

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday | 2021

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/011321.cfm>

**Hebrews 2:14-18**

*Since the children share in blood and Flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life.*

*Surely, he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people.*

*Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.*

**Psalms 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9**

*Give thanks to the LORD, invoke his name; make known among the nations his deeds.*

*Sing to him, sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds.*

*Glory in his holy name; rejoice, O hearts that seek the LORD! Look to the LORD in his strength; seek to serve him constantly.*

*You descendants of Abraham, his servants, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones! He, the LORD, is our God; throughout the earth his judgments prevail.*

*He remembers forever his covenant which he made binding for a thousand generations--*

*Which he entered into with Abraham and by his oath to Isaac.*

**Mark 1:29-39**

*On leaving the synagogue Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.*

*Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her.*

*He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.*

*When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons.*

*The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him.*

*Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed.*

*Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you."*

*He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come."*

*So, he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.*



*Since the children share in blood and Flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them.*

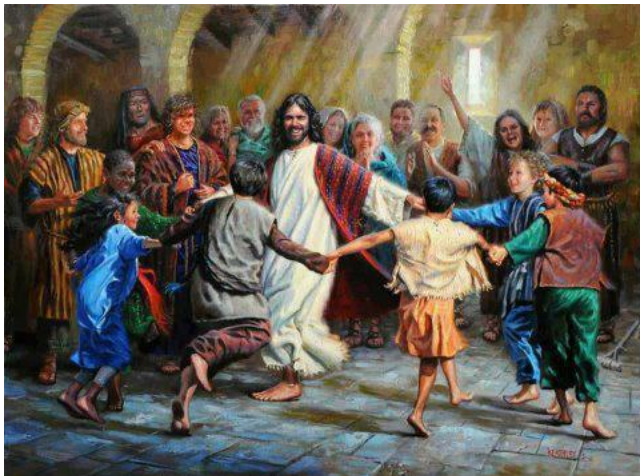
The Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) were Christendom's first Ecumenical Councils. They provided us with the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. What we hold to be true today every time we pray that Nicene Creed at Mass was not always understood to be so in the first centuries.

Our early Christians were not unanimous in their understanding of the nature of Jesus. Some thought he was God with only the appearance of a man, not unlike the Mediterranean people's familiarity with the Roman and Greco pantheon of gods and their earthly manifestations. Others believed that Jesus was human, whose sonship was by the God's adoption and not as being a co-eternal person in the Trinity.

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father...consubstantial with the Father. Through him all things were made. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.*

(Nicene Creed)

In short, we explain Jesus' nature as the mystery of being True God & True Man.



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As we contemplate that mystery, I embrace his human image for a time until I am pulled away to contemplate his divine image, but for only a time, as then I am called to recall again, his human image. I don't spend much reflection on one without being pulled away to the other. Of course, it being a mystery, it is challenging for me, this poor creature, to hold both images together at once: a person with limits who is limitless.

That is why I appreciate today's reading from the *Letter to the Hebrews*. It allows me a deep dive into Jesus' humanity. It is important for me, and I suggest for you also, as it is in my identification with Jesus' humanity, that I am joined to the Divine Father.

*Since the children share in blood and Flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them.*

The *Letter to the Hebrews*, is more like a long sermon than it is a letter. It doesn't speak to a particular people or place as much as it is an exhortation and encouragement to the Universal Church.

Written in the First Century, it just smells like Jesus. As I delve deeper into today's reading, I remind myself that I am writing a homily on a few verses of a greater homily—a homily on a homily. With that, hear my encouragement to read the whole *Letter to the Hebrews*.

But it is with appreciation that I linger more with Jesus as I understand him in his human nature. As Jesus humbled himself to share in our humanity, may we come to share in his divinity. (paraphrased from the Holy Mass).

As I try to wrap my mind around that, I am reminded that I have experienced something like that in my own life, where by having a relationship with one person, I end up being in relationship with others.

Most dramatically, that was in 1971—AD, that is. Jan Evo brought home her boyfriend from Michigan State to introduce that 18-year-old to her family. She had only gone out on a couple of dates with him, but she had written home to her mom that this was the guy she was going to marry.

Well, a family visit to the Evos entailed meeting not just her parents, but her 9 brothers and sisters also. Jan was the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest, yet the oldest girl, which in that Irish-Catholic family meant she was the #2 Mom.

Of course, that boyfriend was me. As I walked into that overwhelming hospitality, I kept on catching glimpses of young-uns peering around the corner peeking at me. They were all stair-stepped down, the youngest being only 4 months old.

Because of my love for Jan, and more importantly, her love for me, I obtained an instant family. That 4-month-old is now 50 years old. She has known me her entire life and does not distinguish me from her other brothers. I adore her, and how she loves me.

Such love!

Can you imagine what kind of love is offered to you and me, what kind of family we are eternally being called into, when we allow Jesus (the son of Mary, born of the house of David)... when we allow Jesus to love us?

Such love! Never-ending!

*Since the children share in blood and Flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them.*

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