

TABLE OF CONTENTS

viii	Abbreviations used for the Books of the Bible	24	The Name of "YHWH"
viii	General Abbreviations	25	Attributes of God
ix	Foreword	25	God Is Perfect
139	Art and Photo Credits	26	God Is Pure Spirit
142	Index	26	God Is Immutable (Unchanging)
		27	God Is Eternal
		27	God Is Omnibenevolent (All-Loving)
		27	God Is Omniscient (All-Knowing)
		28	God Is Omnipotent (All-Powerful)
		28	God Is Omnipresent (All-Present)
		29	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Therese of Lisieux
		29	Conclusion
		30	What's Next?
		30	Discussion Questions
1	Chapter 1: Natural Faith and Natural Revelation	31	Chapter 4: God is a Trinity of Persons
2	Natural Faith and Natural Revelation	32	Review of the Key Points of Chapter 3
3	God in Search of Man	32	The Blessed Trinity
3	God's Plan of Salvation Is Unfolded in the Old Testament	33	Foreshadowed in the Old Testament
4	God's Plan of Salvation Is Fulfilled in Christ	33	In Our Image
5	Man in Search of God	33	Abraham and the Three Visitors
6	Natural Faith	33	Revealed in the New Testament
6	Reasoning about God	34	God the Father
7	Argument from Motion: the First Mover.	35	God the Son
7	Argument from Causes: the First Cause.	36	God the Holy Spirit
7	Argument from Governance: the Grand Architect.	36	Understanding Three-in-One
8	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Albert the Great	37	The Language of the Trinity
8	Modern Updates	37	Early Trinitarian Heresies
9	Limitations of Knowing	38	Conclusion
9	Conclusion	39	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Athanasius: Defender Against the Arian Errors
10	What's Next?	40	What's Next?
10	Discussion Questions	40	Discussion Questions
11	Chapter 2: Supernatural Faith and Supernatural Revelation	41	Chapter 5: God the Father—The Creator
12	Review of the Key Points of Chapter 1	42	Review of the Key Points of Chapter 4
12	The Movements of Faith	42	God as Father
14	Faith in God Is Received from Others and for Others	43	God the Creator
15	Faith Is Verified by Our Personal Experience	44	Why Did God Create?
15	Faith Comes Alive when Lived in Communion	45	The Beginning of Creation
16	The Deposit of Faith: The Apostles' Teaching	45	Preservation, Providence, and Government
16	Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture	46	Angels
17	Magisterium	47	The Fall of the Angels
18	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Philip and the Ethiopian	47	The Ministry of Angels
19	Conclusion	48	<i>Sidebar:</i> Guardian Angel Prayer
20	What's Next?	49	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Dominic
20	Discussion Questions	50	What's Next?
		50	Discussion Questions
21	Chapter 3: Getting to Know God		
22	Review of the Key Points of Chapter 2		
23	There Is Only One God		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

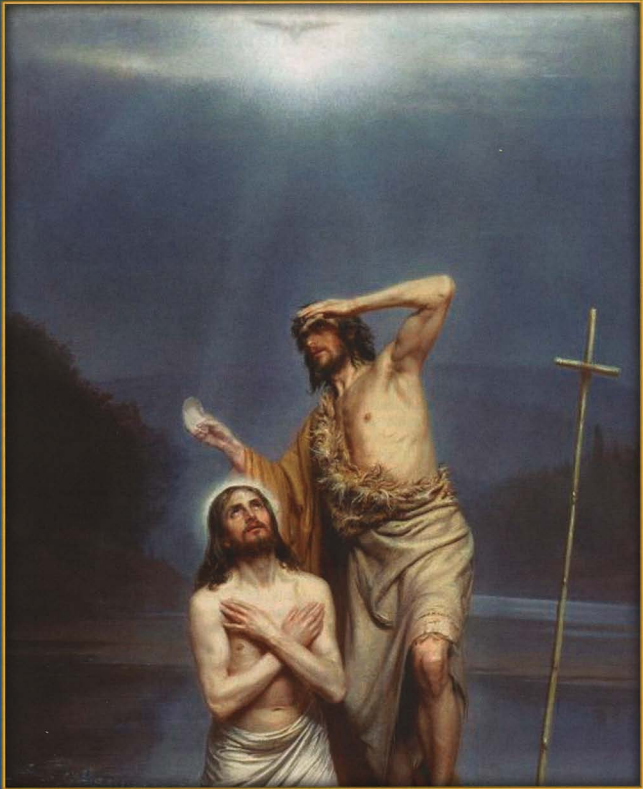
- 51 **Chapter 6:**
God the Father—Creator of Man
- 52 Review of the Key Points of Chapter 5
- 52 Image and Likeness
- 52 Image of the Father
- 53 Material Body
- 53 Immortal Soul
- 54 Intrinsic Dignity
- 55 Man's Original State
- 55 Transmission of Original Sin
- 56 Marriage as the Image of God
- 57 Our Call to Holiness
- 58 Conclusion
- 59 *Sidebar:* Sts. James and John
- 60 What's Next?
- 60 Discussion Questions
- 61 **Chapter 7:**
The Teachings of Jesus Christ
- 62 Review of the Key Points of Chapter 6
- 62 God Is Our Father
- 65 Proclaiming the Kingdom
- 65 Conversion Required
- 65 Keys to the Kingdom
- 66 Not of This World
- 66 The Sermon on the Mount
- 67 The Beatitudes
- 68 The Perfection of the Mosaic Law
- 68 Motivated by Love
- 69 *Sidebar:* St. Thomas the Apostle
- 70 Conclusion
- 70 What's Next?
- 70 Discussion Questions
- 71 **Chapter 8:**
Jesus Christ—True God
- 72 Review of the Key Points of Chapter 7
- 72 The Reality of Christ
- 73 Resurrection
- 74 The Divinity of Christ
- 75 Son of God
- 76 Consubstantial with the Father
- 76 Through Him All Things Were Made
- 77 Christ Affirms His Identity
- 77 Sent by the Father
- 77 Teaches God's Law
- 77 Forgives Sins
- 77 Judges the World
- 78 Accepts Adoration
- 78 Identifies as God
- 78 Conclusion
- 79 *Sidebar:* Pope St. Clement I
- 80 What's Next?
- 80 Discussion Questions
- 81 **Chapter 9:**
Jesus Christ—True Man
- 82 Review of the Key Points of Chapter 8
- 82 True God, True Man
- 83 Two Natures in One Person
- 84 Theandric Acts
- 84 Knowing and Willing
- 85 Christ's Attractive Humanity
- 85 His Human Life
- 86 Descendant of Adam
- 86 Emotion, Pain, and Suffering
- 87 His Human Flesh
- 88 Redeemed Through His Humanity
- 88 Giver of Grace
- 88 Conclusion
- 89 *Sidebar:* St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the Younger
- 90 What's Next?
- 90 Discussion Questions
- 91 **Chapter 10:**
God the Holy Spirit—The Nature of the Holy Spirit
- 92 Review of the Key Points of Chapter 9
- 92 Inner Life of the Trinity
- 93 Holy Spirit Foreshadowed
- 94 The Holy Spirit Revealed in the New Testament
- 96 The Paraclete
- 97 Descent of the Holy Spirit
- 98 The Laying on of Hands
- 98 Inspiration of the Scriptures
- 98 Conclusion
- 99 *Sidebar:* Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati
- 100 What's Next?
- 100 Discussion Questions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

101	Chapter 11: God the Holy Spirit—The Work of the Holy Spirit	121	Chapter 13: The Blessed Trinity and Our Christian Vocation
102	Review of the Key Points of Chapter 11	122	Review of the Key Points of Chapter 12
102	To Know the Holy Spirit	123	Temples of the Holy Spirit
103	Grace	124	Faith in and Experience of Christ
104	Theological Virtues of the Holy Spirit	125	Christ Present Among Us
104	The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit	125	Christ Is Present in His Church
105	<i>Sidebar:</i> Prayer to the Holy Spirit	125	Christ Is Present in His Sacraments
105	Wisdom (Enjoying the Presence of God)	127	Christ Is Present in His Word
105	Understanding (Discerning Divine Truths)	127	Christ Is Present in Our Prayer
105	Counsel (Making Wise Decisions)	128	Christ Is Present in His Followers
106	Fortitude (Having Strength of Character)	128	Conclusion
106	Knowledge (Seeing Our Circumstances as God Sees Them)	129	<i>Sidebar:</i> The Conversion of St. Paul
106	Piety (Having Affection for God, Our Father)	130	What's Next?
107	Fear of the Lord (Desiring Not to Offend God)	130	Discussion Questions
107	The Fruits of the Holy Spirit	131	Chapter 14: Challenges to the Trinity
108	Conclusion	132	A. Can we know God really exists?
109	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Faustina Kowalska	133	B. If God created the world, who created God?
110	What's Next?	133	C. The Trinity and the Hypostatic Union are unbelievable!
110	Discussion Questions	134	D. Does God really love us?
111	Chapter 12: The Blessed Virgin Mary	134	E. Don't suffering and evil prove that God doesn't exist?
112	Review of the Key Points of Chapter 12	135	F. Does God really want us to be happy?
112	Virgin Birth	136	G. How can we be sure the Church didn't just invent her teachings?
113	Mary, Mother of God	136	H. Is the Church wrong in what she teaches about Mary?
114	Immaculate Conception	137	<i>Sidebar:</i> Bl. Teresa of Calcutta
114	Perpetual Virginity	138	Discussion Questions
115	The Assumption of Mary		
116	Mother of the Church and of All Christians		
116	Intercessor		
118	Veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary		
118	Conclusion		
119	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes		
120	What's Next?		
120	Discussion Questions		

The Blessed Trinity

and Our Christian Vocation



Chapter 2

Supernatural Faith and Supernatural Revelation

God calls us, helps us to hear him, and gives us the confidence to follow him.

CHAPTER 2

Supernatural Faith and Supernatural Revelation

OPENING ACTIVITY

Write for a few minutes, responding to the following statement summarizing one of the main ideas of Chapter 1:

- ✦ Most of what we *know* is not because we have discovered or experienced it ourselves but because we have received it from trusted authorities.

BASIC QUESTIONS

This chapter will attempt to answer the following basic questions:

- ✦ How has God revealed himself to humanity supernaturally?
- ✦ How can we believe what God has supernaturally revealed?

KEY IDEAS

The key ideas of Chapter 2 are:

- ✦ God has revealed himself to humanity supernaturally through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, culminating in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
- ✦ We can confidently assent to what God supernaturally reveals because he gives us the ability to do so through grace and he guarantees the truth of Revelation through the Magisterium of the Church.
- ✦ Our experience of living the Faith also confirms the truth we are called to pass on.

Review of Chapter 1

- ✦ God created humanity in his own image and likeness, endowed with an immortal soul, intellect, reason, and free will, in order that we might share in his own blessed life. This is the fundamental vocation of every human person.
- ✦ We are called to respond to this vocation by seeking, knowing, and loving God.
- ✦ We can come to know of the existence of God and of some of his attributes through natural reason.
- ✦ Natural faith is knowledge acquired through trust in the teacher or source of our information.
- ✦ To assist us in coming to know him, God has revealed himself to us throughout salvation history—in his covenants, his words, his deeds, and in prophecy—and finally in Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of his Revelation.

Christianity proclaims Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. This is a truth of faith, but not a truth that we can know from reason alone. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is another truth that is beyond our human ability to deduce or comprehend through reason. How does one make such an act of faith? How does one know with certainty that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, or that there are three Persons in one God?

In this chapter, we will look closely at Divine Revelation, also called *supernatural revelation*, and in particular our proper response of faith. This is how God makes himself known to us beyond our natural capacity to know him through reason (cf. CCC 35). Through this Revelation and the gift of God's grace, we can arrive at a *supernatural faith* by which we know these revealed truths with certainty.

THE MOVEMENTS OF FAITH

Christianity proclaims Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the culmination of all Divine Revelation. But how does one make this act of faith? How does one know with certainty that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God?

First we must define "faith" more clearly. As the author of the Letter to the Hebrews wrote:

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb 11:1)

Faith, hope, and love (or charity) are known as the *theological virtues*. These virtues are called "theological" not because they derive from the study of theology, but because they are free gifts from God, which are not attainable through our natural human capacity, and relate directly to God as their object or focus. The theological virtues, therefore, are supernatural, and so we can speak of the virtue of faith as supernatural faith.



Faith comes alive for us as we live in communion with the Church.

We cannot acquire these theological virtues by effort; instead, we grow in these virtues by seeking God and allowing him to infuse us with these virtues by the work of his grace. In receiving these virtues, we draw near to God and conform ourselves more and more to his image and likeness, thus in a certain sense participating in his divine nature.

The theological virtue of faith is the proper human response to God's self-revelation. Therefore, faith is a necessary part of our Christian vocation, i.e., we are called to faith. Through faith, we adhere more closely to God and to the truth that he has revealed. In this way, faith is intimately related to knowledge.

The virtue of faith is supernatural because it is a permanent habit God gives to us so that we can make an assent of our will to what he has revealed. Assisted by God's grace, we are able to say yes to all that God reveals. Simply stated, in the economy of salvation, God proposes his Divine Revelation, and we respond with faith.

While faith is a gift from God alone, we usually are moved to accept this gift through the testimony or example of others, whose words or lived witness inspire us to open ourselves up to this gift and to allow it to take root in our soul. God offers us the gift of faith, but never imposes it upon us; it takes an act of our will to accept and use this great gift and virtue.

This is what we mean when we speak of "giving" the Faith to others or "receiving" the Faith from others. Only God can give the grace that allows us to have faith, but we can mediate that faith for one another, serving as inspirations and pathways, as it were, that help turn our will toward God so that his grace can work within us.

In his book *The Yes of Jesus Christ*, Pope Benedict XVI speaks about how a person begins and progresses in faith. We can identify three stages or "movements" in the beginning of faith:

- ✦ We first receive faith from others and for others.
- ✦ We then verify our faith through our own experience.
- ✦ Faith then comes alive for us as we live in communion with the Church.

Let us briefly examine each of these movements of faith. Each of these stages configures with Christ's own plan and mandate for leading others to faith.

VOCABULARY

DIVINE REVELATION

God's communication of himself by which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan; a gift of God's self-communication that is realized by his deeds and words through time, the fullness of which was sending his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Also called *supernatural revelation*.

SUPERNATURAL FAITH

The theological virtue by which one believes all that God has said and revealed to man and that the Church proposes for belief. It is a gift of God whose focus is God himself, enabling us to know with certainty those truths revealed by him that cannot be known by human reason alone.

THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE

Virtues or permanent habits not attainable through our natural human capacities that come as a free gift from God and have God as their object or focus. The theological virtues are faith, hope, and love (or charity).

Focus Question 1:

What is supernatural faith?

Focus Question 2:

What are the three stages or movements of faith from Pope Benedict's perspective?

Only God can give the grace that allows us to have faith

FROM *YouCat*

Why did God have to show himself in order for us to be able to know what he is like?

Man can know by reason that God exists, but not what God is really like. Yet because God would very much like to be known, he has revealed himself. [50–53, 68–69]

God did not have to reveal himself to us. But he did it—out of love. Just as in human love one can know something about the beloved person only if he opens his heart to us, so too we know something about God's inmost thoughts only because the eternal and mysterious God has opened himself to us out of love. From creation on, through the patriarchs and the prophets down to the definitive REVELATION in his Son Jesus Christ, God has spoken again and again to mankind. In him he has poured out his heart to us and made his inmost being visible for us. (*YouCat* 7)



*The Disciples of Jesus Baptizing by Procaccini.
Christ calls each of us to a life of holiness.*

Faith in God Is Received from Others and for Others

In his final instructions before his Ascension into Heaven, Christ said to his Apostles:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Mt 28:18-20)

Christ commanded his Apostles to take the gift of the Faith that they had received from him and communicate it to others. And so unto this day, one person receives Christ through an encounter with another person who lives and professes the Faith. Once the individual becomes a person of faith, he or she is enabled and compelled to bring Christ into the lives of others. This is the sense in which Christianity is a mediated faith. We do not receive it directly from God, but through others. We then can become instruments to share it with others and lead them to faith as well.

Many Christians receive the Faith at a very early age through Baptism and have the privilege of being reared and instructed in the faith by their parents or guardians. Others encounter the Faith later in life through a family member or friend, often as a result of a long and possibly difficult journey. Still others receive the Faith but then allow it to stagnate. Later they may have an encounter with Christ and be led to a deeper realization of his presence in their lives. These three kinds of followers of Christ are often popularly referred to as “cradle Catholics,” converts, and “reverts.”

In each of these examples, the individual receives the Faith through others. Here, we can see how the influence and example of others lead the individual to become open to and accepting of that gift.

The light of Jesus is reflected in the saints and shines out again from them. The “saints,” however, are not just those canonized by name. There are always hidden saints who in their fellowship with Jesus receive a ray of his brightness, actual and real experience of God.¹

Through Baptism, Christ calls each of us to a life of holiness. “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). When we respond to the call of Christ, we also become saints (“holy ones”) through

GUIDED EXERCISE

Free write for a few minutes on the following questions about faith:

- What most attracts you to the Faith?
- Or, if you do not have faith, what do you think would suffice to attract you to it?

Focus Question 3:

What role did Christ give the Apostles in terms of the transmission of the Faith?

Focus Question 4:

What is a person who receives the Faith supposed to do with it, besides live it?

Focus Question 5:

What are a “cradle Catholic,” a convert, and a “revert”?

which the light of Christ can be passed to others. Indeed, by virtue of our Baptism, we have the grave responsibility not only to seek personal holiness, but also to evangelize those around us and to serve as living witnesses of the love of Christ. Our personal holiness and desire to carry on the prophetic mission of Christ naturally lead us to evangelize, for it is out of love of God and neighbor that we actively draw others to Christ.

Faith Is Verified by Our Personal Experience

Jesus' message answers to an inner expectation of our heart: It corresponds to an inner light of our being that stretches out towards the truth of God.²

In time, the faith that a person encounters through others becomes verifiable. As Pope Benedict says in the above passage, it “corresponds.” The word “correspond” is derived from the Latin *correspondere*, which means “a mutual response” or “to be in conformity or agreement with.”

In choosing the word “correspond,” Pope Benedict indicates that the human heart *responds* to Christ. Once we accept faith, we assimilate it and “own” it for ourselves. The Christian’s lived experience verifies that the Faith received from another is true and that it answers all the expectations of the heart and mind. In other words, having faith is the act of recognizing that God is the ultimate desire of our hearts, the one in whom all our yearnings for happiness can be fulfilled.

A classic example of this verification can be found in the biblical story of the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42). The woman who met Christ told many of the townspeople of her encounter, and they believed her testimony and found her credible. The townspeople then invited Christ to visit them, and he accepted their invitation, continuing to teach for two more days. They were thus able to experience and more fully internalize their newfound faith. Afterward, the townspeople said to the Samaritan woman, “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world” (Jn 4:42). They had seen for themselves that what the Samaritan woman said was true.

In one of his Psalms, King David invites us to “taste and see that the LORD is good!” (Ps 34: 8). Our experience really does verify God’s goodness and the truth of what he says.

Faith Comes Alive when Lived in Communion

Just as we receive faith through others, we are sustained in our faith through others in a kind of interdependence centered on Christ. Pope Benedict speaks of how the word *communio* expresses the essence of the Church. Communion with Christ becomes communion with one another:³

[Faith] lives and moves in the “we” of the Church, one with the common “I” of Jesus Christ....[T]he wall between myself and others falls down.⁴

Within the communion of the Church, faith is strengthened and grows; outside of the communion, faith can wither and die. The early Christians understood and lived this communion of the Church: “They devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2: 42).

St. Paul affirms this movement of faith when he speaks of the Church as the “body of Christ,” which experiences a “building up” when all its members unite in the “one faith” (cf. Eph 4:1-16).

Focus Question 6:

What does it mean to say that the Faith can be verified by personal experience?

Focus Question 7:

Is the Christian religion just something between Christ and the believer?



Woman at the Well by Bloch.

The woman who met Christ told many of the townspeople of her encounter, and they believed her testimony and found her credible.

When we respond to the call of Christ, we also become saints (“holy ones”) through which the light of Christ can be passed to others.

VOCABULARY

DEPOSIT OF FAITH

All of the Divine Revelation granted to the Church by Jesus Christ, contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and mediated by the Magisterium.

SACRED SCRIPTURE

The Bible, which contains the sacred writings deemed by the Church to have been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It includes the forty-six books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

SACRED TRADITION

The "living transmission" of the truths taught by Christ as communicated through the doctrine, life, and worship of the Church.

Focus Question 8:

Why did Christ found his Church?

Focus Question 9:

What is the Deposit of Faith?

GUIDED EXERCISE

Conduct a think/pair/share on the following question based on St. Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thes 1:15).

- How does St. Paul affirm the existence of both Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture here?

(In a Think/Pair/Share, first *think* about an answer, then *discuss* your answer with a partner, then *share* with the class if called upon.)

Focus Question 10:

What is Oral Tradition?

Focus Question 11:

What is the New Testament?



Appearance to the Apostles at Table by Duccio. Bestowing on them his own authority, he commanded them to go forth to teach all nations.

THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH: THE APOSTLES' TEACHING

Throughout his public ministry, Christ taught his disciples the revealed truth of God. However, the communication of this truth to mankind would have been in vain had God not assured us that his truth would be handed down faithfully and accurately throughout the ages.

Knowing that he would give his life for the redemption of mankind, Christ founded his Church to continue his ministry of salvation. To the Twelve Apostles he gave the fullness of Divine Revelation. Bestowing on them his own authority, he commanded them to go forth to teach all nations and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 28:19-20). As we read in the previous text, *Faith and Revelation*, these teachings of Christ are referred to as the Deposit of Faith, because they contain all of the Divine Revelation granted to the Church by Jesus Christ.

Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture

In the initial stages of Christianity, the teachings of Christ were handed on orally, not in writing. This is the *Oral Tradition*. In this manner, the Apostles passed on the Deposit of Faith to the early Christian communities. Some of the teachings contained in the Oral Tradition were eventually written down. When occasion demanded, the Apostles also communicated with the Christian communities by letter, applying and relating the truths Christ had taught. Various accounts of the life and ministry of Christ were written, either by the Apostles or by others who had heard the apostolic preaching.

Sacred Tradition refers to the "living transmission" of the truths taught by Christ as communicated through the doctrine, life, and worship of the Church. *Sacred Scripture* refers to the Bible, the sacred writings judged by the teaching authority of the Church to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Bible includes the Old Testament, which comprises the inspired books that preceded the Birth of Christ, and the New Testament, which includes the Gospels and writings that pertain to the completion of God's self-revelation in Christ.

Together, Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture comprise a single deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church so that the truth may be preserved and proclaimed to all generations. That is why the Catholic Church has always taught that both Scripture and Tradition are essential to understanding Divine Revelation. Christianity is not a religion of the book (cf. CCC 108). Rather, Christianity is a religion of the Word of God—Jesus Christ—who is still living today and will live forever.

Because God is its primary author, Sacred Scripture is inspired and inerrant. However, it is important to understand the particular genres and literary devices that the human authors used to communicate the inspired truth given to them by God. The use of figurative speech, storytelling, and imagery are among the means used for communicating Divine Revelation.

Magisterium

Many of the teachings found in Sacred Scripture can be difficult to understand. Different people, even well-educated ones, sometimes interpret the same verse of Scripture in very different ways.

To ensure that the faithful would be truthfully taught, Christ guaranteed that St. Peter and the Apostles in union with him would be free from error in the transmission of the Deposit of Faith. This guarantee of infallibility is continued today by the successors to the Apostles. This teaching authority of the Pope and the bishops united to him is called the Magisterium, which derives from the Latin word for “teaching office.”

The infallible Word of God as transmitted by Scripture and Tradition has been entrusted solely to the living Magisterium of the Church, which exercises its authority in the name of Jesus Christ. The true interpretation of both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition is expressed in its teachings as guided by the Holy Spirit.

The Church’s teaching on matters of faith and morals is infallible when exercised by the Pope, or bishops in communion with the Pope, under particular conditions. We therefore can be assured that the teaching authority of the Church communicates to us the authentic teachings of Christ himself.



The Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, *Dei Filius*, was adopted unanimously at the First Vatican Council on April 24, 1870.

FROM YouCat

DOGMA

(Greek *dogma* = opinion, decision, doctrine): an article of faith proclaimed by a Council or the Pope as divine revelation contained in Scripture and Tradition. (*YouCat*, p. 90)

VOCABULARY

INSPIRED

Guided by God; from a word meaning “breathed in.” The human writers of Scripture wrote in their own words, but through God’s inspiration they wrote what God intended them to write and nothing more.

INFALLIBLE

Immune from error. The Bible and the Church are infallible because of a special protection afforded by God.

MAGISTERIUM

The name given to the universal teaching authority of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him, which guides the members of the Church without error in matters of faith and morals, through the interpretation of Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

Focus Question 12:

Why is Christianity not a religion of the book?

Focus Question 13:

What is the *inspiration* of Sacred Scripture?

Focus Question 14:

What is the *inerrancy* of Sacred Scripture?

Focus Question 15:

Should Scripture always be interpreted literally?

Focus Question 16:

What is the Magisterium?

Focus Question 17:

Can the Magisterium add to or take away from the Deposit of Faith?

FROM YouCat

With Jesus Christ, has everything been said, or does revelation continue even after him?

In Jesus Christ, God himself came to earth. He is God's last Word. By listening to him, all men of all times can know who God is and what is necessary for their salvation. [66–67]

With the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the REVELATION of God is perfect and complete. To make it comprehensible to us, the Holy Spirit leads us ever deeper into the truth. God's light breaks so forcefully into the lives of many individuals that they "see the heavens opened" (Acts 7:56). That is how the great places of pilgrimage such as Guadalupe in Mexico or Lourdes in France came about. The "private revelations" of visionaries cannot improve on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No one is obliged to believe in them. But they can help us understand the Gospel better. Their authenticity is tested by the CHURCH. (YouCat 10)

Sacred Tradition refers to the "living transmission" of the truths taught by Christ as communicated through the doctrine, life, and worship of the Church.



St. Philip Baptizing the Ethiopian by Rembrandt.

ST. PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN



t. Philip was the Apostle whom the Holy Spirit brought into contact with an Ethiopian traveling home from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless some one guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news of Jesus. And as they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. (Acts 8:29-31, 35-39)

The Holy Spirit, acting through St. Philip, unveiled the meaning of the Scriptures for the Ethiopian. Understanding Christ to be the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, the Ethiopian received the Sacrament of Baptism. The Holy Spirit gave the man the gift of faith, enabling him to accept the teachings of Christ.

CONCLUSION

In his love for fallen humanity, God intervened in human history. After Original Sin, God promised a Savior, gradually formed the Chosen People, and then fully revealed himself through the God-Man, Jesus Christ, who has saved and redeemed us through his life, Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, that is, the full Divine Revelation, is found in both Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, which is authentically interpreted by the Magisterium, or teaching authority, of the Church. Assisted by God's grace, we are able to say yes to all that God reveals. We receive the Faith through others, experience its truth in our own lives, and pass it on.



The Inspiration of St. Matthew by Caravaggio.

Because God is its primary author, Sacred Scripture is inspired and inerrant.

FROM *YouCat*

Can the Church err in questions of faith?

The faithful as a whole cannot err in faith, because Jesus promised his disciples that he would send them the Spirit of truth and keep them in the truth (Jn 14:17). [80–82, 85–87, 92, 100]

Just as the disciples believed Jesus with their whole heart, a Christian can rely completely on the Church when he asks about the way to life. Since Jesus Christ himself gave his apostles the commission to teach, the Church has a teaching authority (the **MAGISTERIUM**) and must not remain silent. Although individual members of the Church can err and even make serious mistakes, the Church as a whole can never fall away from God's truth. The Church carries through the ages a living truth that is greater than herself. We speak about a *depositum fidei*, a deposit of faith that is to be preserved. If such a truth is publicly disputed or distorted, the Church is called upon to clarify again "what has always and everywhere been believed by all" (St. Vincent of Lerins, d. 450). (*YouCat* 13)

Sacred Scripture refers to the Bible, the sacred writings judged by the teaching authority of the Church to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

CLOSURE

Write a paragraph explaining why it is reasonable and possible to believe Divine Revelation.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Explore the Revised Standard Version of the Bible online by searching one of the following terms: teach, faith, hope, love, truth, pure, life (or a word of your own choice).

For convenience, limit your search to the New Testament.



We can truly have a real and mystical encounter with Christ every time we receive the sacraments.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In Chapter 3, we will consider the perfection of God and his attributes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is supernatural faith?
2. What role did Christ give the Apostles in terms of the transmission of the Faith?
3. What is the Deposit of Faith?
4. Why is Christianity not a religion of the book?
5. What is Oral Tradition?
6. What is the New Testament?
7. What is the *inspiration* of Sacred Scripture?
8. What is the *inerrancy* of Sacred Scripture?
9. What is the Magisterium?

ENDNOTES – CHAPTER 2

1. Pope Benedict XVI, *The Yes of Jesus Christ* (New York: New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1991), 28.
2. *Ibid.*, 32.
3. Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *On the Way to Jesus Christ* (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 2005), 113, 119.
4. Pope Benedict XVI, *The Yes of Jesus Christ*, 28.

*Assisted by God's grace,
we are able to say yes to all
that God reveals.*