus the Christ according to Paul*

SESSION 6

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“ *I have been crucified with Christ;  
and it is no longer I who live,  
but it is Christ who lives in me.*”

Galatians 2:19-20 [NRSV]

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“ *Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith.  
Test yourselves.  
Do you not realize that Christ is in you?*”

2 Corinthians 13:5 [NRSV]

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Moving from knowing about Jesus ...

- to knowing Christ
- to professing Jesus as Christ, as Lord, as Savior
- to recognizing and celebrating our new life in Christ

## **GATHER**

### **Opening Prayer**

*Leader* Let us spend a few moments in quiet,  
becoming more aware of God's presence ...  
... God's presence in each one of us,  
but especially in this community,  
gathered in Jesus' name.

*Pause for a few moments of quiet.*

*Then the leader invites:*

Paul teaches us that we are moved by the Spirit  
to call God "Abba, Father."

As members of God's family,

let us say together

the prayer entrusted to us by Christ himself:

**All Our Father, ...**



***Suggested Song***

**Awake, O Sleeper**

### **Living Our Faith**

*Share briefly your experience of putting into effect the  
action you chose after the last session.*

## **BREAKING OPEN OUR STORY**

### **Reflection**

My father died of a heart attack nine days before my  
fourteenth birthday. I remember the sadness, the sense  
of loss, the shock among family and friends. My most  
significant memory was at the funeral home when I  
approached the casket and leaned forward to kiss my  
father's cheek. What a disappointment and a sense  
of emptiness. Even now, many years later, I clearly  
remember my reaction, "He's not here anymore. This  
is just a shell of who he was." And then, the question:  
"Where's my father now? Where's the gentle, loving,  
and funny man who loved me so much?"

Like most of us, I was baptized as a baby and in due course received the other sacraments, yet my understanding of Jesus and the God he came to reveal was very childish. Jesus, I believed, was the Son of God, a good man who died on a cross and taught us to love one another. The resurrection was a vague teaching and I was far from having a “personal relationship” with Christ.

The quest for my father’s “whereabouts” led me to a priest who began by asking about my father. He allowed me to wax eloquently about my father’s greatness, then posed an interesting question: “Imagine you are God and you are standing at the gates of heaven. Suddenly you see your father walking in the distance. What would you do?” Startled, I replied: “I would run towards him, embrace him, and bring him into my heaven!” After a brief pause, the priest asked: “What makes you think that you are more generous and loving than God?” In my confusion I started apologizing for giving that impression. He interrupted me and went to the heart of the matter: “Do you know God?” I replied: “I don’t think so.” “Would you like to know him better?” he asked. Of course I did!

### ***Paul’s Life at a Glance***

Saul was born around AD 10 in the port of Tarsus in Cilicia in what is now southern Turkey. This made him a citizen of the Roman Empire, with certain privileges on which he would call when arrested. His writing shows he was well educated in the Greek language. Above all, he had a very good education as a Pharisee (a Jew of strict observance). Saul worked zealously to stop what he saw as a “Jewish heresy,” namely believing that Jesus was the Christ.

After his Damascus experience (around AD 36-37), he became a Christian, symbolizing this new beginning by changing his name to Paul. He undertook three missionary journeys, preaching the message of salvation to all people, including the Gentiles. Opposition from both the Jewish and Roman authorities led to his arrest, and eventually his execution (around AD 67).

Paul was the first to preach the Gospel in writing. Between about AD 50 and his death (AD 67), Paul wrote letters to communities or individuals with whom he had worked, sometimes to answer questions they asked, sometimes because he heard reports of behavior that needed correction, but always to reaffirm the good news of salvation.



Throughout the next two years I met regularly and consistently with this priest. Since then I can say I have grown in my understanding of God and my closeness to him. When I look back now, I see that this was a turning point in my life.

Paul thought he was in a really good place in his faith journey: devout, practicing, and doing all he could to protect the faith into which he was born. Paul himself says how he “progressed in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my race,” to the extent of being “a zealot for my ancestral traditions.” This led him to persecute the Church—he says he “tried to destroy it” (see Galatians 1:13-14).

Then one day, he had an encounter with Christ and heard words that would change all that ...

## ***Invitation to Share***

*Take a few moments of silence to reflect on one of the following questions. Then share your reflections.*

1. Think of an experience you have had (big or small) that significantly changed your life, led you to live in a different way. Share this with the group.
2. Look back over this first Season of **ARISE** and what you have shared in your group. In what new ways have you come to know and experience Christ? Choose one thing that particularly moved you, and share that with the group.

## **BREAKING OPEN GOD’S STORY**

### ***The Word of God***

*Sometime before the meeting, the leader asks a member of the group to be prepared to proclaim the passage from the Act of the Apostles.*

***Acts 9:1-22 (short version, vv. 1-9)***

***On the road to Damascus ...***

***Reader***    The Word of the Lord.

***All***        **Thanks be to God.**

**Reflection***Moment of silent reflection*

- What word, phrase, or image from the Scripture reading touches my heart or speaks to my life?

**Invitation to Share**

*The leader invites those who so wish to echo a key word or phrase that touched them from the Scripture passage.*

**Reflection**

We've spent time together exploring the image of Jesus presented by the four evangelists, and hopefully that has helped each of us in our faith journey.

Looking to the miracles, the fulfillment of prophecy as proof that Jesus was the Christ, with a divine mission has got us well started on that journey. But is reading what Jesus said—even learning it by heart—enough? Is that not just to know Christ in a merely human way, to treat him as a man who once lived but is now dead?

The Gospels call us to something greater, to a life-changing encounter. Once you have learned to accept Christ, to be united with him in baptism, everything changes! He is no longer merely a dead hero, he is a living friend!

**Paul's Letters at a Glance**

Tradition attributes thirteen letters to Paul.

The earliest, which date from about AD 50, are the two letters to the **Thesalonians**.

Paul first wrote to the **Corinthians** around Passover in AD 57, then later in the same year he wrote to the **Galatians**, and then to the **Corinthians** a second time. The letter to the **Romans**, regarded by many as Paul's greatest piece of writing, was written around AD 57-58 while Paul was in Corinth.

Three of the letters are called "pastoral" (because they are not addressed to communities but to their pastor), offering advice on how to care for these communities: **1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus**.

In four letters, Paul writes of being in prison, so these are known as the "captivity letters":

**Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians**. Paul was under house arrest in Rome AD 61-63.

The letters appear in the New Testament according to their length: the longest (Romans) first to the shortest (Philemon) last.

The evangelists did us a great service, wanting to set the teaching down in writing, aware that the eye-witnesses were dying, aware that the original sense of excitement was waning. They present an honest story—colored, as we have seen by the experience of the communities for whom they were first written. They look at Jesus with the eyes of faith, and invite us to do the same.

For Paul that was not the point. The point was that the Lord was alive; that he lived on in his mystical body, in the Church. When they met on the road to Damascus the Lord says to Paul “Why do you persecute *me*?” That “*me*” is the key to all of Paul’s theology.

In other words, in baptism we enter into a whole new way of “knowing” Christ. So, Paul says, we’re not to think of Christ in a merely human way. From now on, he says, we are not to think of anyone in a merely human way. Why? Because Christ died for us so that being alive should no longer mean living with our own life, but living with the life of Christ who died and has risen again (see 2 Corinthians 5:15-17).

The life into which Christ rose was not a force that brought to life only his natural body; it brought into birth a new body, his mystical body, the Church. In the power of that life, the individual Christian becomes alive in a new, spiritual way, alive in the Spirit. We must think of ourselves, Paul says, as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus (see Romans 6:10).

When we are plunged into Baptism, which is our initiation into the Lord’s death and resurrection, we come up gasping for air, while the Holy Spirit within us cries out, “Abba, Father,” claiming the promise of adoption. Our whole life is now Christ-conditioned, he is the medium in which we exist, the air we breathe: all our nature is summed up in him.

Paul is less interested in the question “Who do you say Jesus is?” (although we have to begin there!) and totally preoccupied with the question of “What are you doing with the Christ-life that is in you?” To talk about the life of Christ for most of us sounds



like the title of a book. Not for Paul! The life of Christ was an energy that radiated all about him, was the very breath he drew.

For Paul, this was the result of his experience on the road to Damascus. The shock passed off; the blindness was cured. But the interior sight of the apostle was dazzled by the experience and the words he heard. After the road to Damascus, he saw Christ in everyone, in everything; nothing but Christ.

Stories about Christ, things Christ said, by all means repeat them. Paul wanted something more. He wanted Christ. Dead, buried, and risen with Christ, that is our state, through our Baptism. We are to think of ourselves as dead to sin and alive with a life that looks to God.

New life for Paul doesn't just mean turning over a new leaf. It means a new principle of life altogether has been implanted in us. Sometimes Paul says it so strongly that you might even think that the change that takes place in baptism is something even more, as if it involved completely wiping out what we once were and the creation of a fresh human being altogether. No, that's not what he means. But what he does say insistently is that we need to live up to this new birth and be worthy of it. He tells us we *have to be rid* of the old self—not that we *are* rid of it.

That we *have to be* rid of it, and that we *can be*, because we are children of the resurrection, graced with the strength of the Spirit who resurrected Jesus within us. God says to us “Arise,” and we can because we are together in Christ.

### **Baptism is Our Response to the Gospel of Christ**

“Baptism is, above all, the sacrament of that faith by which men and women, enlightened by the Spirit's grace, respond to the Gospel of Christ.”

*Rite of Christian Initiation, 3*



## **Invitation to Share**

*Take a few moments of silence to reflect on one of the following questions. Then share your reflections.*

1. What is the difference between “wanting to know about Christ” and “wanting Christ”? Share any human experiences that help enlighten this (for example, the relationship between husband and wife; or our relationship with our children).
2. “No longer living with our own life, but with the life of Christ” (see 2 Corinthians 5:15). Share what this means, both individually, and for us as Church (members of the body of Christ).

## **INVITATION TO ACT**

*Sharing and being together in a small Christian community fosters growth in our faith and in our spirituality. However, no communal sharing is complete without a serious commitment to putting our faith into practice.*

In this session we have reflected on what it means to share the Christ-life, to see Christ in all: to what kind of action does this inspire us?

### *Some Suggestions*

1. Share with family and friends your experience of these six weeks of Season One of **ARISE**. Invite a friend, neighbor, or family member to join your **ARISE** group for Season Two (Lent).
2. In what ways can we celebrate and honor Baptism, the source of our new life in Christ? For example, pray for the RCIA candidates in your parish; welcome them, both as candidates and when they are newly-baptized, to your **ARISE** group. For example, encourage the parish to publicize the names of babies who are baptized, so that the community can pray for them; write a message of encouragement to the parents.





3. We share baptism with the other Christian churches. Commit to a specific gesture of prayer and work for Christian unity. Contact your archdiocesan Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for advice and guidance.
4. We believe that in Baptism we have new life in Christ and are made members of the community of faith in the Church. In what ways, then, can we celebrate and honor Baptism?

### **Closing Prayer**

*Leader* This is the closing prayer not just of this session, but of the first Season.  
 For six weeks we have shared what it means to seek an encounter with Christ, and have reflected together on what difference that encounter should make in our lives.  
 Let us symbolize our longing to arise together in Christ by a simple act of commitment.

*Turn off the lights, so that the room is lit by one single candle.*

*Leader* Lord God, source of unfailing light, by the death and resurrection of Christ you have cast out the darkness of hatred and lies and poured forth the light of truth and love upon the human family.  
 Guide us along the paths of right faith, safe from error, doubt, and unbelief so that with eyes unsealed we come to see you face to face for you live and reign for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

[adapted from the Second Scrutiny,  
*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*]

*Leader* I invite each of us in turn,  
to light our personal candle.  
In so doing, we commit ourselves  
to welcome the saving power of Christ  
so that any darkness in our lives will be dispelled.

*The leader lights his or her candle,  
and prays:*

**Christ, you are the light of the world!  
Help me to live as a child of the light.**

*Each member of the group, in turn, does the same.*

*When everyone's candle is lit, pray this litany:*

*Leader* Once we were darkness,  
now we are light in the Lord.  
Let us live as children of light.

**All Let us live as children of light!**

*Leader* Let us try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.  
Let us take no part in the fruitless works of darkness.

**All Let us live as children of light!**

*Leader* Always and everywhere,  
let us give thanks to God who is our Father  
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All Let us live as children of light!**

(Ephesians 5:8, 10-11, 20)

## **Concluding Song**



*Suggested Song*

**We Are Called (Come, live in the light)**



# Music Resources

## Alphabetical Index of Suggested Songs

(by first line and/or title)

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### All Are Welcome

Words, and music: Marty Haugen  
© 1994 GIA Publications, Inc.

### Awake, O Sleeper

Words, based on Ephesians 5,  
and music: Marty Haugen  
© 1987 GIA Publications, Inc.

### Blest Are They

Words, based on Matthew 5:3-10,  
and music: David Haas  
© 1985 GIA Publications, Inc.

### Christ Be Our Light

Words and music: Bernadette Farrell  
© 1993 Bernadette Farrell.  
Published by OCP Publications.

### Come, Live in the Light

See We Are Called

### Gather Us In

Words and music: Marty Haugen  
© 1982 GIA Publications, Inc.

### God Beyond All Names

Words and music: Bernadette Farrell  
© Bernadette Farrell.  
Published by OCP Publications.

### God beyond our dream

See God Beyond All Names

### God Is Love

Words, based on 1 John 1:5, 3:2, 4:15,  
Ps 33:6, Galatians 3:28,  
and music: David Haas  
© 1987 GIA Publications, Inc.

### Healer of Our Every Ill

Words and music: Marty Haugen  
© 1987 GIA Publications, Inc.

### I will come to you in the silence

See You Are Mine

### Lead Me Lord

Words, based on Matthew 5:3-12; 7:7;  
John 14:6, and  
Music: John Beeker  
© 1987 John D. Beeker  
Published by OCP Publications

### Let us build a house where love can dwell

See All Are Welcome

### Longing for light, we wait in darkness

See Christ Be Our Light

### The Summons

Words: John Bell  
Music: Scottish traditional  
(KELVINGROVE)  
© 1987 Iona Community,  
GIA Publications, Inc., agent.

### You Are Mine

Words and music: David Haas  
© 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

### Will you come and follow me

See The Summons

### We Are Called

Words, based on Micah 6:8,  
and music: David Haas  
© 1988 GIA Publications, Inc.

All of the songs listed above are on the *Encountering Christ Today* CD, one sample copy of which is included in the *ARISE Parish Kit*. For further information, including how to order additional copies, see pages 71-72.

Most of the songs suggested for the sessions can be found in the standard hymnals or parish worship aids. Should you want to get in touch with any of the publishers of the songs suggested (for example, to obtain printed copies of the music scores, or to purchase downloadable PDF, TIFF, or MP3 files, or to ask for permission to reprint copyright words), here are their contact details.



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