



Dear Friends,

I invite you all to participate in the upcoming *Jesus the Christ* eConference on September 16<sup>th</sup>. This will be a wonderful faith formation experience and an opportunity to gather in groups and reflect on Jesus, the central person and founder of our Faith. I was chatting at work the other day about how it would be a good idea to put together a selection of pre reading articles for the eConference so that facilitators, participants and group leaders felt confident and enthused.

Father Joseph Lam, my good friend and former student of Father Gerald O'Collins sj at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome came to the rescue. He selected an excellent collection of relevant articles. He introduces them by saying, 'In his book "What are they saying about Jesus?" published in 1977 our key presenter of the E-Conference on Jesus Christ G. O'Collins reminds us of the spiritual and pastoral renewal the Second Vatican Council has brought into the Church. At the same time he also raises the concern that the teaching about Jesus Christ comes on secondarily at the Vatican II. According to him "any efforts to renew the Church will remain spiritually empty, emotionally hollow and doctrinally unsound unless they drawn inspiration and strength from the founder of Christianity himself". In this context he envisioned the III Vatican Council by suggesting "that its major document would not be "The church in the Modern World", but some response to the question: Who is Jesus Christ for today"?<sup>1</sup>

Today, forty-five years after the Second Vatican Council, the same question is still valid for us. And to be sure, our answers to the question won't be easy. We are amazed about Jesus, but are also struggling with him. Our present experience of a World in unrest and destruction in various forms, could lead us to the same question Jesus asked when hanging on the Cross: Why have you forsaken me?

Who is Jesus Christ for us?

In conversation with Joseph he said, '...we need to explore the identity of Jesus Christ whom we believe is our redeemer and brother. The search for his identity is important because what we *do* as the people of God will rest ultimately on what we *think* about Jesus<sup>2</sup>. Or memory of him will determine the way we act in the world.'

That's the point– what we *do* reflects who we think Jesus is and how we remember him. The eConference will many people a time and place to discover the identity of Jesus and the possibility of creating new memories of him. I will conclude with a set

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<sup>1</sup> G. O'Collins SJ, *What are they saying about Jesus? – a report on recent theological speculation about Jesus Christ and its implications for Christian faith*, NY: Paulist Press, 1977, vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

of questions courtesy of Father Joseph. Actually they're more than a set of questions; they're the starting point to becoming the sort of person we want to be.

Human beings are social beings. In our daily life we encounter many persons. We retain in our memory some of them. Others will be lost or forgotten. Some of them are important and others are not. However, Jesus encountered people with sincerity and treated all with equal respect. Nevertheless, he also challenged them. His love for people is **critical**, because he wants them to mature in love by asking them to change old habits and thoughts, and therefore become a new creature.

How can your faith in Christ be challenge for your life and for your community?

How can your faith in Christ be a **critical moment** which aims to make the "World" a better "World"?

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