

2022-2023 *ENCOUNTERING DIFFERENCE*

OCTOBER MONTHLY FOCUS:

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is at its core a monotheistic religion centered on the figure of Jesus Christ. How followers understand the person of Jesus and his teachings will define thousands of later sects and splits within the Christian world. Jesus lived a brief life of about 33 years as a Jewish teacher in Israel. Early oral traditions of his teachings passed on by his followers became written down decades after his death and selected texts became codified into today's Bible in about the 5th century. Major holidays include Easter, which celebrates Jesus' resurrection from the dead each Spring, and Jesus' birth celebrated at Christmas. Central rituals include baptism, a cleansing of sin for infants or adults, and Mass/Lord's Supper/Eucharist, the ritual meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death. Worldwide most Christians adhere to the 325 Nicene Creed which affirms Jesus as God and as central to the forgiveness of sins.

Key Dates and Figures

- 70 A.D. Fall of Jerusalem. The start of recorded accounts of Jesus' life and teachings known as Gospels
- 325 Council of Nicea. Convened by Emperor Constantine to create unified creed of belief—a Trinitarian concept of God wins over a Unitarian idea argued by Arius.
- 354-430 Augustine writes *City of God* and *Confessions*, argues for idea of original sin.
- 451 Council of Chalcedon. Affirms Jesus as God and Man, one person in two natures. Oriental Orthodoxy disagrees and splits off. Today approximately 60 million, including the Coptic church.
- 1054 East-West Schism. Eastern Orthodox and Catholic church divide.
- 1225-1274 Thomas Aquinas author of *Summa Theologia*, relying on Aristotle and systemic thinking to argue for Natural Law, Just War, and other influential theological points of view.
- 1450's Gutenberg Bible printed. The first mass-produced movable type book in Europe.
- 1517 Martin Luther posts "95 Theses" to challenge Catholic church starting the Protestant Reformation.
- 1620-1640 Puritan Migration to New England. First Parish in Wayland (originally Sudbury) founded by Puritans in 1640.
- 1819 William Ellery Channing preaches sermon defining "Unitarian Christianity."
- 1853 Antoinette Brown Blackwell, becomes first American woman ordained minister.
- 1968 Latin American Bishops' Conference, Medellín, Colombia asserts the centrality of the poor and marginalized to Christianity beginning a movement known as Liberation Theology.

Words of the Tradition:

Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee. *Augustine*

I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use. *Galileo Galilei*

We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. *Martin Luther*

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible. *St. Thomas Aquinas*

Any theology that is indifferent to the theme of liberation is not Christian theology. *James H. Cone*

The Christian marginality of women has its roots in the patriarchal beginnings of the church and in the androcentrism of Christian revelation. *Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza*

The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. *Pope Francis, June 2015, [Papal Encyclical](#)*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. *The Lord's Prayer*

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. *Luke 6:27b. Authentic words of Jesus per [Jesus Seminar](#)*