

## Introduction

The happy occasion of the celebration of a Year of Faith proclaimed by Benedict XVI with the *motu proprio* entitled *Porta Fidei* evokes immediately the expression: «I am the door» (*Jn* 10,9). In the following pages, we intend to make a careful examination of this ‘door’ in the hope of offering an opportunity for a choice, the result of which can be both that of remaining on the threshold and that of crossing over it since faith is and remains a mysterious gift for those who profess it just as for those to whom it is alien. Within the limits of this freedom, we follow the course of the history of the centuries-old but unexhausted search for the face of God, revealed by Jesus, in the grace of the Holy Spirit. Although believing that, through his Son, God has «opened to the pagans the door of faith» (*Acts* 14,27), Christians do not cease to ask themselves about the mystery which is disclosed in Jesus Christ. They, therefore, travel again continually along the path which leads to this door and which also starts from it.

Our enquiry is divided into ten chapters<sup>1</sup>. The first four tackle the *event of Jesus Christ*, by means of the history, the world, the intention and the destiny of Jesus, following the lines of historical and cultural research, with particular reference to the Gospel sources. From the fifth to the ninth chapter, we untangle the historical footpath of faith in Christ, where, within various frames, *multiple images of the Son of God* take shape. In the last chapter, we deal with a subject that has emerged in recent years, that is to say, the relationship between Jesus and other religious experiences, within the broader framework of the *mystery of the Saviour*.

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<sup>1</sup> This book is a summary and revision of our *Trattato su Gesù Cristo Figlio di Dio Salvatore*, Queriniana, Brescia 2012<sup>2</sup> [2008], to which we refer for the background and deeper treatment of the more complex questions, the sources and the bibliographical notes. In some parts, we follow the above-mentioned text closely. So as not to burden the reader, we have reduced footnotes and bibliography to the essential minimum.

Among the ‘words of faith’, Jesus Christ is the first and the last (*Rev* 1,8), the one from whom all discourse about God (and man) has its beginning and perfection. This is not our creation of the invisible, since no one has seen God at any time (*Jn* 1,18). It remains for us only to dare to search for his face, «looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith» (*Heb* 12,2).

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