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Teaching the Divinity of Christ by The Socratic Method

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There are many ways to get a point across. But some ways are a lot more effective than others. Have you ever had a teacher who drones on and on, heaping fact upon fact and argument upon argument? Usually, a day or two later, you forget the facts, the argument, and even the point. It's called the problem of the premature question—the teacher is gushing out a long, complicated answer to a question that hasn't even occurred to you yet, a question you're not really curious about.

But have you ever had a teacher who intrigues you with a fascinating question that really makes you think? You strain your brain and—voilà! You figure it out for yourself. You put the pieces together and see a clear picture. And you never forget it.

This is called the Socratic method, but it was not original to Socrates.

The Holy Spirit invented this method as we can see from this Sunday's Scriptures. Our first reading shows how Job and similar puny humans are powerless over the fury of a storm. It is I alone, says the Lord, who controls the raging sea and the howling wind. Psalm 107 tells the same story—God whips up the waves, and then, in response to prayer, causes the storm to subside.

Next comes the story from the Gospel of Mark. A trough through the mountains acts like a bellows, suddenly turning the Sea of Galilee into a frothy cauldron. Jesus and company are in the middle of the Lake, and the disciples fear for their lives. They wake up their snoozing leader in a panic. He does not tell them to start bailing out the boat or to put on their life jackets. He does not pray to God to calm the storm, as Elijah prayed for an end to the drought (1 Kgs 18-19). No, he barks out a command: "Be still." Immediately, the storm responds.



As one would expect, the disciples are stunned. Awestruck, they keep asking each other the same question: "Who can this be that the wind and the sea obey him?"

Here's the Holy Spirit using the Socratic method. He could have just inspired Mark to write "Jesus Christ is God from God, light, true God from true God, begotten not made, one in being with the Father" as the council of Nicaea confessed three hundred years later. Or He could have inspired Mark just to spell it out this way: "Jesus was no mere prophet, because none of the

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prophets, even Moses and Elijah, had this kind of power of command over nature. Only God, the creator of the universe, has that kind of power to alter nature by a simple word of command (Genesis 1).”



But no, the Holy Spirit, good teacher that he is, prefers to lodge a question in our minds that, like an itch, provokes us to dig through other Scriptures like Job and Ps 107, use a bit of common sense, and come up with the obvious answer to the question ourselves.

Somehow, however, the obvious answer seems to have escaped some folks. Like the founder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example. Or the author of the “Duh”-Vinci Code.

Evidently they also missed what Paul was trying to say in 2 Corinthians 5. Christ, in dying for all, let loose a power enabling those he died for to become new people and live a new sort of life, a life no longer motivated by selfishness but by divine charity. Because of this, he says, we no longer regard Christ by mere human judgment, looking at him as if he were just any other human being. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.



The “old” creation was wonderful enough, and can only have been created by God. If the new creation is even more magnificent, what does that say about Jesus, its Creator? Duh.

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