

# What is faith?

Holy Spirit Catholic Church - RCIA

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# Opening Scripture Jn 14:1-4

- **Last Supper Discourses.** <sup>1</sup> [\[a\]](#) “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith [\[b\]](#) in God; have faith also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> [\[c\]](#) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. <sup>4</sup> Where [I] am going you know the way.” [\[d\]](#)

# What is Faith?

## Some Initial Thoughts on Faith

- Faith is the essential component in our relationship with God
- It is impossible to have a two-way relationship with God without faith, for without faith, we are unable to return the love God gives to us
- Faith, in its many forms, will be an integral part of every session we have in RCIA

# What is Faith?

## Some Initial Thoughts on Faith

- Through the experience of RCIA, faith will become an integral part of your life
- Growing your faith is the “work” done in RCIA
- This work will continue for the rest of your life and will be nurtured by the fullness of the revelation of God expressed through the Catholic Church

# What is Faith?

## Some Initial Thoughts on Faith

- Faith is an all-embracing theme intricately intertwined with our relationship with God
- The Symbolon video shows us some of these many different aspects of faith. We will attempt to show some others here
- Much of the following is taken from: “United States Catholic Catechism for Adults,” 2019, USCCB, p 36-47

# What is Faith?

## Some Initial Thoughts on Faith

“By his Revelation, ‘the invisible God from the fullness of his love, addresses man as his friends, and moves among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company.’ The adequate response to this invitation is faith” (CCC 142, citing DV 2)

# What is Faith?

## Some Initial Thoughts on Faith

- God makes himself known through the gift of Revelation (2 Pt 1:20-21)
- This gift is given in love and includes an invitation to respond
- Both the gift from God and our response are called Faith

# What is Faith?

## What else can we say about faith?

- Faith Is a *personal* adherence to the Triune God, and a free assent to the whole truth God has revealed
- Faith requires a certain personal response from us, which St. Paul calls: “The obedience of faith” (Rm 1:5, 16:26)
- Faith Is Also *Communal*. At Mass we profess our faith together and experience ourselves as members of the Body of Christ



# What is Faith?

## Faith Seeks Understanding And Is A Friend of Reason

- Faith makes it possible to begin to understand what God has revealed and the totality of his plan
- Faith and reason work together to discover truth
- Truth is expressed in many ways. Faith and the sciences are no more in opposition than poetry and science
- Scholarly and scientific research faithful to reason and moral law will not conflict with the truth revealed by God (*cf* CCC 159)

# What is Faith?

## Faith Seeks Understanding And Is A Friend of Reason

*Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth*

(CCC 159, quoting St. Augustine *Sermo* 43)

# What is Faith?

## Faith Is Necessary For Salvation

- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast”(Ep 2:8-9)
- “He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned” (CCC, 183 citing Mk 16:16)
- “Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation” (CCC, 161)

# What is Faith?

## Faith Is A Gift Of Grace

- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast” (Ep 2:8-9)
- God not only speaks to us and invites us, but gives us the grace to respond
- In Matthew’s Gospel, Peter understood Jesus was the Messiah, not from “flesh and blood,” that is, not by human reason, but by the grace of the Father (Mt 16:16-18)

# What is Faith?

## Faith Is A Free Human Act

- God gave us free will, so God never forces his truth and love on us
- Our faith response to him is made by exercising that freedom
- We are free to either accept or reject God's gift of faith
- Even if we do reject it, we are free to turn back to God and accept it again

# What is Faith?

## Faith Is Active

- The gift of faith and our response to it, is not passive
- To truly live our faith requires action on our part (See Ja 2:14-17)
- In active faith, we put into action the command to love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves (*cf* Mk 12:30-31)
- In faith, we continue to seek, learn, and live according to the truth
- With the help of the Holy Spirit, we make decisions in our lives to respond in harmony with divine Revelation

# What is Faith?

## Faith Believes the Message of Revelation With Conviction

- This message is the message found in Scripture and Tradition
- It is transmitted to us through many means, such as liturgy, prayers, and the Creeds
- Faith fills us with conviction because God guarantees the truthfulness of what is revealed
- The Spirit assists us to be believers.
- “Faith is the realization of what is hoped or and evidence of things not seen...,” the examples of Noah, Abraham, etc. (Heb 11:1-40)

# What is Faith?

## Challenges To Faith

- Our culture was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment, which professed that reason and common sense should be our only guides
- Its religious counterpart, Deism, believes that while God made the world, he allowed it to evolve without his intervention
- This influenced our founding fathers in a good way, in that they ensured our country was founded with religious freedom
- Over time, however, this freedom changed into a “wall” that seems to say that faith should have no impact on the state or society.



# What is Faith?

## Challenges To Faith:

- Aspects of Deism have been replaced by *ideological secularism* which states we are self-sufficient, self-explanatory and do not need religious faith or God to discern right and wrong
- We see this in such things as: radical individualism bereft of charity, abortion “rights”, Same-sex “Marriage,” Gender affirming surgery and treatments for minors, and more
- These ideas, founded on a humanistic world view, appeal to many, but fail to answer basic human questions, such as, Who are We? Where are we going? What is the meaning of suffering, evil and death? Why has modern progress, the enlightenment, not eliminated them?

# What is Faith?

## Challenges To Faith

- We need to boldly reaffirm our faith that Jesus Christ can show all of us the way—believers to a stronger faith, and non-believers to the beginnings of faith.
- Our faith must be centered in Jesus who is the “way and the truth and the life.” (Jn 14:4)

# What is Faith?

## Doubt and Nurturing Our Faith

- Read “The Healing of a Boy with a Demon” Mk 9:14-29
  - What do we learn about faith and doubt?
  - What do we learn about strengthening our faith?
- What are other ways to strengthen our faith?

# What is Faith?

## The Apostle's Creed (CCC p49-50)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Amen.

Questions?

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