



Chapter 4

My Christian Identity



- What kind of people do you like the most?
- What makes them attractive?
- Can we evaluate them solely based on external characteristics?

The way we present ourselves before others, the impression we create in them, and the influence we exert on them are all aspects through which we understand personality. However, personality is not limited to these alone.

What is personality?

The psychologist Gordon Allport defined personality as follows: "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique characteristic behavior and thought."

Personality is the relatively stable integration of physical, material, emotional, and behavioral characteristics, along with the functioning of the nervous system and hormones, which help an individual uniquely adapt to their surroundings – Hans Eysenck.

Characteristics of Personality

- The factors influencing personality vary in each individual (physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual characteristics).
- The abilities and qualities of each person are different.
- It is not possible to compare one person with another.
- Hereditary factors and environment are the elements that determine and shape an individual's personality.
- Good behavior, gentle speech, physical characteristics, athletic and artistic abilities—these are the external components of personality.
- The internal components of personality are love, honesty, sense of justice, patience, sense of responsibility, sincerity, holiness, intellectual ability, analytical skill, problem-solving ability, and so on.



Mk 8:22-26

The word "Personality" originates from the Greek word "Persona." Its meaning is "mask." In Greek dramas, "Persona" referred to the masks used to portray different characters.



What are the characteristics of personality?



"Can grapes be gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?" (Mt 7:16).



Analyze the relationship between a person's inner qualities and actions in the light of the given definition of personality.

The areas that manifest personality

Our personality is manifested through five areas: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual.

Spiritual Quotient

Physical Quotient

Intellectual Quotient

Emotional Quotient

Social Quotient

The soul is the divine element dwelling within us. Our personality matures as spiritual growth expands into the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions. Jesus was a person in whom all these dimensions were fully developed.

The Characteristics of Jesus' Personality

Self-awareness	Jesus always had the awareness that He and the Father are one (Jn 10:30, 14:21) and that He is the Son of God.
Awareness of the Purpose of Life	Jesus had the awareness that He came to proclaim the Good News to the poor, to set the captives free, to give sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Lk 4:18-19) as well as the awareness that He is the Savior of the world (Jn 12:47).
Emotional Maturity	Jesus pursued emotional maturity throughout His life. The extraordinary emotional maturity He displayed during His trial and crucifixion is sublime.
Problem-Solving Ability	The wisdom that Jesus displayed is astonishing—whether in skillfully saving the sinful woman who was brought to be stoned (Jn 8:1-9) or in resolving the dispute about paying taxes to Caesar (Mt 22:21-22).



How does personality attain maturity?



Discuss how you would respond to social situations in the light of the characteristics of Jesus' personality. Prepare a skit based on this discussion and present it in class.



Why is Jesus the greatest model for this world?

Mercy	Jesus manifested mercy by raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:35-44), healing the sick, delivering those possessed by demons, giving bread to the hungry, and granting forgiveness to sinners.
Openness	Jesus' personality embraced everyone, especially sinners, tax collectors, and those who were marginalized.
Self-control	Throughout Jesus' life, especially during His temptation in the wilderness, when people attempted to make Him the King of the Jews, and even at the moment of His crucifixion, this self-control is evident.
Self-confidence and Optimism	Jesus expresses His self-confidence and optimism during His crucifixion, when He promises paradise to the good thief, and when He prays at the tomb of Lazarus.
Steadfastness and Firmness in Conviction	Even in the midst of criticism and when sentenced to death, Jesus remained firm in His stance (Mt 26:63-64).
Ability to Adapt to Life's Situations	Born in a manger, fasting in the wilderness, teaching in the temple, by the sea, and on the mountaintop, and living among sinners and righteous people alike, Jesus adapted to diverse life situations.

Jesus possessed a mature and balanced personality. Through the example of His personality, He showed us how God desires humanity to be.

The Characteristics of Christian Identity

Christian identity is a way of life centered in Jesus. This identity is established on spirituality. Christian identity is formed within us by embracing and living according to the words and attitudes of Jesus.



He said to them,
"Why were you
searching for me?
Did you not know
that I must be in my
Father's house?"
Lk 2 : 49



"And all who heard
him were amazed at
his understanding and
his answers."
Lk 2 : 47



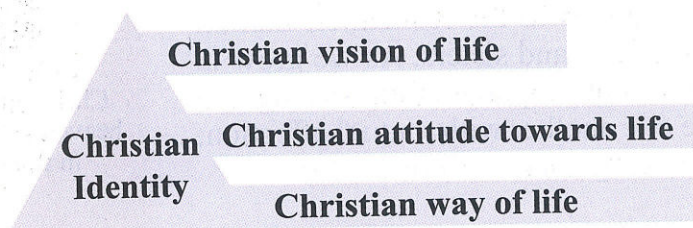
Mt 9:36



Mt 26:47-56

"When we can say, like St. Paul the Apostle, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:20), we attain the fullness of Christian identity."

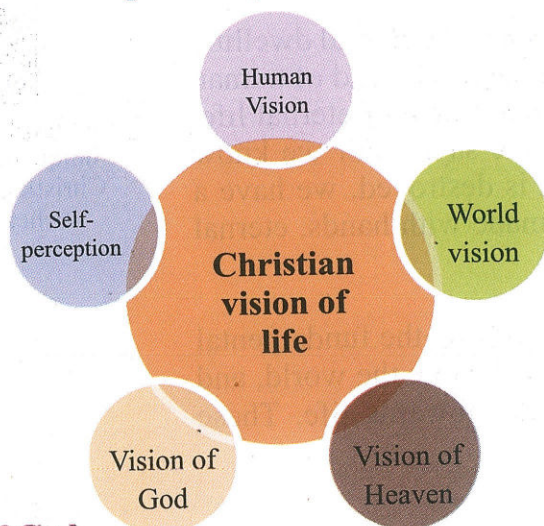
The Christian Identity has three levels



1. Christian Vision of Life

What gives Christian identity its uniqueness and greatness is the vision of life inherent in it. The foundation of the Christian vision of life is faith in the one true God, which includes God the Father, Jesus the Savior, and the Holy Spirit, the Helper.

This vision of life primarily consists of five components.



Vision of God

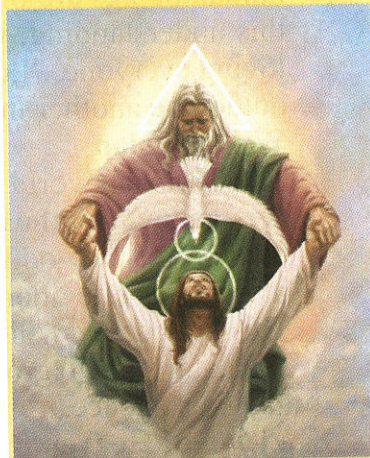
The awareness that God is our Father is the distinctive feature of the Christian vision of life. Jesus taught us to pray to God, calling, "Our Father in heaven" (Mt 6:9).

Self-Perception

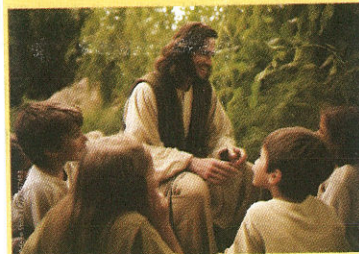
The awareness that we are children of God is another distinctive aspect of the Christian vision of life. Human beings are inherently created with the potential to become children of God. The Apostle Jn says, "But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12). He further states, "See what love the Father



What are the characteristics of a mature personality?



What are the different levels of Christian personality?



Are non-Catholic Christians our brothers and sisters also? Youcat 130

has given us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are" (1 Jn 3:1).

Human Vision

"The Father, by sending His Son, revealed the greatness of the human person in its fullness." (DI 19). The awareness that God is our Father leads us to the realization that all human beings are our brothers and sisters. As we grow in this understanding, we become capable of embracing and loving everyone. "Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom 12:10).

World Vision

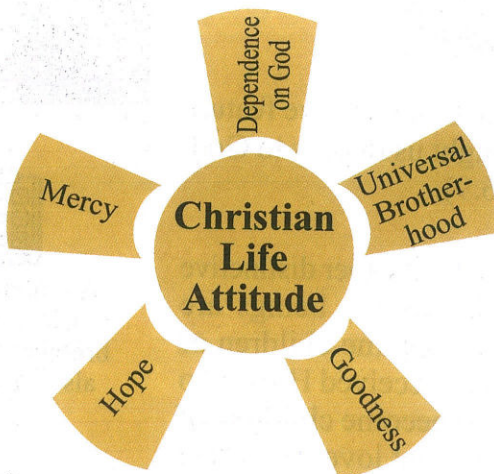
The Christian world vision is primarily centered on the understanding that the earth and everything in it were created by God for the goodness of humanity (Gen 1:26) and that it serves as a temporary dwelling place for human beings. This perspective will help us to love and protect the universe and nature and to grow into a culture of mutual brotherhood and coexistence.

Vision of Heaven

This world is perishable, and heaven is the eternal dwelling place - one should have this awareness. The end of human life is not death; rather, it is the attainment of eternal life, that is, heaven. St. Paul the Apostle says, "For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor 5:1).

2. Christian Life Attitude

In the light of the Christian vision of life, the fundamental relationships that a person holds with God, the world, and oneself form the Christian attitudes towards life. These attitudes have certain



How does the Christian vision of heaven influence life in this world?



Explain the uniqueness of the Christian vision of heaven.



Identify, discuss, and present Christian life attitudes from various biblical contexts.

Dependence on God

Christians are those who have the awareness that they are children of God. This awareness instills in us a dependence on God. Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (Jn 14:1). This faith strengthens us to move forward in Christian life with courage and confidence. As St. Francis of Assisi said, we should be able to say, "My God, and my all."

Universal Brotherhood

This attitude enables us to see and interact with all human beings as brothers and sisters, beyond all distinctions. Jesus' teaching, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Mt 25:40) helps us grow in the spirit of universal brotherhood. "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

Goodness

Goodness is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Christ's disciples must be those who do good and encourage it. St. Paul exhorts us, "Overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:21). God is the fullness of goodness. Everything that is truly good are rays of divine grace. Only those who possess divine grace can recognize goodness, practice it, and promote it.

Hope

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1817). Hope is the foundation of life's success. It is the grace given by God to face life with confidence, without fear, even in the crises and adverse circumstances of daily life, with the assurance that God is with us. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28).

Mercy

Mercy is the gift of God's unmerited grace and compassion. "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy." (The Face of Mercy, 1) "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36).

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13) these words of the



What are the life attitudes a Christian should have?

"A Virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good." (CCC 1833)



Why is the Church called Catholic?
Youcat 133



Mk 10:19

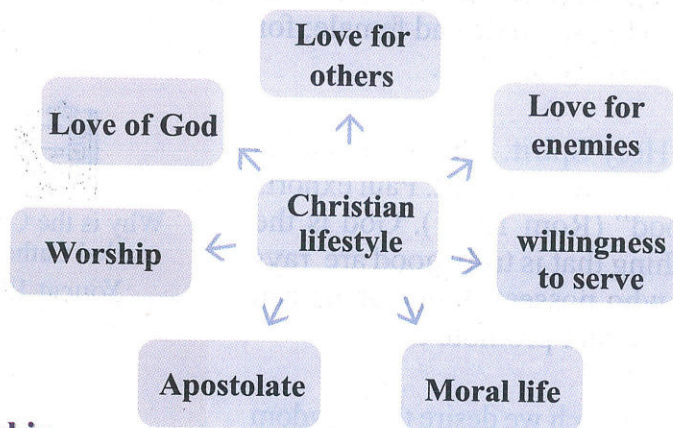


Heb 10:23

Lord lead us in this direction. We who experience God's mercy must also show mercy to our fellow beings. An example of this is the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). The works of mercy that the Church teaches us must become our life attitude.

3. Christian Lifestyle

We have understood the vision and mindset that form the foundation of Christian personality. Christian identity is practically realized when we adopt a lifestyle molded by these principles. Habits that align with the aforementioned mindset must develop in our lives. It has to become our nature. This is the transformation that occurs when our personality becomes centered in Christ. As a result, the following characteristics will take shape within us.



Worship

Worshipping God is the hallmark of Christians. It is the duty of all human beings. "Let my people go, so that they may worship me" (Ex 8:1) is what God commanded to Pharaoh. Conveying that God's people must be worshipers of God, Jesus said that those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Love of God

The foundation of Christian life is the love of God. Above all things, one must love God and love one's neighbor as oneself this is the essence of God's commandments. The first of these is: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mk 12:30).

Fourteen Works of Mercy

Corporal Works – Seven

1. Giving food to the hungry
2. Giving drink to the thirsty
3. Clothing the naked
4. Providing shelter to the homeless
5. Visiting the sick and the imprisoned
6. Assisting the afflicted
7. Burying the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy – Seven

1. Instructing the ignorant
2. Resolving the doubts of those who are doubtful
3. Comforting the sorrowful
4. Correcting those who err
5. Forgiving offenses
6. Bearing the shortcomings of others with patience
7. Praying for the living and the dead



In what ways can we manifest the Christian lifestyle?

Love for others

The mark of Jesus' personality is selfless love. "By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35).

- The early Christians were those who accepted this command as a challenge.

Love for Enemies

The highest manifestation of Christian identity is love for enemies. "Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you, so that you will be children of your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:44-45).

Love for enemies is a unique teaching that Christ practiced; the fullness of Christian love lies in loving even one's enemies. However, there may be those who portray love for enemies as a weakness. Love for enemies is the hallmark of Christian life. A Christian by himself should be able to win over an enemy through prayer and patient endurance.

Willingness to Serve

Accepting and serving sinners, the sick, the poor, and the orphaned is a distinctive characteristic of Christian identity. "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45).

Distinguishing people based on religion, nationality, politics, language, culture is a narrow-minded approach. In contrast, we are called to embrace, accept, and respect everyone without conditions, giving them a place in our hearts. Christian maturity calls us to interact with others with magnanimity, cultivate the virtues of generosity, and lead a life of sharing.

To interact with others with a generous heart, to cultivate the habit of magnanimity, and to lead a life of sharing—Christian maturity demands these from us.

Moral life

Christian life is a life in accordance with moral laws and virtues. The moral virtues grow through education, deliberate acts, and perseverance in struggle. Divine grace purifies and elevates them (CCC 1837).

Apostolate

The life of every Christian must proclaim Christ. Jesus' final



Tertullian (AD 155-220), a great theologian who lived in the second century, recorded what others said about the love among Christians: "See how they love one another when we hate each other. See how they are willing to die for others when we kill one another."

To be filled with grace

1. Participate in the Holy Eucharist.
2. Confess regularly.
3. Read the Word of God.
4. Take part in Eucharistic Adoration.
5. Recite the Liturgy of the Hours and the Rosary.
6. Receive the indulgences granted by the Church.
7. Make fasting, abstinence, and works of mercy a part of life.
8. Personal Prayer
9.



Let us discuss
(CCC 851).

command is the guiding principle of life.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:19-20).

To grow in Christian personality

Christian personality is a reality that must be consciously nurtured. We can achieve this goal only through constant effort. To grow in the personality of Jesus, we must follow the aspects mentioned below.

1. Follow Jesus

We must inculcate the virtues of Jesus—love, mercy, patience, courage, compassion, peace, humility, etc.

2. Living an Ecclesial Life

Isn't our Mother, the Holy Church, the continuation of Jesus and His mystical body? The spiritual life, founded in the Church's liturgical order, nurtured by the sacramental life, and rooted in the teachings of the Church, enables us to grow in Christian identity. Only if we follow the ecclesial consciousness and lifestyle, we can bear witness to Christ in this world.

3. Grow in God's Grace

God strengthens human beings through His grace. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly," (Titus 2:11-12). When we call upon Jesus, His grace empowers and saves us.

4. Follow the Example of the Saints

There are numerous saints in the history of the Church who have followed the personality of Christ. The apostles, Church Fathers, doctors of the church, martyrs, etc., are among the many radiant figures who have borne courageous witness to Christ.

The saints are those who embraced and lived according to the loving commandment and the lifestyle of Jesus. They have made us realize that the formation of a Christian personality is practical. It is not about imitating the saints but rather making them our role models.

A journalist asked,
"What needs to
be changed in the
Church?"
Mother Teresa
"You and I."



What should I do to
grow in Christian
personality?



Let us discuss
Youcat 342.



Why is it said that
we are all called to
holiness?



1 Pet 1:15-16



Prepare a video based
on the life examples
of saints.

5. Nurturing the Talents Given by God

God has given talents to everyone. Each person has the responsibility to make effective use of the opportunities received and to cultivate their own abilities through continuous effort.

6. Actively Engaging in Society

Christians must work for the well-being of society and the nation according to God's will. They should understand societal movements and trends in the light of the Gospel and intervene to improve the society in which we live, just as Jesus did.

The person who has developed a Christian personality is, in the true sense, another Christ. In every age, the presence of good individuals is always essential for the well-being and edification of society. Those with a Christian personality become a blessing to society.

Christ does not ask
for those who marvel;
He asks for those who
follow.

Soren Kierkegaard
(Youcat 348)

My Convictions



- Jesus had a complete and integral personality.
- We must make Jesus our model in shaping our personality.
- As we grow in Christian personality, we ensure the well-being of both ourselves and society.



Let us read the Word of God

The Gospel of St. John
Chapters 13-16



Let us illuminate our hearts

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear” (Eph 4:29).

My Resolution

I will constantly strive to
grow in Christian character.

