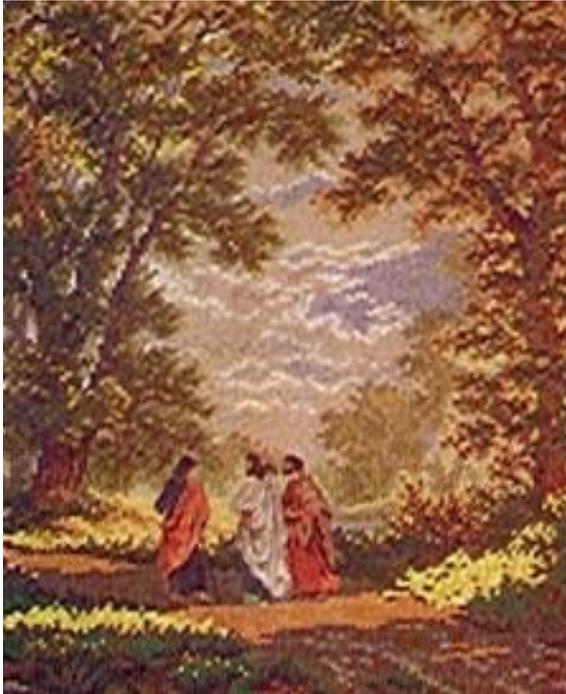


# ***What Does It Mean?***



# ***To Have Faith?***

*“On whom can I rely? To whom shall I entrust myself? Where is the One who can offer me the response capable of satisfying my heart’s deepest desires?”* Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day, Cologne, 2005.

*Compiled by Fr. Martin Pitstick, 11/11/2010.*

## **What Is Faith?** Quotes taken from the *Catechism of the*

*Catholic Church* (found online at: <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>)

### **Faith is necessary for salvation**

“Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation. (Cf. *Mk* 16:16; *Jn.* 3:36; 6:40) ‘Since “without faith it is impossible to please [God]” and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life “But he who endures to the end.”’ (*Dei Filius* 3:DS 3012; cf. *Mt* 10:22; 24:13 and *Heb.* 11:6; Council of Trent:DS 1532” CCC 161

“Faith is necessary for salvation. The Lord himself affirms: ‘He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned’ (*Mk* 16:16).” CCC 183

### **Faith is both a gift of God and a human act (in response to God)**

“In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace: ‘Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace’ (St. Thomas Aquinas).” CCC 155

<p>The first commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it. CCC 2088</p>
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### **Faith commits our whole selves (mind, heart and will) to God**

“Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God... it is a *free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed*. As personal adherence to God and assent to his truth ... it is right and just to entrust oneself wholly to God and to believe absolutely what he says.” CCC 150

“Faith is a personal adherence of the whole man to God who reveals himself. It involves an assent of the intellect and will to the

self-revelation God has made through his deeds and words.” CCC 176

“Faith in God leads us to turn to him alone as our first origin and our ultimate goal, and neither to prefer anything to him nor to substitute anything for him.” CCC 229

### **Faith is our response to a loving God**

God reveals his saving love to mankind, inviting us to participate in the very life and love of God that is found in the Trinity.

“The adequate response to this invitation is faith.”

“*By faith*, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. (Cf. *DV 5*) With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, ‘the obedience of faith’ (reference Rom 1:5; 16:26).“ CCC 143

### **A loving response to God means we nourish & protect our faith**

“The first commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it.” CCC 2088

“Faith in God’s love encompasses the call and the obligation to respond with sincere love to divine charity. The first commandment enjoins us to love God above everything and all creatures for him and because of him.” CCC 2093

### **Our belief in God must be *complete* (we don’t pick and choose)**

“Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith ‘man freely commits his entire self to God.’ (*DV 5*) For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God’s will. ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’ Living faith ‘work[s] through charity.’ (*Rom 1:17; Gal 5:6*)” CCC 1814

### **Our faith in God is safeguarded and passed down through the Church Christ established**

“The Church's faith precedes the faith of the believer who is invited to adhere to it. When the Church celebrates the sacraments, she confesses the faith received from the apostles.” CCC 1124

“The Church, ‘the pillar and bulwark of the truth’ (*1Tim* 3:15), faithfully guards ‘the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints’ (*Jude* 3). She guards the memory of Christ's words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith. As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith.” CCC 171

### **The family has the primary responsibility for the faith of children**

“*Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.” CCC 2226

### **Mary is the model of Faith; her “Yes” brought Jesus to the world**

“Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power (See: *2 Cor* 12:9; *Phil* 4:13). The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that ‘nothing will be impossible with God,’ and was able to magnify the Lord: ‘For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.’ (*Lk* 1:37, 49)” CCC 273

### **Can Non Christians be saved?**

“Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have *desired Baptism explicitly* if they had known its necessity.” CCC 1260

## Perseverance in faith in trial, temptation, and spiritual dryness

“Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. We can lose this priceless gift, as St. Paul indicated to St. Timothy: ‘Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith.’ (1 Tim 1:18-19) To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; (Cf. Mk 9:24; Lk 17:5; 22:32) it must be ‘working through charity,’ abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church (Gal 5:6; Rom 15:13; cf. Jas 2:14-26).” CCC 162

*Some seed fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Those on rocky ground are the ones who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, but they have no root; they believe only for a time and fall away in time of trial. Luke 8: 6,13*

Another difficulty, especially for those who sincerely want to pray, is *dryness*. Dryness belongs to contemplative prayer when the heart is separated from God, with no taste for thoughts, memories, and feelings, even spiritual ones. This is the moment of sheer faith clinging faithfully to Jesus in his agony and in his tomb. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." If dryness is due to the lack of roots, because the word has fallen on rocky soil, the battle requires conversion (see Luke 8: 6,13). CCC 2731

## Faith and Christ

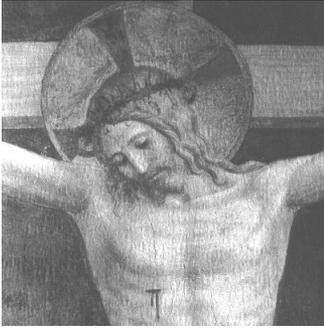
The following is an excerpt from *Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of Catholic Beliefs based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001), Peter J. Kreeft, 31

The Catholic faith has one answer, ultimately, to all twelve of these problems; in fact, one answer to all problems: Jesus Christ, the one answer God provided. “God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19)

Every Catholic home and every Catholic believer should have a crucifix. For the answer to all doubts, temptations, and trials is there (in the reality it pictures, not just in the picture of it). For instance, the problem of suffering and injustice. God’s answer is not an explanation

but a deed: he did not hover above it like a bird, but came down and shared it as a man, as a victim. Instead of telling us why not to weep, he wept with us (Jn 11:12). Christ is God’s tears. And Christ is the conqueror of tears – and of death.

[end of *Catholic Christianity* excerpt]



“Commit yourselves without reserve to serving Christ, whatever the cost. The encounter with Jesus Christ will allow you to experience in your hearts the joy of his living and life-giving presence, and enable you to bear witness to it before others.”

Pope Benedict XVI,  
World Youth Day, Cologne, 2005

*“If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation”* (Homily of Pope Benedict XVI, April 24, 2005).

Faith, however, must be lived out – for, “what good is it... if someone says he has faith but does not have works?” (James 2:14) True faith is accompanied by the “labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Thes. 1:3) Faith is nourished by the liturgical life of the Church, by daily prayer and reading of God’s Word. It is expressed in charity, in the context of a moral life that draws its hope from Christ.

*“O my soul, created to enjoy such exquisite gifts,  
what are you doing, where is your life going?  
How wretched is the blindness of Adam’s children,  
if indeed we are blind to such a brilliant light  
and deaf to so insistent a voice.”*

Saint John of the Cross, *A Spiritual Canticle*

# **The Necessary Minimum of Catholic Life**

[From the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2041-2043]

The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor:

**The first precept** ("You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor") requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord as well as the principal liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints; in the first place, by participating in the Eucharistic celebration, in which the Christian community is gathered, and by resting from those works and activities which could impede such a sanctification of these days.

**The second precept** ("You shall confess your sins at least once a year") ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness.

**The third precept** ("You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season") guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy.

**The fourth precept** ("You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church") ensures the times of ascesis (self denial) and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.

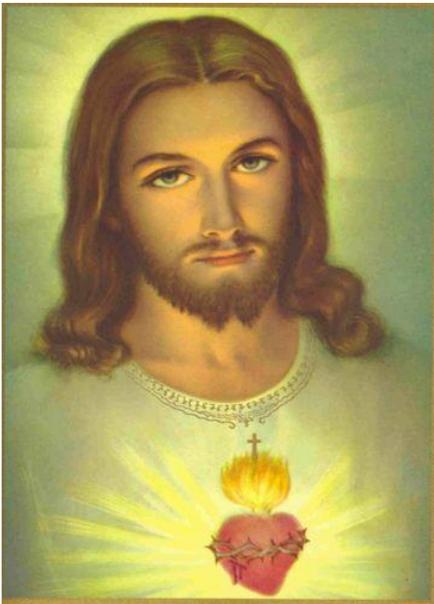
**The fifth precept** ("You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church") means that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability.

The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men. CCC 780
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No matter what our situation, Jesus wants to come into our hearts in a deeper way. He wants to share with us his love and forgiveness. He wants to heal us and make us whole - to give us new hope. The tragic reality of our world however, is that many don't take the time to think about God or to respond to his saving gift of love to us.

## **Will Many Be Saved?**

*“And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.' He will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity!' There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.” Luke 13:23-28*



*Jesus, I place all my trust  
in You!*

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