

CHAPTER ONE GETTING INTO THE BOAT

A. The Call of Peter and Andrew

1. The call to discipleship brings us to the unknown

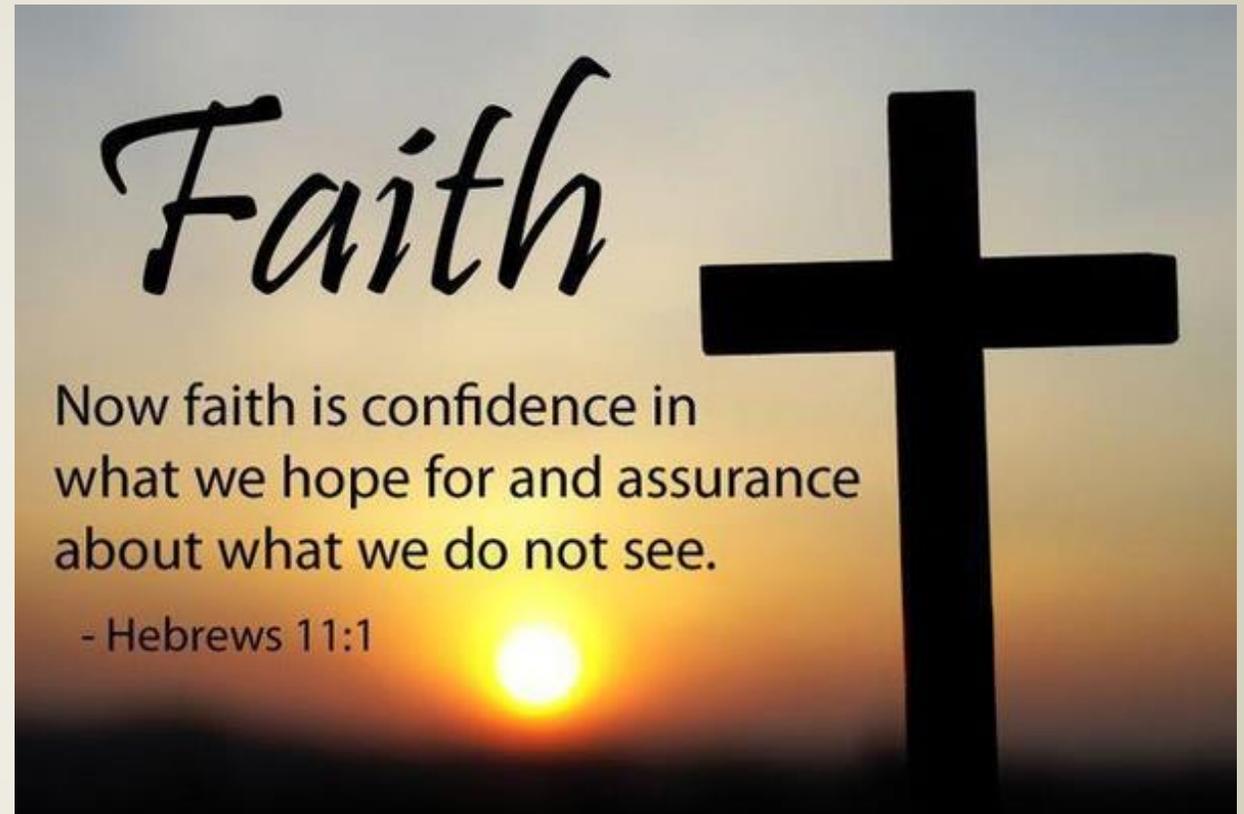
2. We do not know what lies beneath the vast ocean as we look from the shore or know what God has in store for us in our journey on earth.

3. What is faith?



B. The paths of faith

1. Theism- A person who believes in God
2. Atheism- A person who does not believe in God
3. Agnostic - A person concludes that there is not enough evidence knowledge to believe in God
4. Indifference - Apathy displaces any possibility of faith



C. Saint Thomas Aquinas

One of the greatest minds in the Church

Developed the Fives Ways to believe in God

1. *Argument from Motion* – We came to understand that some objects are in motion. This occurs when potential motion becomes actual motion. Since no object can move itself, we must assume that someone or something put these objects into motion. Since the sequence of motion cannot extend to infinity, there must have been a *first mover*. We understand this mover to be God.
2. *Argument from efficient causes* – Since nothing exists prior to itself, we must rely on a series of efficient causes within the world. If an efficient cause does not exist, then nothing will follow. We must conclude that a *first efficient cause* must exist. This cause is understood to be God.

3. *Argument from Possibility and Necessity* (Reductio Argument) – In nature, some come into being and go out of being. We call these *contingent beings* because they do not exist on their own and depend on another being for their existence. For each contingent being, there is a time that it does not exist. So we can assume that there possibly was a time when nothing existed. However, there must be one being that exists on its own power and is not contingent on another for its existence. We refer to this being as God.



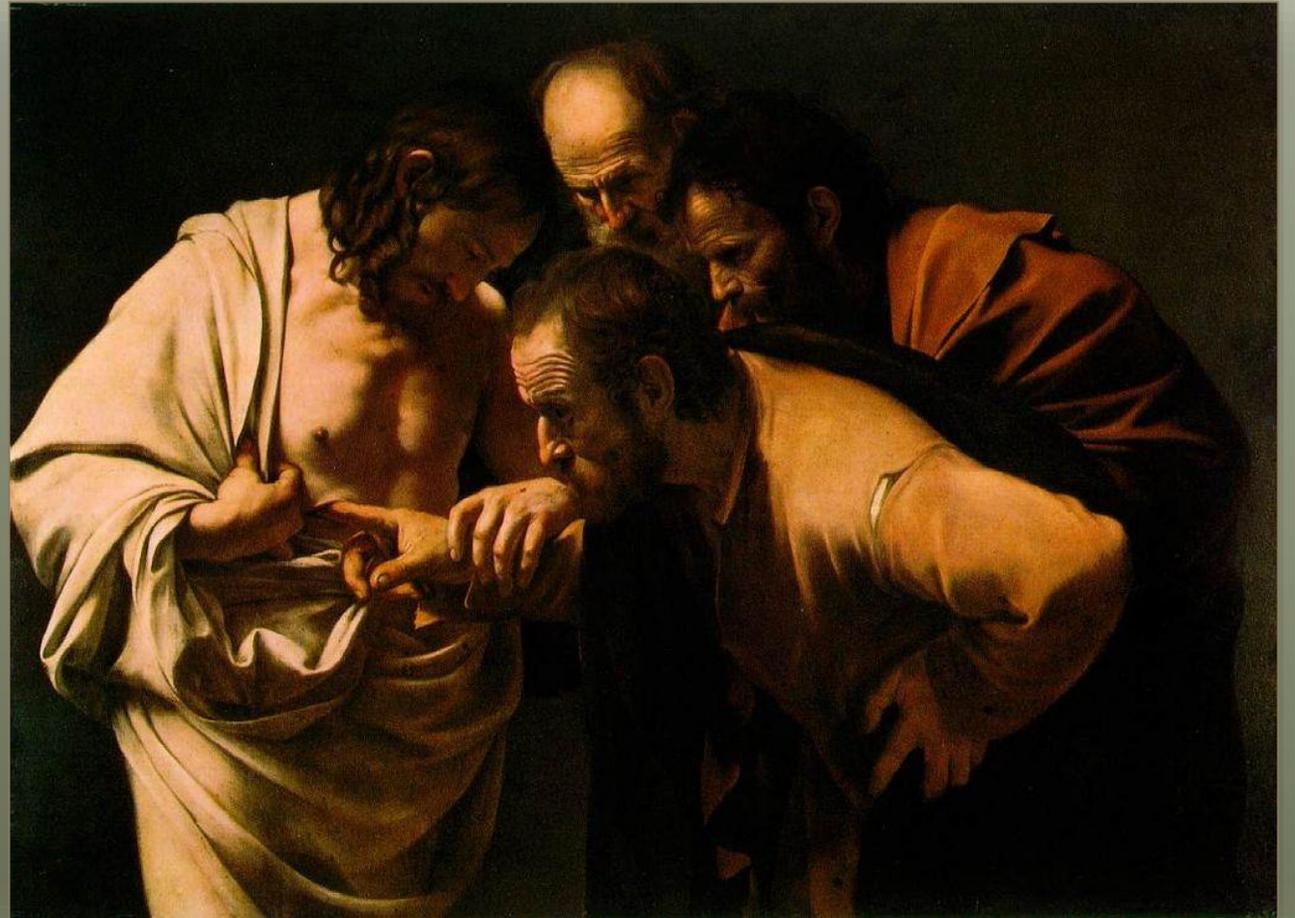
4. *Argument from Gradation of Being* – There is a gradation or hierarchy found in all things. (Meaning that some things have more value or goodness than others.) We may assume that the highest being in each genus or order is the cause of all in that genus. Therefore, there must exist a being which is higher than all others that caused the existence of everything else. We call this being God.

5. *Argument from Design* – Most natural objects have an arrangement and work towards an end or goal. Since many objects lack knowledge or intelligence, there must exist some intelligent driving force pushing it towards its goal. We believe that this intelligent being is God.



D. The Existence of Christ

1. The story of Saint Thomas the apostle Called “doubting Thomas.”



E. The Light of the World

Painting by William
Holman Hunt

The door to Christ
is only opened by
the individual.



Chapter Two

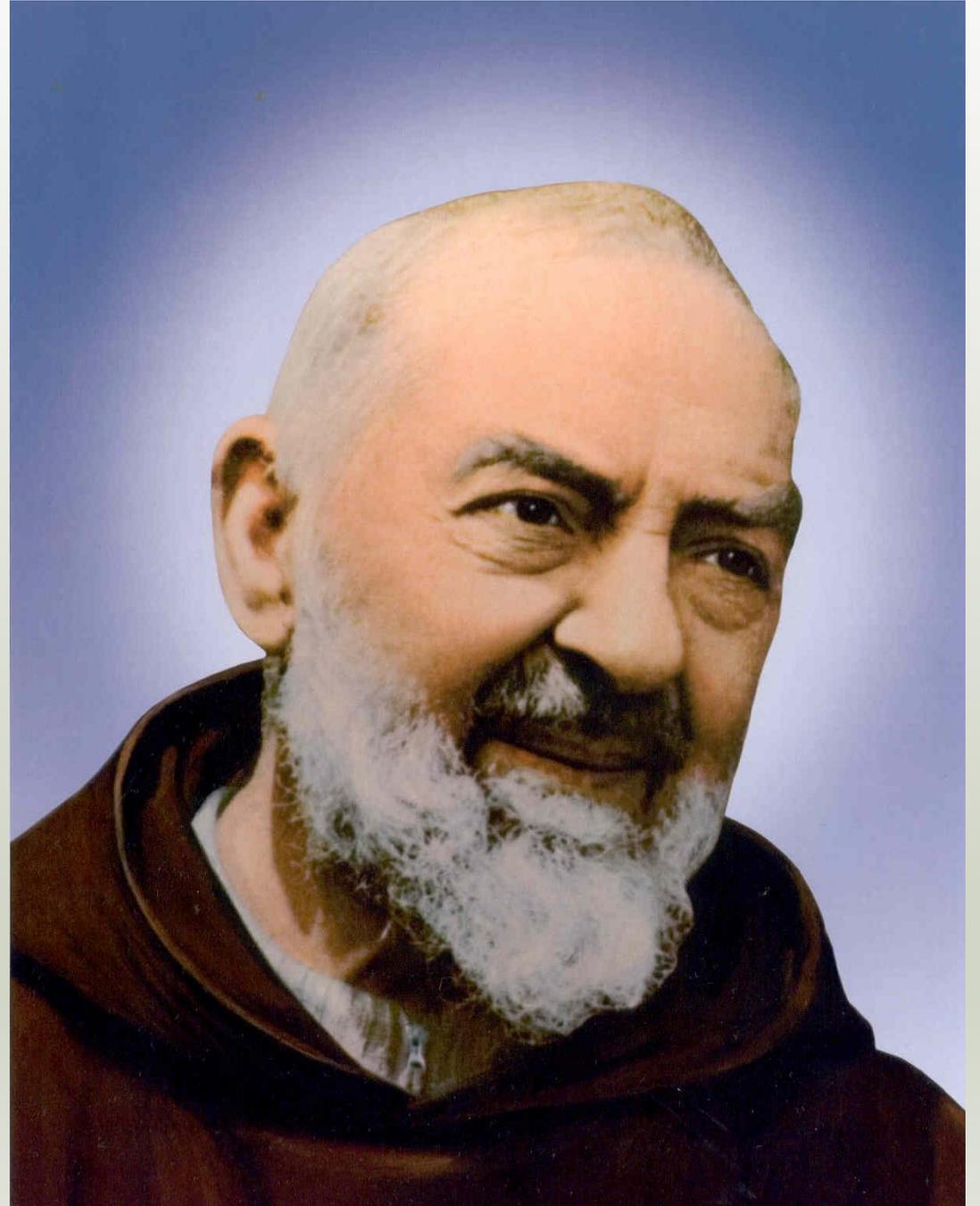
Why We Believe

A. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina

1. Thousands traveled to see Padre Pio as a pilgrimage

2. La Casa Solievo della Sofferenza (Home for the relief of the suffering built at therequest of Pio to assist the sick who made the journey to see him.

3. Pio had a vision of two armies when he was a young boy



4. He entered religious life at at age 15.

5. The physical life of Padre Pio confounded doctors:

- Stigmata (the wounds of Christ

- Fevers

6. Church investigates the miraculous nature of Padre Pio

7. Spent 15-18 hours a day in confession.

Gift of reading souls.

Story of Joe Greco



8. Gemma Di Giurgo is cured of blindness despite not having any pupils.

9. Bilocation – Padre Pio was seen in various places around the world even though he did not leave his home.

10. Gift of aroma – Rose scent from wounds of Christ.

11. The life of Pio “put doubt in people’s disbelief.”



The eyes of Gemma di Giorgi with no pupils

There are four “motives of credibility” the Church presents:

1. The miracles of Christ and the Saints
2. The prophecies regarding Christ and the Church
3. The Church’s growth, holiness, fruitfulness, and stability.
4. The wisdom and beauty of revelation itself, and Christ Himself, and the Saints



1. The miracles of Christ and the Saints

- The Resurrection
- Fatima
- Lourdes

2 .The prophecies regarding Christ and the Church

The depth of scripture shows us the mystery of God

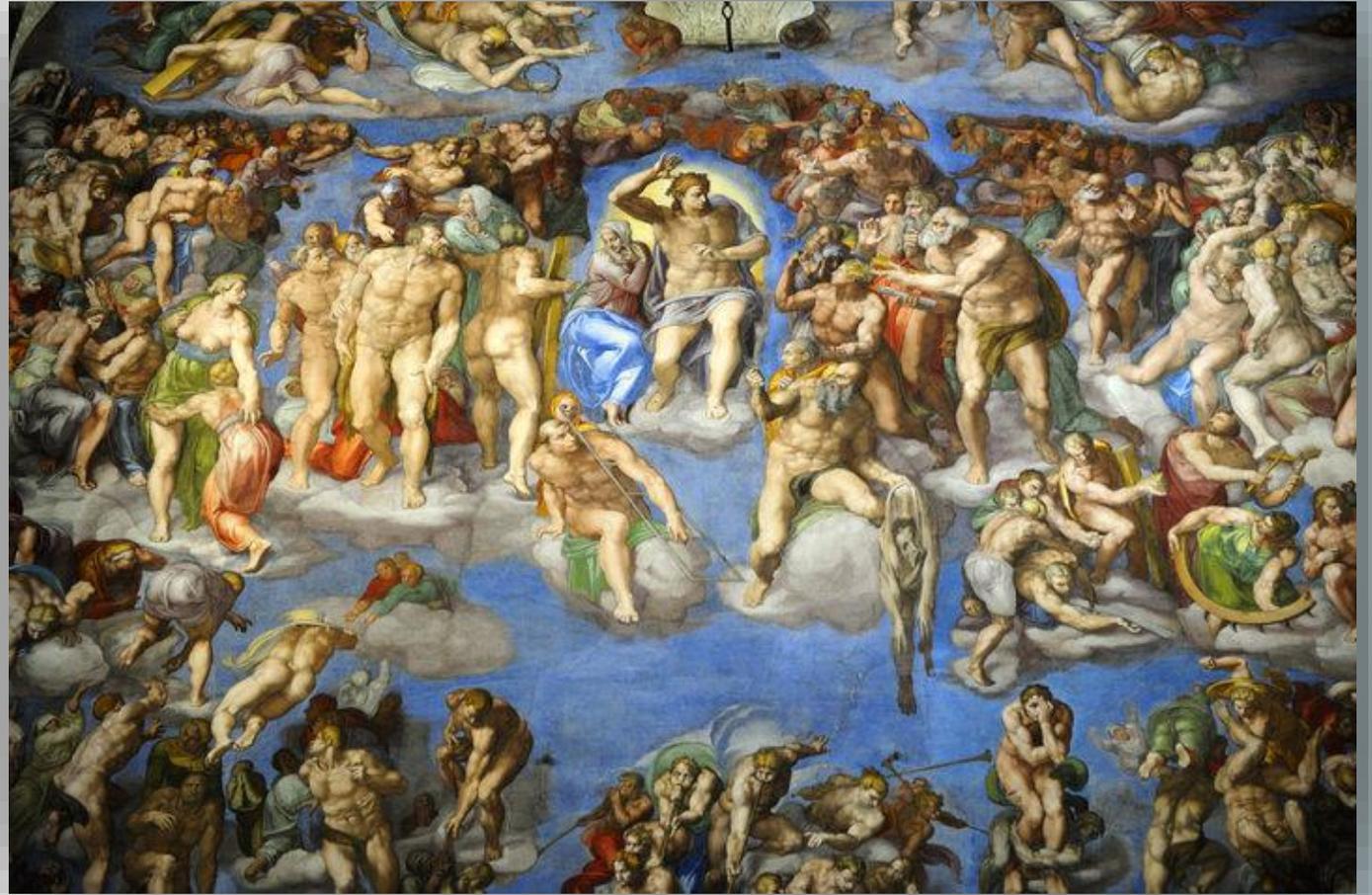


3. The Church's growth, holiness, fruitfulness, and stability.

- we observe the Catholic Church and look at how it has grown over the centuries, the holiness it has produced, the results it has produced in culture and society, and its stability.

- In your study of Church History you have seen the incredible art, architecture, music, and literature that has been born from the Faith.

- Even in moments of corruption because of the sin of humanity, the Church has thrived.



4. The wisdom and beauty of revelation itself, and Christ Himself, and the Saints

In the famous Regensburg Address of Pope Benedict XVI in 2006, we see this point made clearly. If a religion calls for spreading the faith through violent means, Pope Benedict said, this religion should be rejected, for it violates the natural law and human conscience. God's Law cannot contradict the human conscience.

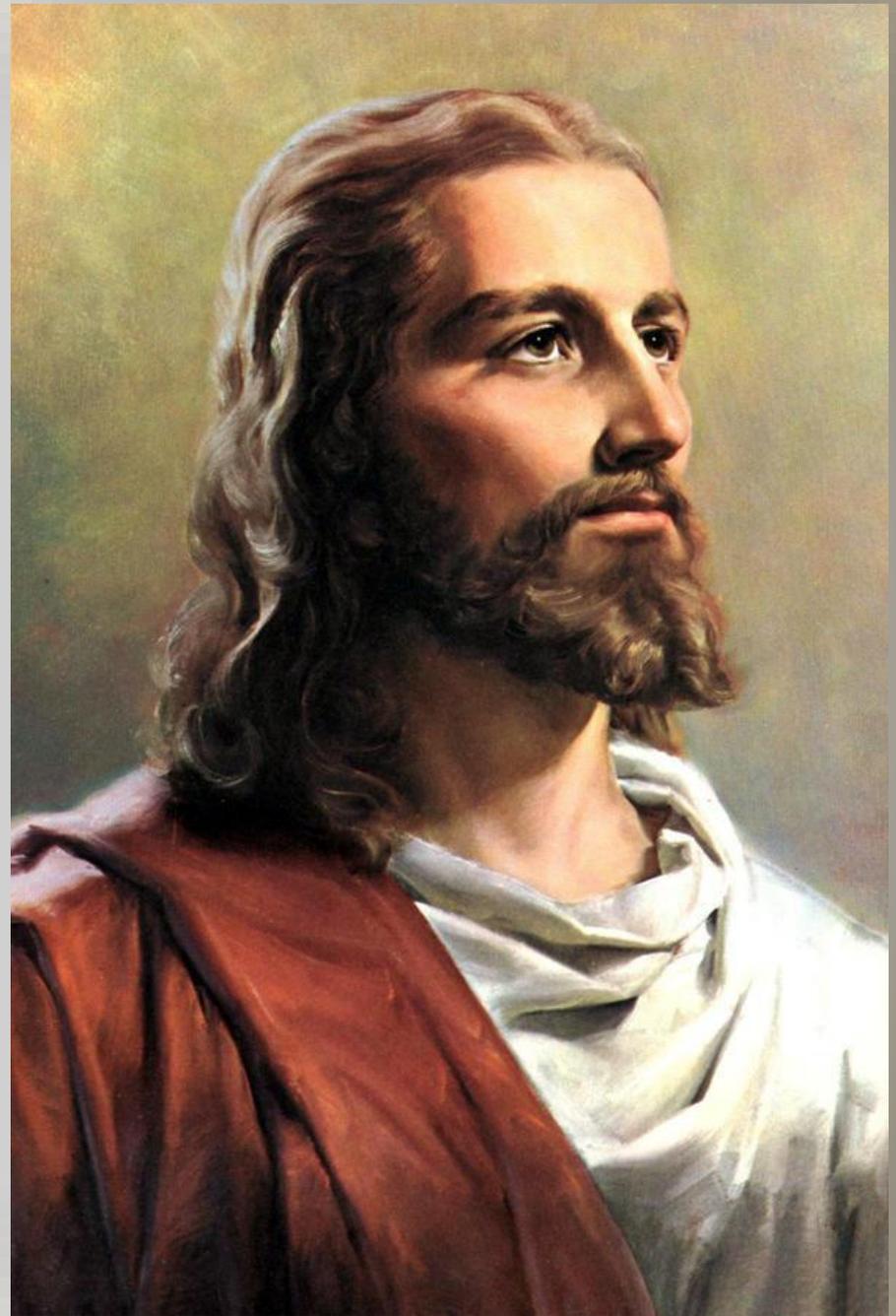


Chapter Three

Who Is Jesus Christ

The Church calls the integration of Christ divinity and humanity, the *hypostatic union*. Jesus, the second person of the Holy Trinity, came to earth and became flesh through the Incarnation.

Jesus became human through the *Incarnation (became flesh)* to demonstrate how we should live.



The human Christ painted a picture of our heavenly Father with mercy and forgiveness. Through his *parables* (stories used to teach lessons) Jesus portrayed an intimate God who had a magnificent desire to know us intimately.

Jesus experience anger, grief and joy. We see clear examples of his true human nature throughout his life.

The cross is transformed by Christ from an implement of torture into a symbol of self-giving love.



The Emperor Constantine established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman empire.

He sends his mother on a mission to find the true cross of Jesus.

Helena and her team of archeologists excavate the site of two temples built by Hadrian and discover the relics of the crucifixion and Resurrection.

On this site, Constantine builds the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre

1. *Chapel of the Crucifixion* – within this chapel is an altar where a silver disc beneath it marks the place believed to be where the Cross of Jesus stood.

2. Underneath the Rotunda, the tomb of Christ is enshrined with a stone *aedicule* (little house). It is here that we believe that the body of Jesus lay buried for three days until He rose on Easter Sunday.

3. *Stone of Unction* – Beneath a row of eight lamps lays a large stone slab called the “Stone of Unction” (the act of anointing). This is the place where the body of Jesus was anointed when it was taken from the cross.



4. *Chapel of Adam* – Directly beneath the Chapel of the Crucifixion (Calvary) is the Chapel of Adam. In this chapel, the lower half of the Rock of Calvary is visible. Tradition says that Adam was buried here. When the earthquake cracked the Rock of Calvary, it is believed that the blood of the crucified Christ reached the skull of Adam.

Other chapels and landmarks include: the *Station of the Holy Women* (where the Blessed Mother and her closest other female disciples viewed the crucifixion); *the Chapel of St. Joseph* and *St. Nicodemus* (where tradition explains that our Lord appeared to his mother after the Resurrection); *Chapel of St. Longinus* (which remembers the soldier who pierced the side of Christ with a lance and later became a Christian.)



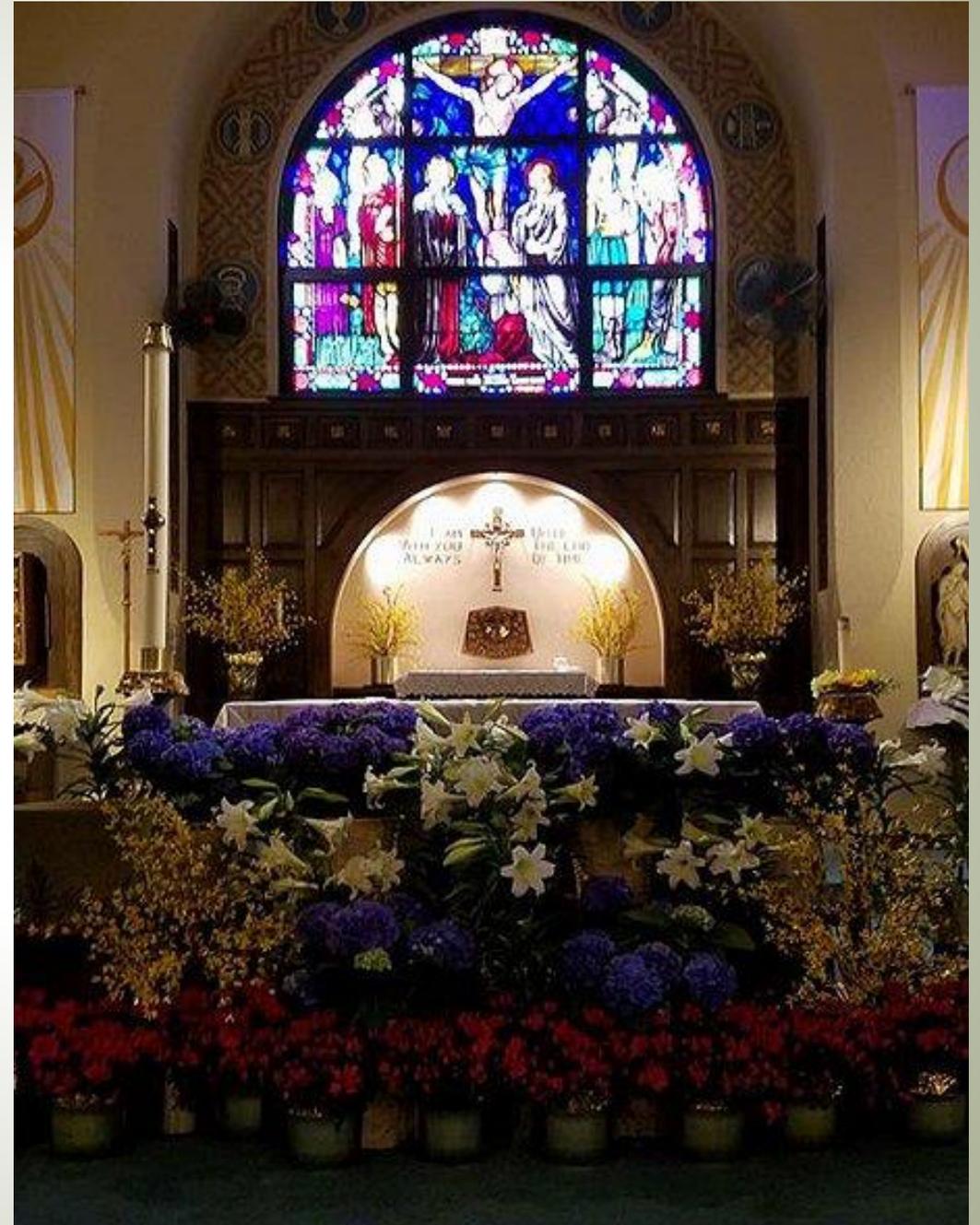
The Resurrection of Jesus changes everything for Christians. It proves that Jesus is who He said he was.

Death no longer remains the end...it becomes a transformation to eternal life. A life where there is no more pain and only joy!



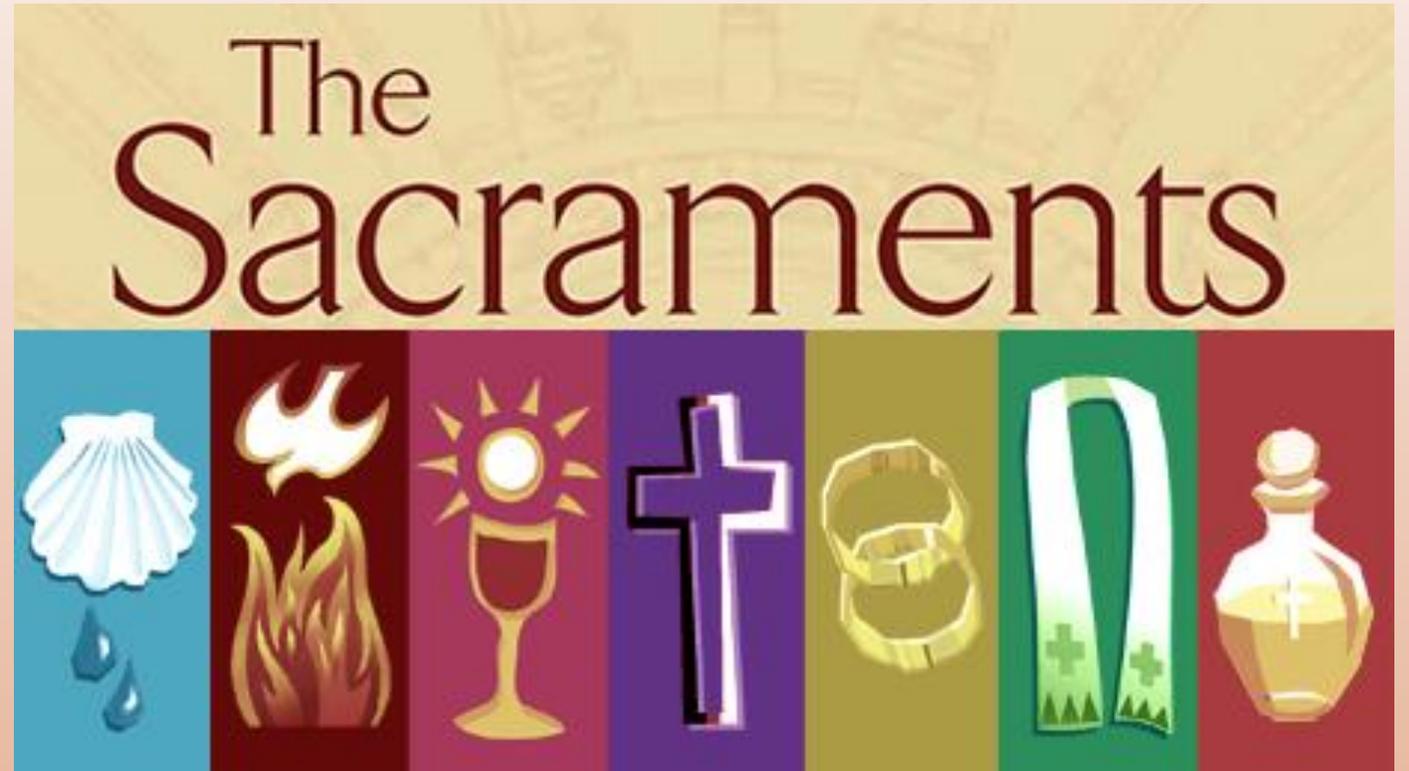
CATHOLICISM AND THE HEART OF WORSHIP

The word “*Catholic*” confuses many people. Catholic (which means *universal*) has been traced back to St. *Ignatius of Antioch* in the second century A.D. It expresses the worldwide nature of the Church. Catholicism means that Christ came so that the entire world may be saved and that all are invited to participate in his unconditional act of redemption.



The Church calls each member to continue to the journey initiated at Baptism through the rest of the sacraments. *A sacrament* (an outward sign of inward grace initiated by Christ) permits each Christian to grow in faith and love with the assistance of Christ's grace. The simplest and most practical way to grow in faith is to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

Reluctant churchgoers often cite a multitude of excuses: “the homilies are too boring”, “Mass is too long”, or “my church always asks for money.” Often the main reason for skipping weekly Mass is that it is just not a priority.



The Eucharist enables us to share in the sacrifice of the Cross. Holy Communion would not be possible if Jesus did not die on Calvary. The shedding of his Body and Blood makes the sacrifice possible. By attending Mass and receiving Jesus present in the Eucharist we recount his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Jesus knew that belief in the Eucharist would be difficult for some. In His “Discourse on the Bread of Life,” Saint John describes the reaction of the crowd when the Teacher explained His presence in the Blessed Sacrament.



Throughout the history of the Church, people have doubted his true presence in Holy Communion. Current polls state that 66% of Catholics doubt the True Presence. This may seem somewhat understandable being that the bread and wine that we received at Communion still appears to taste like bread and wine. *Transubstantiation* states that although the matter may be the same, the actual substance has been altered by the miracle of the Eucharist.

A small chapel in Orvieto, Italy holds the evidence of one of the many miracles that proves that Christ himself resides in the Eucharist.

Father Peter noticed that the Body of Christ had begun to shed blood on the altar cloth (or *corporal*) used during the Mass.



On August 18, 1996, Father Alejandro Pezet celebrated Mass in a church within the commercial area of Buenos Aires, Argentina. After Mass, Father Pezet was approached by a concerned parishioner after she had discovered a discarded host on a candle holder in the rear of the church.

Upon examining the specimen, Dr. Frederic Zugiba concluded that the flesh contained human DNA and was from the left ventricle of the heart. Because of the presence of living white blood cells, the cardiologist and forensic pathologist also stated that the sample was taken from a living person and someone who had been severely beaten in the chest area.



Flannery O'Connor stated, "If the Eucharist is just a symbol, than to hell with it!" Do we treat the most holy Sacrament as a symbol or as the true presence of our Redeemer?

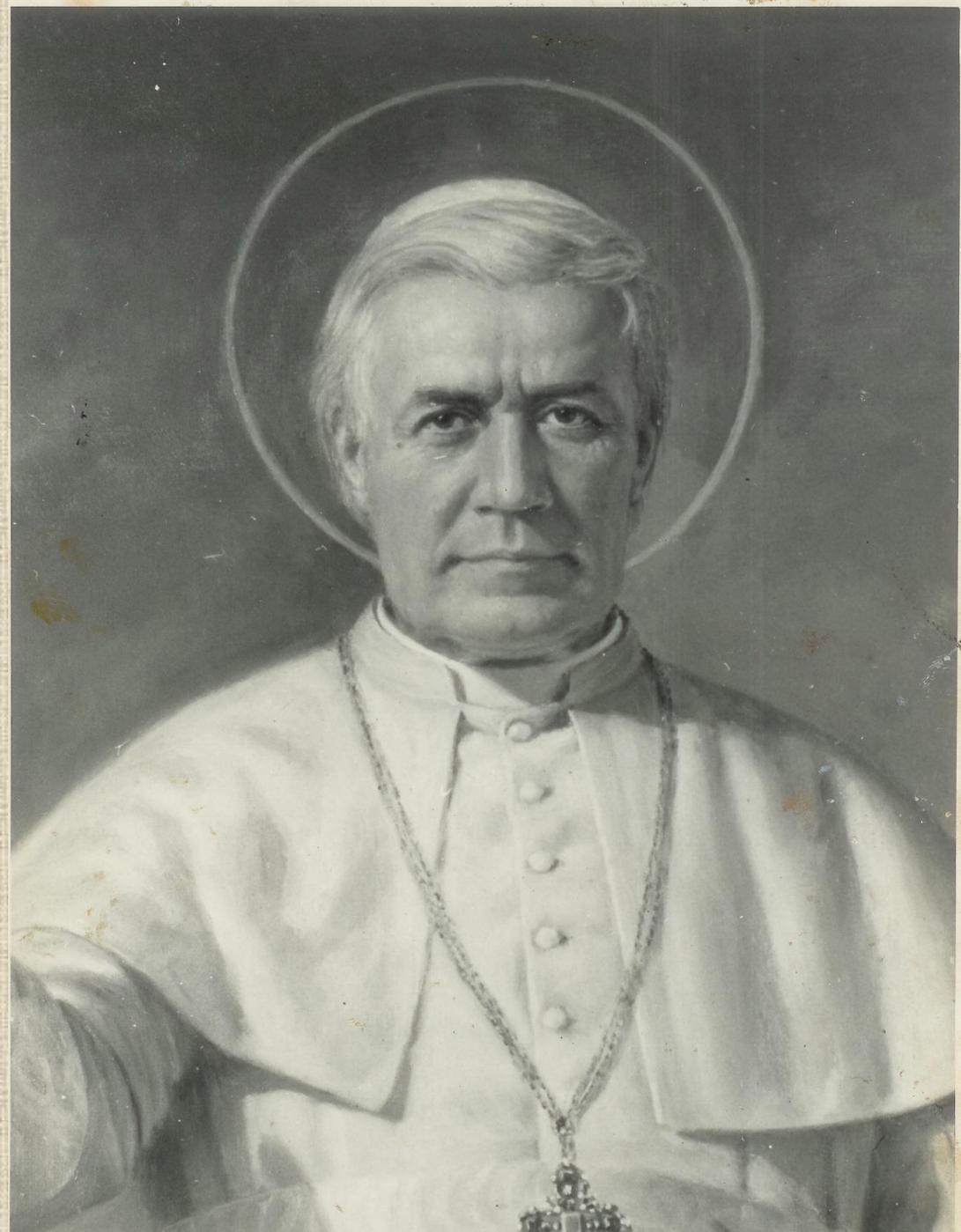
In his book, *Letters to a Young Catholic*, George Weigel recounts a comment from a Protestant friend, "If I believed as you do that Jesus Christ is in that tabernacle, I would go down the aisle on my hands and knees."



Pope Pius X (right) exclaimed, “The safest and surest way to heaven is the Eucharist.” The Pope understood that the grace received Holy Communion is immeasurable.

The Catechism calls the Eucharist “the source and summit of Christian life.” It is the source of nourishment. It is the center of being and of our existence. From the Eucharist, all things flow. The sacrament is also the summit or apex of faith. It serves as the high point that our relationship with God allows us to reach. The summit also permits us to see the world more clearly. We also perceive the world differently when in communion with Christ.

The Church calls each Christian to discern his or her vocation. A *vocation* (or calling) is more than a search for a job or a career. A Christian vocation is a call to holiness in which we serve God and others.

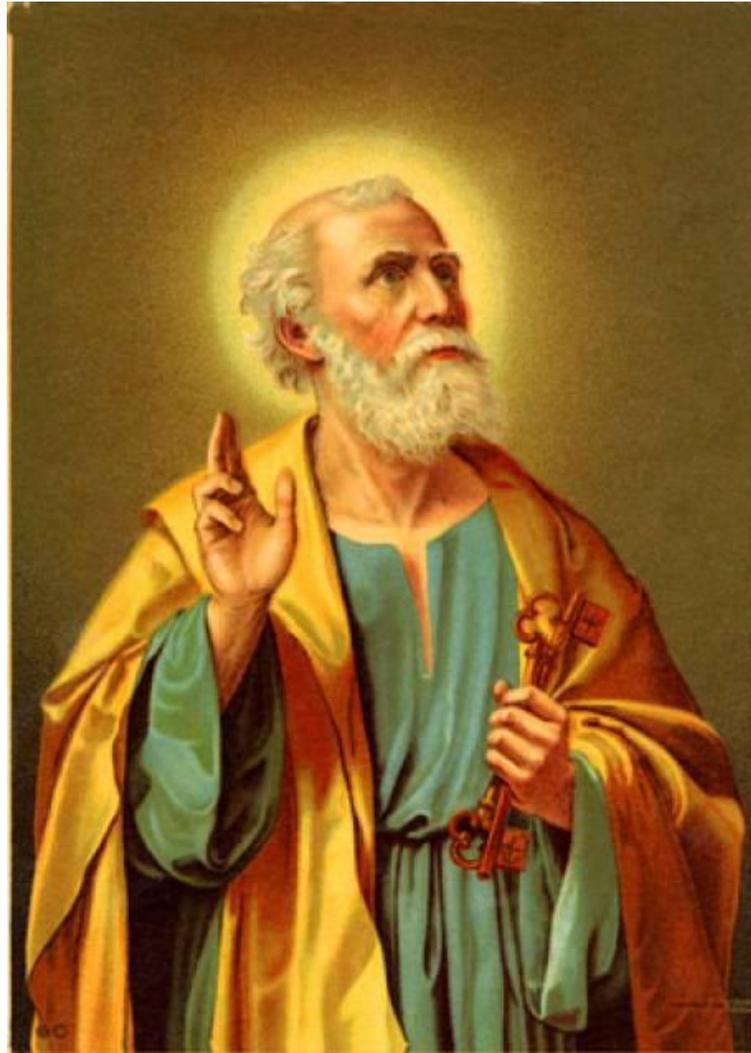


The Eucharistic miracles highlight the love of God and his heart that he wishes to share with the world. Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque had a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As a young nun, Margaret Mary had many visions where Jesus asked her to promote devotion to his Sacred Heart. Both the Eucharist and the Sacred Heart of Christ are profound, concrete examples of his love.



Saint Peter: Mission and Conversion in the Church

Peter's life exposes the true "humanness" that God accepts in each of us. Peter and the saints demonstrate the humanity of Christ's Church. Unlike the Blessed Mother, most saints undergo some type of *conversion* (or change of heart). Peter was certainly subject to the flaws that may derail a person from living a life of holiness.



One of the first accounts of Peter's oblivious nature comes when he encounters Jesus on the waters of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus prompted the fishermen to lower their nets in a specific location which yielded an abundance of fish (so much so that the nets almost broke).

Scripture was written to be examined deeply. To reflect on Peter's life without examining the finer details is to gloss over one of the greatest stories of failure and triumph in human history. One example is the story of Jesus walking on water.



Jesus tried to reveal his Passion, Death and Resurrection to His friend. Peter protested such a notion. He even went a step further and stated that he would never let it happen. Jesus called Peter “Satan” because only the devil would stand between God and the salvation of humanity.

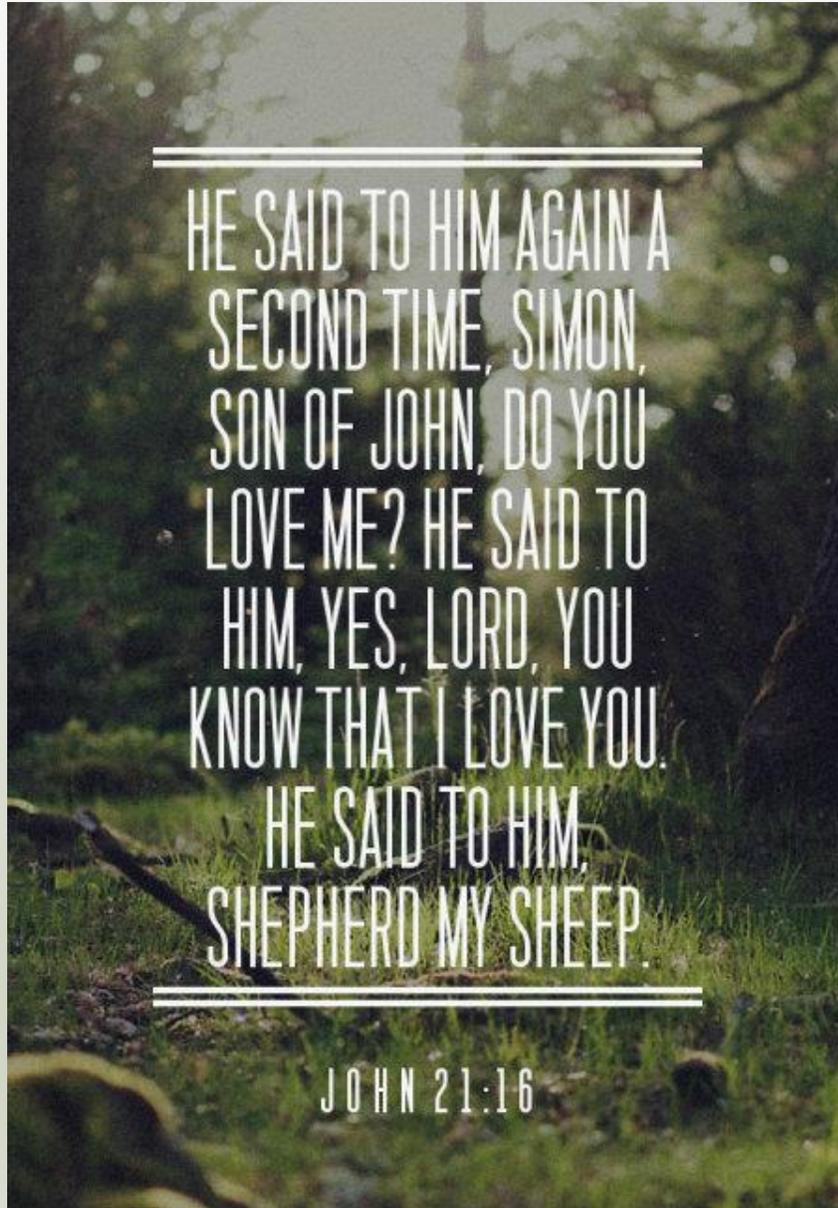
The pinnacle of Peter’s sinfulness occurs when he denies his best friend the night before he died.



Jesus encounters Peter after the Resurrection. He asked Peter if he loved him. Peter does not understand what the Lord requires from him. He is only willing to give him the love of a friend rather than the love of the Cross.

There are two things that should be remembered from this encounter between Christ and Peter:

1. Jesus descends to where we are, but never leaves us there. We do not have to be perfect in faith.



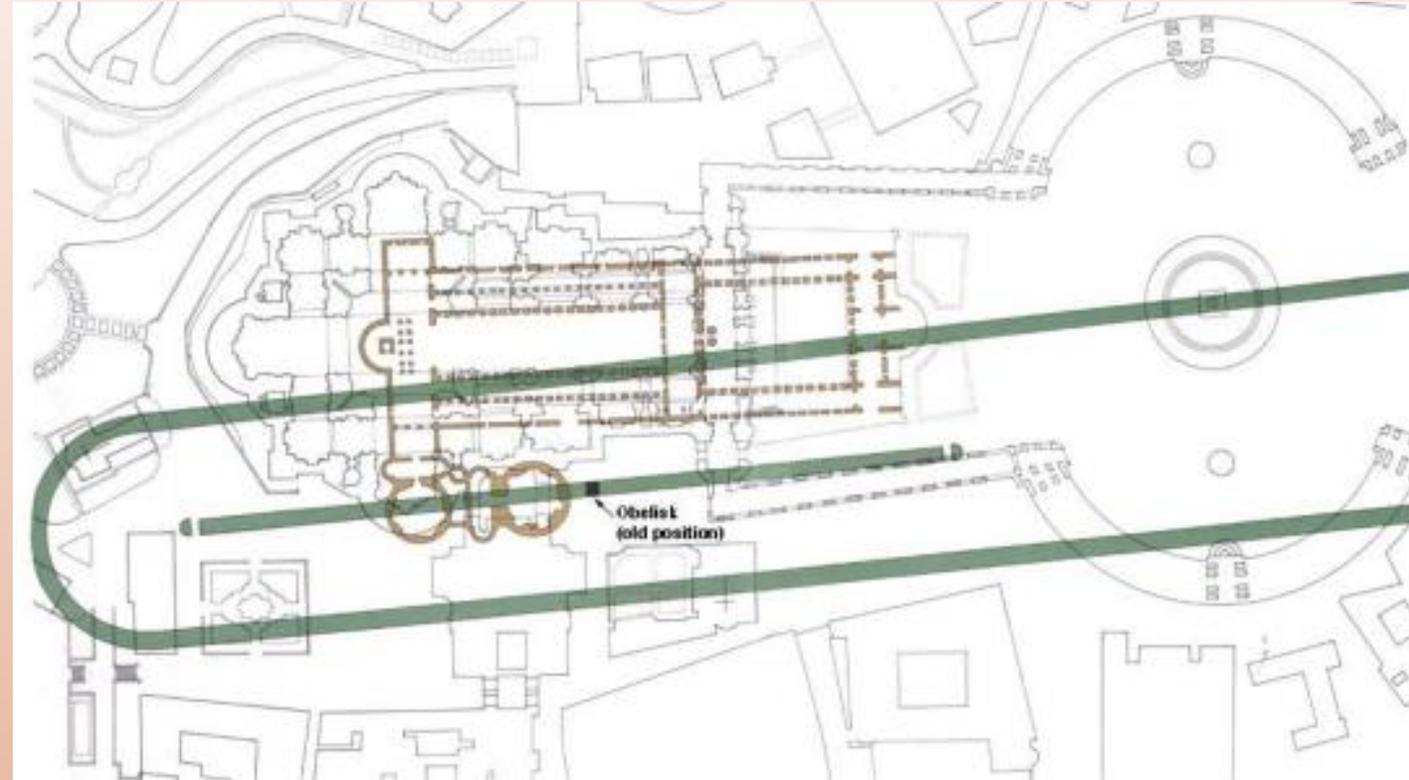
2. Peter represents all of humanity. At times, he was limited. He needed to complete his conversion before he was able to love Christ as he was supposed to do.

On his last journey to Rome, the Emperor Nero began the first widespread persecutions of Christians. Peter once again feared for his life and made his escape on the *Via Appia*. Tradition tells us of how the first pope encountered the risen Jesus as he hastily made his way out of the city on this major road.



Peter was later captured and crucified at Nero's Circus just adjacent to the Vatican Hill. An Egyptian obelisk stood on the central island (or spine) of the circus. As the disciple and the other Christians were crucified, the obelisk was probably the last reminder of Rome that they saw before their death.

Peter was buried on the Vatican Hill in what is called the *necropolis* (or city of the dead). Christians who came to pray at the grave of the first pope revered this site. The Emperor Constantine built the first of two facilities on the site.



Because of the sacredness of the area below the altar, most popes avoided authorizing any excavations beneath St. Peter's Basilica. In 1940, in order to accommodate the large tomb of Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII authorized excavations beneath the basilica with the exception of the area beneath the altar.

Pope Pius placed Msgr. Ludwig Kaas in charge of the excavations. He was the administrator of St. Peter's Basilica and close advisor to the pope. Kaas chose only people he would trust to do the actual excavations. He enlisted the *sampietrini*, a group of highly skilled masons, plasterers, electricians, plumbers and craftsmen who oversaw the daily maintenance of the Basilica.



In 1943, the excavation crew came upon what is called the *Valerii tomb*. Inside the tomb they found a drawing of two men. The word “vibus” (living) was written on the forehead of the first man. There was also a Phoenix (the symbol of the Resurrection). The man in the drawing below was depicted as an elderly man who was bald and had a beard.

They found this inscribed on the wall:

“Peter, pray to Christ Jesus. For the holy Christian men buried near your body.”



The team soon discovered the *tropaion* or “trophy like” structure. Papal records indicate that it was built by Pope St. Anicetus, ninety years after the death of Saint Peter (circa 154 A.D.). This victory monument was built to commemorate St. Peter’s overcoming pain and death.

The team felt assured that they had discovered the final resting place of St. Peter when they found graffiti “Peter is here” carved into the wall adjacent to the monument.

This figure was missing its’ feet. The relics found in the scavi (excavations) seemed consistent to the story of Saint Peter.



Relics are important to Catholics because they demonstrate the humanity of the saints. Saint Peter and the rest of the saints give other Christians hope of a life of virtue and holiness.

The discovery of Saint Peter beneath the altar of Saint Peter's Basilica reinforces the true story of a real man who tried, but did not always succeed in remaining faithful to Christ.



CHAPTER SIX CHRIST IN MIND FROM THE BEGINNING

The Torah or Pentateuch:

The main lesson of the story of Adam and Eve is that God is willing to allow us to reject Him. The tree in the garden is the expression of God's allowing us freedom. *Real love is rooted in freedom and never in mandates.*

Cain and Abel –sin continues



The Patriarchs:

Abraham- The people are given a Father.

Sarah- the faithful wife

Lot- Sodom and Gomorrah

Melchizadek -offers a Eucharistic sacrifice

Isaac- the son who would be sacrificed

Jacob- the deceiver who will be deceived.

The Bondage:

Joseph -brings his family to Egypt



Moses- called to lead the
Israelites out of Egypt

The 10 Plagues – demonstrate the
awesome power of God.

The Promised Land:

Joshua and the Judges

The Kingdom:

Saul- the misguided leader

David- sin and holiness

Solomon- the new temple



The Fulfillment in Christ

The new Adam – Jesus Christ

The new Moses

The Passover Lamb

The Redeemer



Chapter 7

Augustine's Journey: Seeking Grace and Truth in the Church

The life of Saint Augustine will become one of the greatest conversion stories in the Church.

Sexual promiscuity, alcohol abuse, theft...all became a major part of his life by the time he is sixteen.

Augustine's father encouraged him in this lifestyle, commending Augustine on being the "life of the party", and "lady's man".



His mother, Monica recognized the sin of her son. When she spoke about God, he refused to listen.

Deep down he knew she was right.

Monica would pray for her son. She would pray for him for many years, pleading with God that He would touch Augustine's heart.

Augustine reached his goal of becoming a prominent lawyer and rhetorician, first working in Rome and then taking an important job in Milan.

Augustine settled down with one woman, moving in with her and having a child with her, a boy named Adeodatus. His father Patricius would die, but not before Monica had convinced him of the importance of his soul, so that he received the Sacraments of the Church as he lay dying.

Augustine fell into the belief of Manicheanism, a form of Gnosticism, which taught that the material world was evil and the spiritual world was good.

The Manichees went a bit further, believing that there were actually two gods in the universe, one good and one evil, and each one of us, and everything in the universe is made up of one of these two gods.

Your own body, according to the Manichees, is made up of these two gods. Some organs are good god, some are bad god. Life was all about this cosmic battle between the two.



They taught that it wasn't your fault when you did something wrong, rather the evil god inside you.

Augustine constantly struggled with sin, ie, the pear story.

As Augustine matured, he began to realize that there were inconsistencies in the teaching of Manichees.

Soon a friend exposed Augustine to the writings of the great Roman poet and philosopher Cicero, along with the writings of Plato, the Greek philosopher.



In these writings, Augustine would make a great discovery: the reality that each one of us has a soul, a part of ourselves beyond our material body but just as real. He also learned from Plato that just as the body need certain things like food, clothing, and shelter, so the soul needs certain things, namely truth, beauty and goodness, also known as the Transcendentals.

This showed Augustine that our mind craves to know the reality of things, that the soul needs to be lifted beyond itself, and the heart seeks a satisfaction in perfectly fulfilled love.



Monica spoke to the charismatic bishop of Milan about her son. This bishop, named Ambrose, one of the greatest preachers in Italy, would someday be known as one of the great Fathers of the Church.

Ambrose provided various insights into the meanings of the Scriptures.

Augustine recognized Ambrose's gift for speaking, and so he would sneak off on Sunday mornings to the Cathedral to listen to Ambrose, without telling anyone.

Augustine could not ignore the content of Ambrose's powerful homilies. Ambrose began to weave the connection between Augustine's discovery of the human soul and its' needs, and those needs being found in a person: Jesus Christ.



Augustine started to read the Gospels, and he discovered a whole new world: a world that spoke to his heart. If Augustine were to find what his heart was looking for, he would need to change his life. Many of the old struggles with sin had not left him: desire for sexual satisfaction, alcohol, ambition, and many other attachments of his past life would hold him back from the freedom he was seeking.

Augustine broke up with his girlfriend and began to struggle to live a chaste life.

One day in a garden, Augustine heard children singing “Take and read” to the tune of a nursery rhyme. It inspired Augustine to open the letter of Paul to the Romans: “Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

Augustine experienced for the first time in his life what he said was the power of grace which transformed him from a weak, fragile, sinful human being to having the power of God, able to overcome all obstacles which kept him from living according to the plan God had for him.

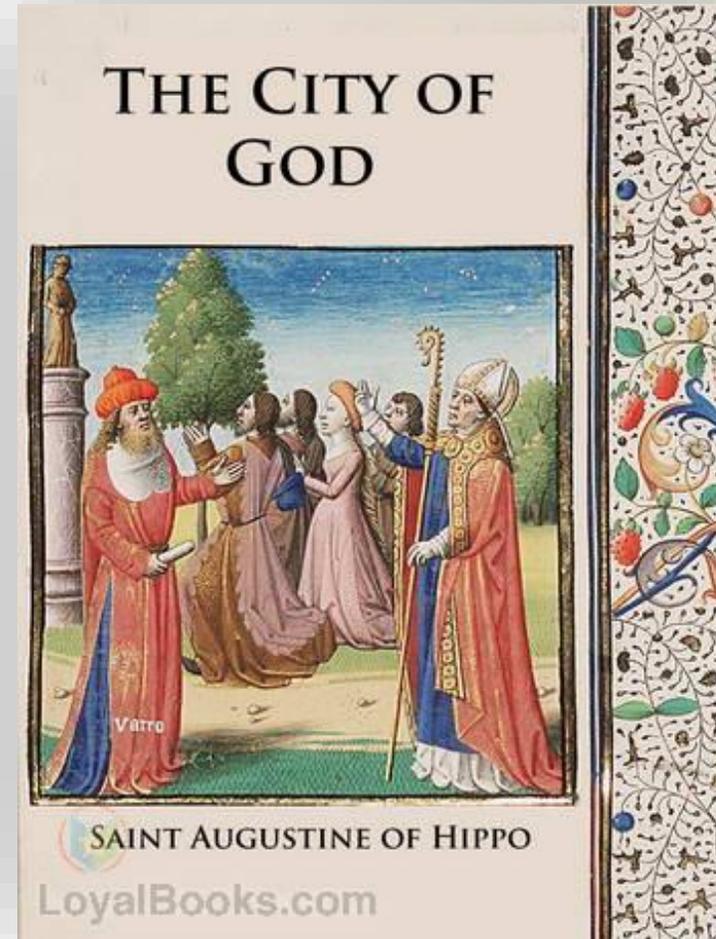
Augustine would finally meet with St. Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, and be baptized, along with his son, and his best friend, at the Easter Vigil in 387 AD.



Augustine became bishop of a city in North Africa named Hippo, where he led the city as well as wrote letters and commentaries on the Scriptures, as well as his famous book, *City of God*, a response to the Fall of Rome.

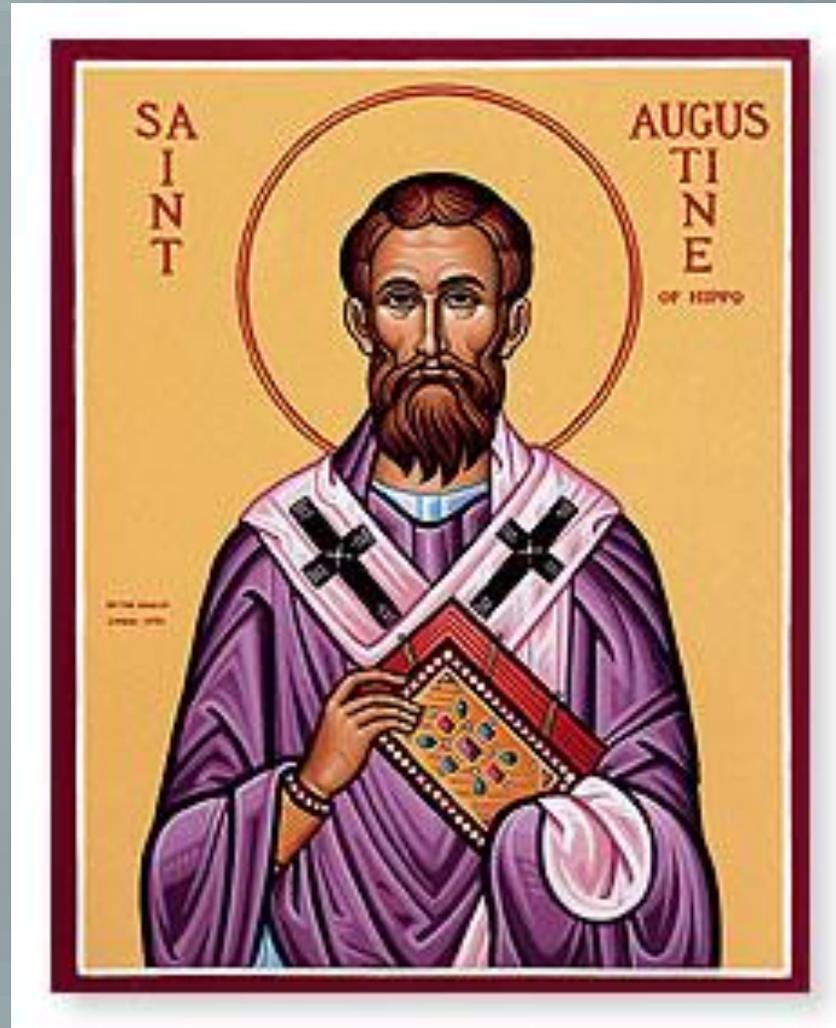
Augustine explained why he needed to be a part of the Church, and why we need to be as well. Augustine would say that God is inseparable from His Church. In fact, for Augustine, the main reason Jesus comes to earth is to establish the Church.

We define “Church” as the main instrument used by God to bring the human person into relationship with Himself.



As Catholics, we make the bold claim that our religion, our Church, was founded by God Himself, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ. This founder of ours, by His sacrifice on the Cross, has purchased for His Church two great treasures: Grace and Truth.

Saint Augustine will be known to the Church as the “Doctor of Grace”. The term “doctor” is given to certain figures who taught, in an extraordinary way, a particular aspect of our faith like no one else. Augustine will teach us about grace like no other figure.



St. Augustine described the Church as a hospital for sinners. If the Church is a hospital, then there must be a sickness that we need to be treated for. St. Augustine would say the whole world is sick with a terribly deadly disease: Original Sin.

What is the cure, the medicine? Grace.

Where do we get this medicine? The hospital known as the Church.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says: “Grace is...the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.”(CCC#1996)

It is through grace that God dwells within us, makes His home in our heart, “possesses” us, and then leads us into a deeper relationship with Himself.

St. Augustine spend much of his life opposing a heresy called Pelagianism, which denied the reality of Original Sin.

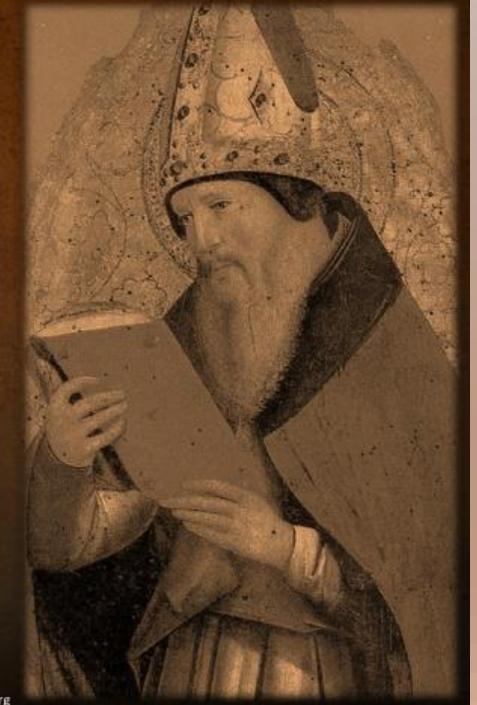
They believed that the Christian life consisted in following programs of self-improvement which if we worked at it long enough, we would attain spiritual perfection.

Pelagians didn't see the need of grace, they taught having a relationship with God consisted completely in one's own "will-power".

PELAGIUS VS. AUGUSTINE

Augustine opposed Pelagius and argued that Scripture clearly teaches every human is born in sin and their conscience is marred so that they, by nature rebel against God. In short, Augustine's position was that people do not save themselves, because they cannot, nor are they saved against their will, because they will not. God needs to make their will compliant: "Neither the grace of God alone, nor he alone, but the grace of God with him..."

At the council of Carthage in A.D. 412, Augustine won and had Pelagius' views officially condemned.



St Augustine, in his restless seeking realized that it was not he who had found the Truth but that the Truth, who is God, had come after him and found him.”

Augustine understood that the Church is the “custodian of truth.”

The Church understands that its mission to teach the truth doesn't mean just to pass on a set of doctrines which must be followed blindly, but rather to shed light on the truth for all to see and understand. It is the truth on not just how we are to live, but the truth about all of reality. Augustine himself was so firmly convinced of this truth, that not only would he live a life dedicated to this truth, but also spend his life teaching others about it, not only in his own diocese where he would be bishop, but writing literally to all parts of the world.



CHAPTER 8 RELATIVISM VS. THE TRUTH OF CHRIST

Relativism denies absolutes. It proclaims that there is no absolute good or absolute evil. Behavior is driven by the will of the individual and not by a moral compass that dictates what one should or should not do.

At best, the relativist concedes, “You live by your truth and I will live by mine!”

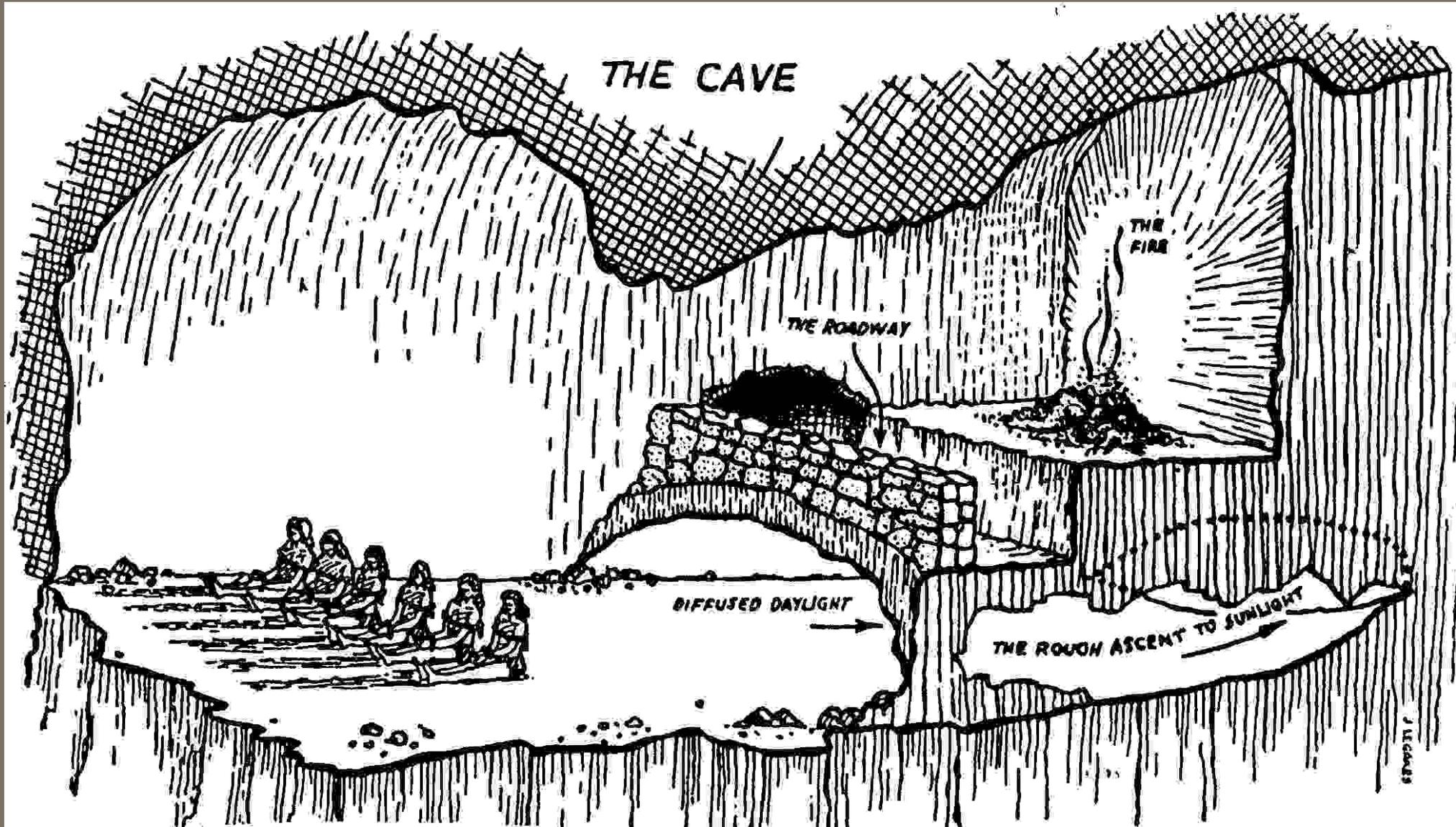


Relativism is incapable of differentiating between subjective and objective reality.

Subjective truth comes from within the individual. It is determined by the perceiver. Subjective truth can be obscured by bias, vested interests, and spiritual blindness.

Objective truth, on the other hand, occurs beyond or outside of the individual. It occurs whether we perceive it to be true or not to be true. Objective truth does not wait for the individual to prove it to be true.

Plato, in his *Analogy of the Cave*, presented the landmark illustration displaying the difference between subjective and objective reality.

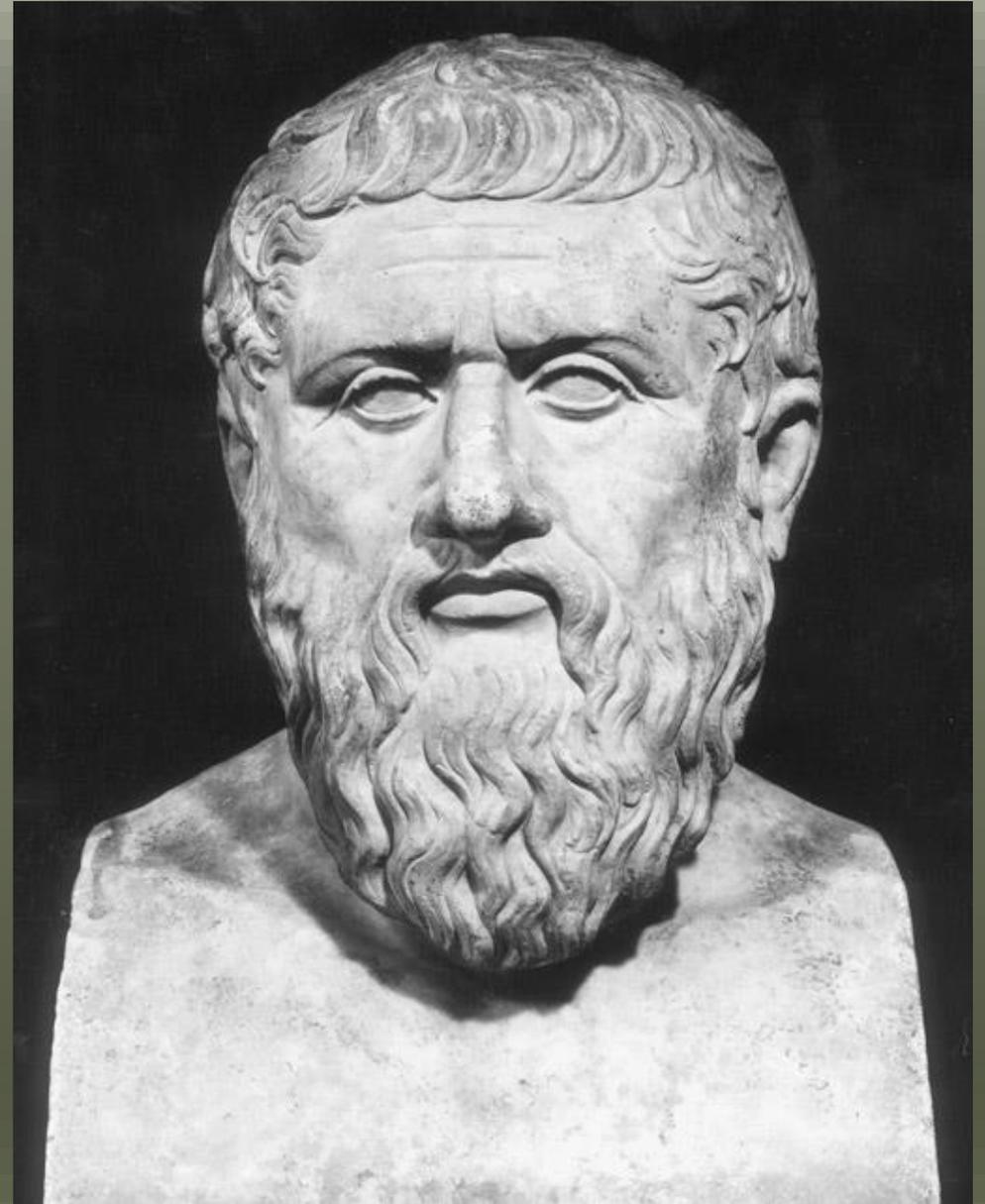


The History of Relativism

Modern relativism can be traced to several philosophical movements in history. Some scholars look to the sophists as the root of relativism.

The *sophists* referred to themselves as “wise men” or men of wisdom. Socrates will alter the term to “lovers of wisdom.” (Hence, the origin of the term “philosopher.”)

Protagoras (right) was one of the most notable sophists. Protagoras stated, “Man is the measure of all things.” His thinking placed humans in charge of law and morality. Even God is subject to the measure of men in this philosophy.



Medieval Christian philosopher William of Ockham produced the treatise *Ockham's Razor*.

The Razor urged thinkers to “never multiply entities beyond necessity.” In other words, people were encouraged to choose the simplest hypothesis.

When Ockham's Razor is used, parts of reasoning are eliminated especially when attempting to determine causality. For example, when people attempted to figure out why something is moral or immoral, they used the Razor to separate natural law from divine law. Those who wished to highlight the importance of religion, downplayed natural law and those who wanted to minimize the role of God attempted to erase the presence of divine law.



“All things being equal, the simplest solution tends to be the best one.”

William of Ockham

Modernity has altered the definition of freedom as “the ability to do whatever you please,” whereas, Pope John Paul II reminded us that freedom is “the ability to do as you should.”

Freedom urges each individual to search for the truth; to do what is good; to love all; to protect the weak; to seek goodness.

Relativism allows us to justify any action whether or not it is noble or irrational.

Many critics of the Catholic Church bemoan its “antiquated teachings” and point of view. However, the truth never goes out of style and what most people really object to is that the Church refuses to bow to modern relativism.

John Henry Newman

One of the greatest converts to Catholicism is also one of the most influential theologians of the modern Church.

John Henry Newman was born in England into a home where religion was not a priority.

As a member of the Anglican Church, he adopted the theological approach of Calvin. He perceived the pope as an antichrist. Newman continued his studies at the prestigious Trinity College at Oxford.

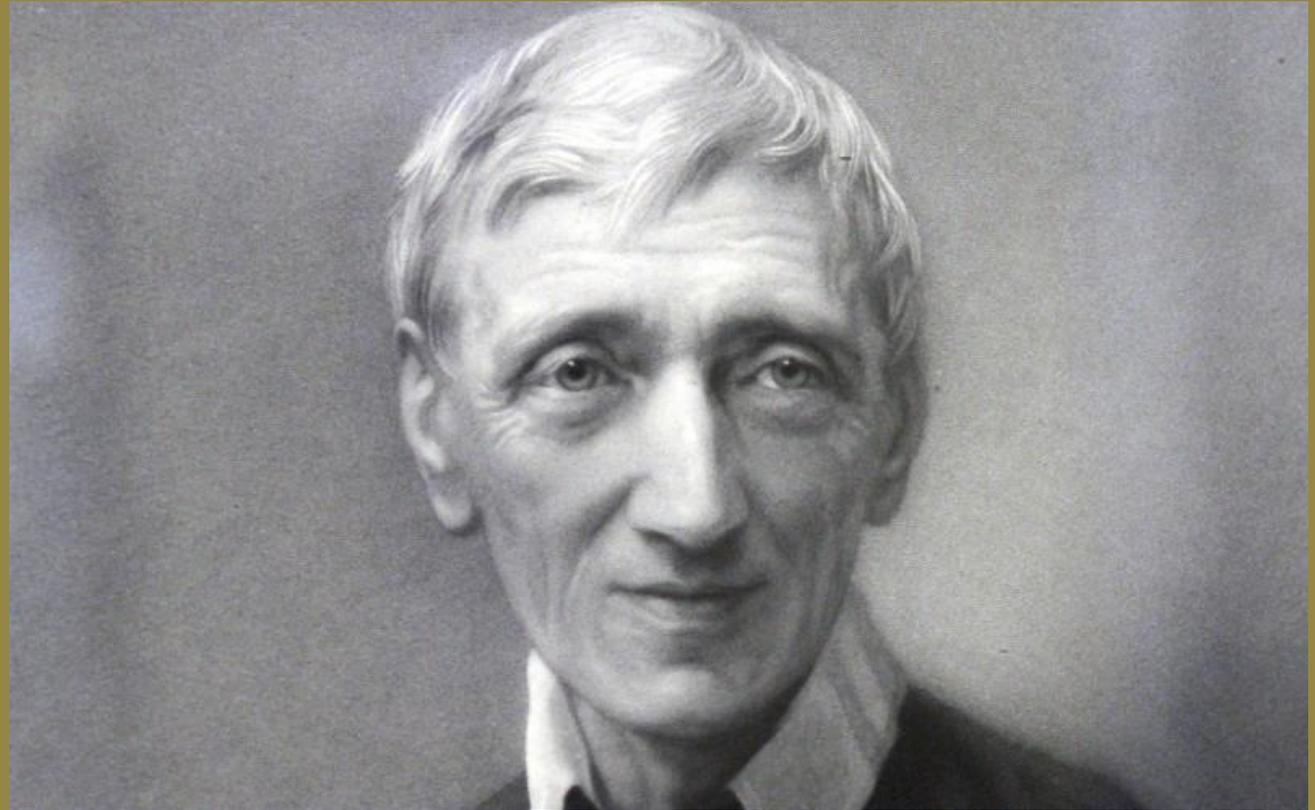
In 1824, Newman was ordained as an Anglican priest. He immediately commenced writing and became one of the most influential voices in the Anglican faith. Newman was awed by the lives of the Apostles and the Church Fathers.



Newman and his colleagues started the *Oxford Movement*. The movement hoped to strengthen the Anglican faith through studying and incorporating these fundamental Catholic elements into Anglicanism.

The more that Newman built a bridge between Catholicism and Anglicanism the more he realized that the members of the Church of England would never embrace the truth that he began to preach.

In 1845, Newman published his *Development of Christian Doctrine*. This work convinced Newman that Catholicism was the one true faith. It became evident to Newman that the Church was founded by Christ himself and continued its work in the world to his present day and beyond.



In 1846, John Henry became a Catholic and was ordained a priest one year later. In 1848, Newman founded the *Birmingham Oratory*. He patterned his oratory after Saint Philip Neri's oratory in Rome.

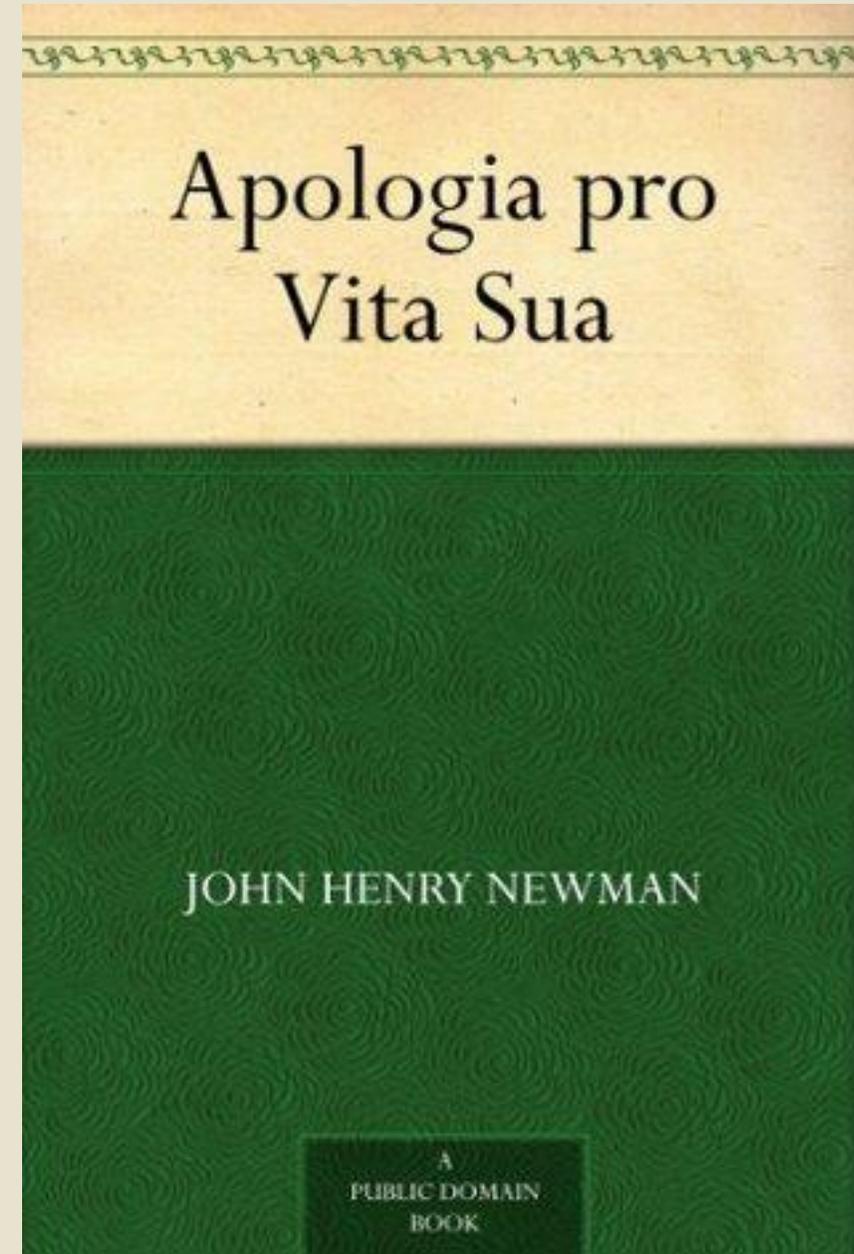
The *oratory* is a place set aside for prayer (other than a parish church) and for the celebration of Mass. It allowed Newman and his academic friends to form a community of theological thinkers, create an atmosphere of prayer, spiritual and academic collegiality, and advancement of the Church.

Newman's most influential work was his spiritual autobiography *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. In his masterpiece, Newman contemplated his spiritual journey and the truth of Catholicism.



Newman's brilliance and faithfulness to the Church were recognized by Pope Leo XIII, in 1879, when he elevated him to a cardinal. At his elevation, Newman spoke about the issue that he had fought against for most of his career:

“Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another, and this is a teaching which is gaining force and substance daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion as true. It teaches that all religions are to be tolerated for all are matters of opinion. Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; an objective truth, not miraculous...”



Before he died, Newman instructed those who would survive him to inscribe these words on his tombstone:

“From shadows and appearances into truth.”

Edith Stein

Edith Stein was a German woman who was born into a Jewish family. As a young girl she searched for answers in faith and pursued the study of philosophy.

Edith worked as the assistant to the famous philosopher, Edmund Husserl.



In 1917, their mutual friend Adolph Reinach died fighting during World War I in Flanders. Edith was devastated by this loss. Stein wondered what she would say and do when attempting to console Adolph's widow.

Edith was amazed at the consolation and hope exuded by this young woman. Instead of others having to comfort her, the widow's faith seemed to comfort others.

Her friend's wife did not succumb to grief because of her confidence in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

This encounter led Stein to investigate Christianity further. She turned to the Scriptures concentrating on the New Testament. She started to believe that one day she may be become a Christian.



One night when her friends had left for the evening, Edith read the *Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*. The philosopher found the book impossible to put down and stayed awake until the next morning. Upon closing the book and its conclusion, Edith Stein stated, “This is the truth!”

In Edith’s academic work, knowledge was everything. Stein soon discovered that God not only encompass knowledge, but He reveals this knowledge through His love in the world.

The writings of St. Theresa unveiled a way to embrace the mystery of the Cross. St. Teresa would point Edith to a new way to pray in the saint’s autobiography:

“At the time of prayer, we should allow the soul undisturbed rest and put all our knowledge off to the side. Scholars will have plenty of time afterward to serve the Lord with what they know...”

Edith bought a Catechism and missal immediately to learn more about the Church. She began attending Mass.

Edith Stein was baptized on January 1, 1922. She took the Teresa as her baptismal name.

Still she longed for a more contemplative life. She entered the cloistered community of nuns at Cologne-Lundenthal on October 14, 1933 as Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

When the Nazis invaded Holland, the Church protested the deportation of Jews, especially those enrolled in the Catholic school system. As punishment, the Nazis arrested any Catholic who had Jewish roots. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who was part of this action, was arrested and sent to Auschwitz where she died on August 9, 1942.

Pope John Paul II beatified Edith Stein (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) on May 1, 1987 and canonized her on October 11, 1998.

Both John Henry Newman and Edith Stein found something that they could not resist the Catholic faith: the truth. Before they came to Catholicism, they were left unfulfilled. They finally understood that once you were confronted with the truth, there was no turning back.

Chapter 9

Our Blessed Mother & the Girl at Lourdes

In his memoir, *Gift and Mystery*, Wojtyla chronicled his own faith journey, which came to understand the role of the Blessed Mother.

Wojtyla wrote that he was swayed by Saint Louis de Montfort's book *True Devotion to Mary*, where he began to understand that all Marian piety is Christocentric and that devotion to Mary is not a distraction from the truth of Christ, but rather a vehicle that moves us closer to the One who died for our salvation.



Mary is perhaps the most significant and exquisite example of faith and reason.

When Mary is approached by the angel, she doesn't immediately say "yes." Mary expresses her "yes," her emphatic fiat, only after she engages her reason. When Mary is approached by Gabriel, her first response is a question, "How can this be"?

She articulates a question! Mary also expresses fear. Not exactly the response of someone who is blindly saying "yes"! The Angel Gabriel indeed answers her questions and calms her fears. It is only then that Mary's expressed her *Fiat*: "Be it done to me according to your word".



If Mary truly is the model of discipleship, then we must follow her perfect example. It is not enough to witness Christ through faith alone.

Faith alone would not have carried her through the scrutiny of her community. Faith alone would not have carried her through the eventual pain of losing her only son. Faith and reason, Mary asking questions and discerning truth gave her the fortitude to forge ahead despite inevitable pain and uncertainty. Mary as the model of discipleship conveys an emphatic “yes”!



Mary's spoken Fiat at the Annunciation is matched in its solemnity only by *Mary's silent Fiat* at the foot of the cross. As Mary watched her only son suffer an excruciating death of prolonged suffocation, Mary did not stop his executioners.

Father Philip Eichner, President of Kellenberg Memorial refers to Mary as the committed pessimist. She says, "yes" to God knowing she will experience the most profound suffering known to mankind: losing a child. Mary agrees to God's plan despite knowing the road to Calvary will be laid with heartache and rejection.



Bernadette Soubirous was born to a simply family in 1844. She faced the hardships of rural life, which included cholera, an epidemic affecting many. Bernadette could not receive her first Holy Communion nor go to school due to her sickness.

She was walking with her sister when she experienced an apparition: a woman in white on February 11, 1858 in a grotto near the River Gave. The place of the grotto is called *Massabielle* (which means “old rock”). In an oval opening in the rock, a woman appeared.

The woman in white asked Bernadette to come back each day, which Bernadette did. The Blessed Mother would appear eighteen times in total.



During the second apparition, the Blessed Mother urged the little girl to share her message with the world: “penitence, penitence, penitence!”

The woman in white also asked Bernadette to build a chapel at the grotto where she would appear. When Bernadette asked the local priest to start this project, he was baffled by her request.

On February 25, 1858, Bernadette began digging in the mud and water trickled forth from where she dug. Bernadette brought the muddy water to her mouth, but threw it to the side after realizing that it was too muddy to consume. Further digging brought more water to the surface and the little girl was finally able to drink and wash herself.



A local mason, Louis Bouriette, had lost the use of one eye due to a stone splinter striking it. After washing his eye in the spring water, his sight was restored. Justin Bouhort, an infant who was brought to the spring at the point of death, was revived.

Ultimately, the priest was moved to belief when Bernadette recounted the words the woman in the vision shared with her: *“Que Soy Era Immaculada Concepciou”*, *I am the Immaculate Conception.*

This theological term had only been introduced four years prior by Pope Pius IX, and it is certain that Bernadette could not have known such an intellectual title given to the Blessed Virgin.



Our last words from Mary are at the wedding at Cana. Mary informed her son that the hosts had run out of wine. Our Lord resisted His mother, at first. Jesus told his mother that his time had not yet come. She looked at the waiters and said to them, “Do whatever he tells you.”

The words of the Blessed Mother are as meaningful today as they were two thousand years ago, “Do whatever he tells you.” Open your heart. Listen to the message. Then, do what you are called to do.

Mary as the model of discipleship is expressed in the Catholic Church’s Doctrine on the Assumption of Mary. Established in 1950, the Doctrine on the Assumption of Mary reveals most perfectly the promise God has made to us; the promise of everlasting life with body and soul united.

Mary's remains have never been discovered. In a world filled with archeologists and curiosity, it seems unlikely that there would be no record or no tradition that speaks to where Mary's remains could be.

She probably ended her days on earth in Ephesus or Jerusalem. The Church commemorates the place of Mary's *Dormition* (or falling asleep) at the *Church of the Dormition* on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Mary embodies most perfectly what we aspire to be: holy, dutiful and courageous.

Mary as our inspiration, not just in earthly dwelling, but in our heavenly dwelling as well. God promises more. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to take on flesh. This means our flesh matters and the material world is good.



Without the resurrection of the body, the birth, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus are rendered meaningless. Look to Mary who experiences this most beautiful promise from God who cherishes us entirely: body and soul.

Mary's Fiat, Mary as the model of discipleship is a perfect example of God's plan for each of us, man or woman, in the role of salvation history. Mary as intercessor connects us to our vocation more deeply and challenges us to say, "Yes."

