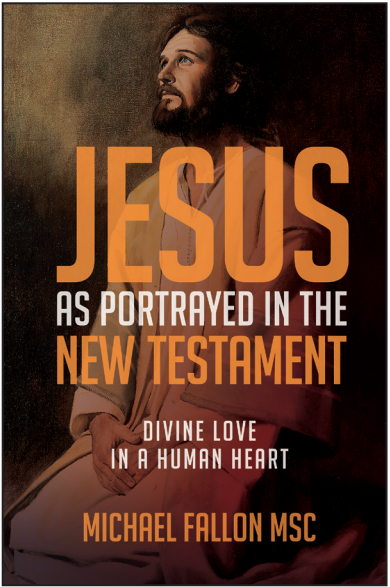


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Jesus as Portrayed in the New Testament

Divine love in a human heart



**JESUS AS PORTRAYED
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**
Divine love in a human heart
Michael Fallon MSC
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But who do you say that I am? (Matthew 16:15)

Jesus' question to Peter and the others is one that every disciple needs to consider, a question that is as old as the Christian tradition. And behind the question an even deeper and challenging one: Who is God?

Michael Fallon argues that the response to both questions must be informed by how we read the New Testament. There, we find the portrait of a man who lived and died in our world, a human being like ourselves, someone recognised by his followers as free from the fear of God or other people – someone who taught us to respond to the divine, someone in whom they acknowledged the human expression (the incarnation) of God.

The author gladly accepts that the historical Jesus has been distorted in many ways through the centuries, with the consequence that often the Jesus presented by Christians has failed to connect with people's life-questions, as if he had lived in a world unlike our own, without doubt or struggle, without insecurity or uncertainty. A life so unlike our own as to make him inaccessible and unreal.

He argues to the contrary. The Jesus portrayed in the New Testament lived in a real world. He was concerned with real people, naming and opposing anything that made it difficult for people to live. In so doing, he incurred opposition and rejection; hence his death. But he also won the confidence of the oppressed. They trusted him, and so learned to trust God, and to believe in themselves, in their world and their future. This was because Jesus revealed the powerful love of the redeemer God.

This is the challenge to us, his followers. Our world has so much idolatry, false religion and *even false Jesus*. *If we have faith enough to present Jesus as the answer to our modern ills, we need to make sure that it is the real Jesus of Nazareth that we present.*

Father Michael Fallon is a Missionary of the Sacred Heart (MSC). Ordained in 1961, his ministry has been largely devoted to teaching and writing in the discipline of adult biblical literacy, with published introductory commentaries on all the books of the Old and New Testament. Michael is currently with the Retreat Team at Douglas Park NSW.



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