

Some Concepts For Exploration

(just samples: there are plenty more)

- 1 **Obedience**
The relationship of Jesus to his Father, whose divine will he came to fulfil. This relationship sets the terms for the Christian life which we call *sequela Christi*, the following of Christ. As he obeyed his Father, we obey him. Jesus' obedience was tested to the point of death, at which he becomes the mediator between the Father and us. His dying fulfils (a) his unity with the human condition, and also (b) his self-giving to the will of his Father. He could have leapt the wall of the garden and evaded death (parting company with us, who have to die at last). He could have denied his claims and saved himself from the Cross (parting company with his Father, who had sent his only-begotten Son to call the world home). His dying thus represents an ultimate obedience to the Father, and an ultimate obedience to us, because his love rose to the full dimensions of our need for him.

- 2 **Poverty**
The attitude of Jesus to possession, including self-possession (he was "the man for others") and possession of other people (he let people go their own way: the rich young man, the crowd in Jn 6, Judas, the Twelve at the Passion). He saw wealth as dangerous and disabling, he saw love of money as incompatible with love of God, he saw the laying-down of life as the only path to salvation. This questions not only the huge role we accord to money and other possessions, but also possessiveness itself.

- 3 **Chastity**
Jesus' attitude to the body, which enabled him to integrate sexuality completely into his way of life. Jesus' life-plan did not include a sexual relationship, yet we insist not only on the perfection of his humanity, but on his exemplary role in the lives of all the baptised – celibate, single, or married. What this says about our notions of sexuality, especially in relation to the notions proposed by the Church, is a hot potato.