

If Jesus is the presence of God for us, what does that tell us of the nature of God?

Jesus lived a real life of human suffering and death with an attitude of radiant love for his community. The effect of Jesus' life on his people persisted after his death and is the basis of the Easter event that ripples through time to our own day.

Regarding Jesus as the ultimate sacrament, the sacrificial / paschal mystery is that we can enter into his life and find a plan for the greatest exploration of the possibilities of life itself. Our decision to be part of this unfolding event in attempts to live outwards in imitation of Jesus in a mutually supportive community, acknowledges the tragic nature of life and having accepted that, loves beyond it.

If we define God as the ground of all being, then Jesus as sacrament is the prototype of living a human life fully accepting being as it really is, warts and all. This is quite humbling and threatening because I think we would rather say life should really be quite pleasant and unthreatening and that God should protect us from disease and ill fortune...and it is not. Our knowledge of God then grows out of the expression of our attempt to live as Jesus communities, conscious of the effect of our lives on others for good or ill and that often we are bound in love in the face of suffering. [reminds me of Hippocrates's definition of the role of a doctor, "cure rarely, comfort mostly, but to console always." – still true]

So if Jesus is the presence of God for us, that God is an acknowledgement that suffering and death are in the very nature of life yet God is a mystery by which this is overcome by love.