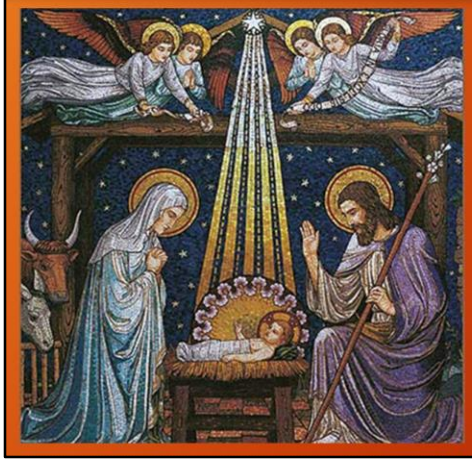
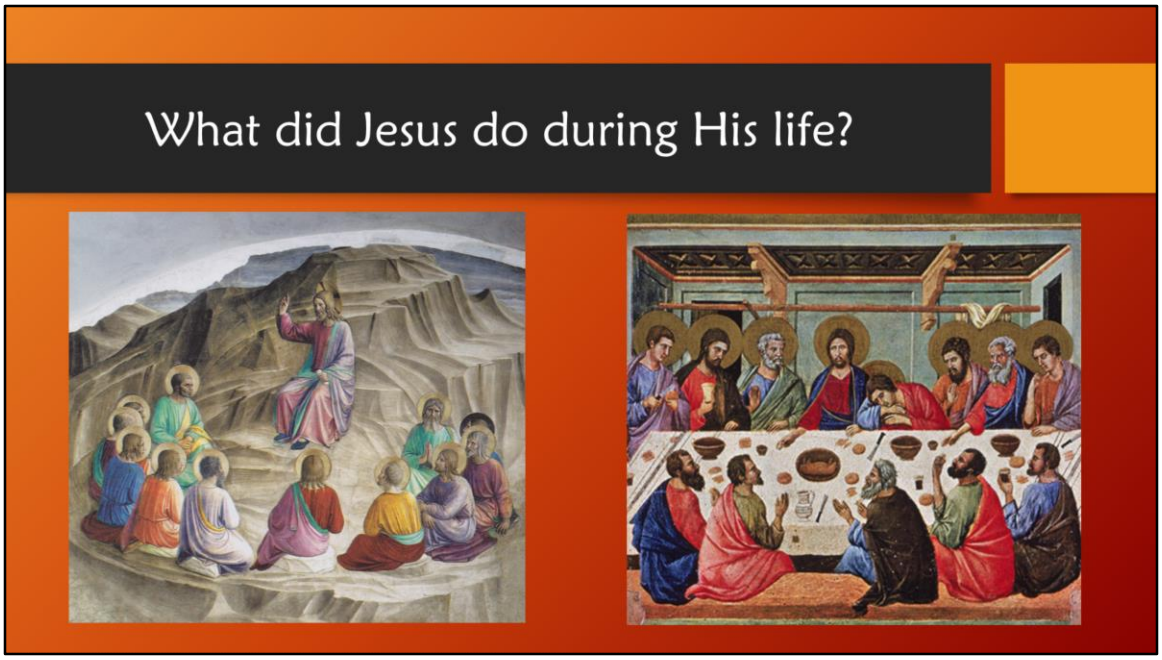
Where does the Church come from?

Why did Jesus come to earth?



- To teach us about God
- To reconcile us to God by offering Himself as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins
- To be a model of holiness for us
- To open for us the way to Heaven



During His public ministry, Jesus passed His teaching on to His disciples, and furthermore told them to tell others what He had taught them. He also commissioned them to celebrate the sacraments (such as the Holy Eucharist, given at the Last Supper the night before He died), commanding the disciples to use them to pass on His grace. This shows that Jesus meant to start something that would continue after His time on earth, to pass on His teachings and celebrate the sacraments.

Jesus ensures the continuation of His work

Jesus made His disciple Simon the first pope: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven.

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Jesus established the Church to continue His work. He made His disciple Simon, whom He renamed Peter, the head of the disciples, as shown in this Scripture passage from Mt. 16.

The Beginnings of the Church

After Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension, the disciples spread throughout the known world, sharing what they had been taught

The disciples spread throughout the known world, forming communities based on Jesus' teaching, and celebrating the sacraments in them such as the Holy Eucharist (Mass). Originally the apostles were the heads of the churches in local communities; later, as they died and as the Church continued to spread, they appointed successors, each of which was called an *episkopos* (overseer), which word is the origin of the word *bishop*.

The Early Church faces Persecution

For almost the first three centuries of the Church's existence (until A.D. 313 in the Roman Empire), Christians were persecuted for their belief in Christ. St. Peter ultimately went to Rome, and was crucified there – upside down at his own request, because he said he was not worthy to die in the same way as Jesus. Other Christians, believing in what they had been taught and given courage by their sacrifices for Jesus, also gave up their lives, rather than their faith.