**The New Testament**

**Teacher Background**

Jesus was a Jew. As such, Jesus’ understanding of God was derived from and related to his religious, cultural and historical background and his experiences as a Jew in first century Palestine. Jesus drew on his Jewish background, the Hebrew Scriptures and his own experience, in reflecting upon and communicating to others his own images and understandings of God. The scriptures of the New Testament, or Christian Scriptures as they are sometimes known, were written in the light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. These Christian scriptures reflect growing understandings and a developing theology in the New Testament Christian communities that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah promised to the people of Israel, the Saviour, God-among-us, the one God had raised from the dead and so on. Understandings of God from the Hebrew Scriptures now came to be understood in the light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus - the Paschal Mystery.

Jesus called upon God as ‘Abba’ meaning Father, reinforcing his understanding of God as parent, one who cares, guides and calls believers to intimacy of relationship. Jesus’ response to his disciples about how they should pray to God is embedded in the Our Father, or Lord’s Prayer, with its abundant imagery relating to the building of God’s kingdom in the world, God as one who provides, God as one who forgives and calls to forgiveness and God as one who protects and calls believers to avoidance of evil and holiness of life.

The parables of Jesus in the New Testament provide rich material indicating understandings of God derived from Jesus and reflected upon by those early New Testament church communities. A generous, forgiving and reconciling God is powerfully imaged in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Parable of the Forgiving Father). God’s generosity and gracious love for all alike is powerfully evoked in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard where those who come at the end of the day receive the same wages as those who have worked all day. God’s loving concern for the wandering and the alienated is imaged in the parable of the Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine and goes after the one who is lost. These parables also give us clues about the response to the question where is God. The catechism use to respond to this question by answering, “God is everywhere”. In Christian faith God is everywhere in that God holds all things in being. God’s loving care sustains all things. In another sense God is everywhere in that for the person of faith, the Christian who sees the world through the loving and compassionate eyes of God the divine action in the world can be discovered everywhere even in the most unexpected places. In a further sense God is everywhere in that every person is potentially open to the transforming love of God.