

# ADULT FORUM

## Rediscovering the Essence of Faith

MOST OFTEN WE THINK OF FAITH AND BELIEFS AS ONE AND THE SAME. INDEED, RELIGIOUS PROCLAMATIONS OF FAITH USUALLY PRESENT A LIST OF BELIEFS. YET, BELIEFS ARE CONSTANTLY SHATTERED BY EXPERIENCE. DOES FAITH PERISH ALONG WITH THE SHATTERED BELIEFS? I THINK NOT! NOR DO I THINK FAITH LIES DORMANT UNTIL NEW BELIEFS CAN BE ESTABLISHED. FAITH BREATHES ON THROUGH THE CHAOS, VERY LIKELY THE SUSTAINER OF LIFE AS OUR LOGICAL AND FAMILIAR STRUCTURES CRUMBLE. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS UNIQUE ELEMENT OF HUMAN EXISTENCE? CAN A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF FAITH HELP US HONOR THE GIFT OF LIFE THROUGH OUR LIVING?

THESE PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS WILL BE BUILT ON THE NOVEL *MARY'S LAMENT*, RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH NYCE. *MARY'S LAMENT* EXPLORES THE AGELESS QUESTIONS OF FAITH AND BELIEFS THROUGH THE STRUGGLES OF THOSE WHO KNEW JESUS BEST, HIS OWN FAMILY.

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS ARE CURIOUSLY SILENT ABOUT THE FAMILY OF JESUS. THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS COMPILED TO AFFIRM THE DIVINITY OF JESUS AND THE CENTRALITY OF PAUL'S MESSAGE OF SALVATION THROUGH JESUS THE CHRIST, AND CLEARLY SEPARATE CHRISTIANITY FROM JUDAISM. HOWEVER, JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JESUS WAS THE LEADER OF THE JESUS FOLLOWERS IN JERUSALEM UP UNTIL THE TIME HE WAS MURDERED, JUST A FEW YEARS BEFORE THE JEWISH REBELLION THAT INSTIGATED THE ROMAN DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. FURTHERMORE, ALL FOUR OF THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS AS WELL AS THE BOOK OF ACTS WERE MOST LIKELY COMPILED AFTER THIS ROMAN DEVASTATION. SADLY, WE ARE LEFT WITH LITTLE TO NO INFORMATION ABOUT THE STRUGGLES OF THE EARLIEST FOLLOWERS OF JESUS. WHAT WERE THEIR ISSUES AND HOW DID THEY RESPOND TO THEM?

WHILE PAUL'S LETTERS SAY NOTHING ABOUT THE LIFE AND MESSAGE OF JESUS THE MAN, THE GOSPELS TELL OF JESUS' ACTIVITY AS A LIVING HUMAN BEING. THE OBVIOUS TENSION BETWEEN JAMES AND PAUL, RECORDED BOTH IN PAUL'S LETTERS AND THE BOOK OF ACTS, SUGGEST A DIFFICULT TRANSITION FROM THE JESUS JAMES KNEW TO PAUL'S JESUS CHRIST. IS THIS THE SAME ANIMOSITY THAT STILL HAUNTS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND JEW, AND INSTIGATES THE VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION?

CAN JESUS' FAMILY HELP US SHED THE BARRIERS THAT STAIN OUR FAITHS?

**WHEN AND WHERE**  
**Sunday, January 26th at 9:00am**  
**All Saints' Church**  
**[www.allsaintsprinceton.org](http://www.allsaintsprinceton.org)**



**Author Joseph Nycé will  
present this Forum**

