

JESUS, BE THE CENTRE

Christ is the centre of time.

In 525, people began to calculate years starting from the birth of Christ instead of the founding of Rome. From the 17th century the custom was established of counting the time Before Christ (BC) and after Christ Anno Domini, the Year of the Lord (AD). Christ is at the centre of time, the One to whom all things before him point and to whom all things point backward after him. In Revelation 21:6 he defines himself as “the Alpha and the Omega” of history, the author of creation and its consummation. While God is completely outside the world, history and time, Christ is “in the world” but not “of it.” He is in history and time, but he transcends history and time.

Christ “is the same yesterday and today and for ever” (Heb 13: 8), but not present in the same way at each time. He is present in the Old Testament as *figure*, he is present in the New Testament as *event*, and he is present in the age of the Church as *sacrament*.

The events and prophecies of the Old Testament can all be interpreted as pointing to Christ: “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] interpreted to them [the disciples on the road to Emmaus] in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Lk 24:27). The historical events concerning the Person of Jesus and in particular the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection, occurred in space and time and are not repeatable. Finally, to say that Christ is present in the Church as “sacrament” is an affirmation that the salvation he accomplished becomes operative in history through the signs he instituted. So, the once only death and resurrection of Christ is made present as often as the Mass is celebrated.

Is Christ my centre?

Christ is recognized as the centre of time and history, but is he also the centre of *my* life, of *my* small personal history? Of *my* time? Does he occupy a central place only in theory or also in fact? The personal encounter with Christ is an event that can take place at any moment in life. In *Evangelii gaudium* Pope Francis says:

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.”

The third century theologian Origen wrote: “*What good does it do me if Christ was born at one time in Bethlehem if he is not born in my heart again by faith?*” Jesus is not merely a liturgical and sacramental memory from the past; he is not a collection of doctrines and dogmas and a topic for study. He is not, in brief, a *personage* but a living, existing *person*.

This means that Christ is not only the centre of human history, but he should fill my time as well. We should fill as many moments of our life with Jesus as we can. It is not an impossible plan. It does not mean thinking about Jesus all of the time but “noticing” his presence, abandoning ourselves to his will, telling him quickly, “I love you!” every time we have the opportunity or inspiration to recollect ourselves.

When one is “connected” in faith to the risen and living Jesus, the world of God opens before you because Christ is the door; he is the way that leads into the Trinity and into the infinite.

*Paraphrased and condensed from “CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND FOR EVER”
The Omnipresence of Christ in Time by Fr Raniero Cantalamessa OFMCap.*

<https://www-vn.azureedge.net/en/vatican-city/news/2017-12/fr--cantalamessa-preaches-2nd-advent-sermon.html>