

## 4. Act

- It is a long-standing tradition to have an image of Jesus prominent in a Catholic home. If you do not have one already you might consider buying a crucifix or framing one of the cards available (free!) from the Church.
- Consider how you might best seek to develop your own personal relationship with Jesus - for example by reading a few lines from the Gospel each day as food for prayer. Pope Francis encourages us to carry a pocket sized Gospel with us at all times: copies of *The Gospel according to Matthew* are available (for sale!) in the porch. Or you might download a Bible app to your PC or mobile phone: the translation being used in *The Word Spoken* (and the new *Lectionary for Mass*, due in a year or so) is available free at [www.E5V.org](http://www.E5V.org)
- Learn the Jesus Prayer by heart (see below). It is an ideal prayer to use throughout the day, quickly and simply turning to the Lord as we face the day and its challenges. It is also suitable to use as the Act of Contrition when we celebrate the Sacrament of Confession!

## 5. Prayer

**O** God, come to our aid.  
*O Lord, make haste to help us.*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
*as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.*

*Spend a minute or so in silence, and bring to mind the things that have struck you during the meeting - the things you have heard and talked about; the people you have been with; and the Lord who has spoken...*

*Then say together*

**L**ord our God, in times past  
you revealed your name in the flame of fire  
and your law amid peals of thunder.

now, in this present time,  
you make yourself known to us in Jesus Christ,  
the servant pierced through for our faults,  
the Master gentle and humble in heart.

Lead us to discover anew each day  
that your holiness is shown in your mercy,  
and that you love us for ever and ever. Amen.

*End with the Jesus Prayer, followed by the Grace and the Dismissal*

**J**esus, Son of the Living God,  
have mercy on me a sinner.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all,  
every more. Amen.**

Let us go in the peace of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

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## The Word Spoken (1): Jesus

### 1. Listen to Scripture

**N**ow the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.

When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son.

And he called his name Jesus.

*Matthew 1:18-25*



## 2. Our Experience

*‘The time of prayer with Scripture is followed by a time looking at where some of the themes connect with our own lives and descriptions.*

*Some people find it easier to answer questions on the spot. Others prefer to think a little first, and even to write down part of their answer. Spend a minute or so with the questions and do make a note of thoughts, if you wish. There’s plenty of white space provided!*

- **What does Jesus mean to me or others?**
- **What challenges me about Jesus?**
- **Do you hear God speak? If so, how?**

## 3. The Church Teaches

‘When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.’ This is ‘the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.’ God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation - he has sent his own ‘beloved Son’.

We believe and confess that Jesus of Nazareth, born a Jew of a daughter of Israel at Bethlehem at the time of King Herod the Great and the emperor Caesar Augustus, a carpenter by trade, who died crucified in Jerusalem under the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of the emperor Tiberius, is the eternal Son of God made man. He ‘came from God’, ‘descended from heaven’, and ‘came in the flesh’. For ‘the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. . . And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.’

Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the



‘living God.’ On the rock of this faith confessed by St. Peter, Christ built his Church.

### JESUS

Jesus means in Hebrew: ‘God saves.’ At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, ‘will save his people from their sins’. In Jesus, God recapitulates the whole history of salvation on behalf of all humankind.

The name ‘Jesus’ signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son, made man for the universal and definitive redemption from sins. It is the divine name that alone brings salvation, and henceforth all can invoke his name, for Jesus united himself to all men through his Incarnation, so that ‘there is no other name under heaven given to the human race by which we must be saved.’

The name of the Saviour God was invoked only once in the year by the high priest in atonement for the sins of Israel, after he had sprinkled the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies with the sacrificial blood. The mercy seat was the place of God’s presence. When St. Paul speaks of Jesus whom ‘God put forward as an expiation by his blood’, he means that in Christ’s humanity ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.’

Jesus’ Resurrection glorifies the name of the Saviour God, for from that time on it is the name of Jesus that fully manifests the supreme power of the ‘name which is above every name’. The evil spirits fear his name; in his name his disciples perform miracles, for the Father grants all they ask in this name.

The name of Jesus is at the heart of Christian prayer. All liturgical prayers conclude with the words ‘through our Lord Jesus Christ’. The Hail Mary reaches its high point in the words ‘blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.’ The Eastern prayer of the heart, the Jesus Prayer, says: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ Many Christians, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died with the one word ‘Jesus’ on their lips.

*cf Catechism of the Catholic Church 422-4; 430-435*

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- **What is meant by ‘Jesus saves’?**
- **Does Jesus save? How?**
- **How would you explain ‘faith in Jesus’ to a non-believer?**