

Part One: The Profession of Faith

Has two sections:

Section One: Belief – What is Faith?

[Section Two: The Creed – no] – What we believe.

Section One

has three chapters:

Chapter 1. Our Capacity for God

Chapter 2. God comes to meet us

Chapter 3. Our response

Chapter 1. Our Capacity for God

The first question is ***Why does faith matter?***

“You cannot imagine at all how much you interest God; he is interested in you as if there were no one else on earth.” - Julien Green (a man, 1900–1998, French-American writer)

St Paul tells us that “God desires that all

i) be saved;

and ii) come to the knowledge of the truth.” - 1 Tim 2:4

What does that have to do with me, in my life? Because we have an infinite desire to be happy. And God, as our Father, wants us to be happy. And so God has placed in our hearts a longing to seek and find him. St. Augustine says, “God have made us for himself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in him.”

The second question is ***How do we seek and find God***, in order to be happy and saved?

Paul’s letter to Timothy has already told us: “come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Blaise Pascal (17th century French mathematician and philosopher) explained: “You must know people and human things in order to love them. You must love God and divine things in order to know them.”

That’s not entirely true. Your parents know you pretty well, better than you think, and there is nothing that could stop them from loving you.

But a higher form of knowledge does come through relationship. As Jesus said, “thank you Father for hiding your knowledge from the very wise and revealing them to little children.” He also encouraged us to become like little children and told us, as the St Columb’s boys know, “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added onto you.”

We'll look at how to partake in the Kingdom of God in our next three meetings on sacraments, moral living and prayer.

Chapter 2. God Comes to Meet Us

Part 1 – In Revelation

Simply because we cannot physically see something does not mean it does not exist. You just have to open your eyes, your mind, your heart.

God reveals himself in three ways:

- i) Indirectly in creation/nature. Atheists or scientists have no excuse. Galileo Galilei, mathematician and physicist said "Mathematics is the alphabet with which God wrote the world." Or look at the stars as the Wise Men did. The Logos is written in Creation. Logos is Greek – for speaking, but 'speaking rationally', also meaning 'to arrange in order'. Centuries before the Word became Flesh, you will find the term Logos in Greek, Indian, Egyptian, and Persian philosophical and theological systems to indicate the divine rationale evident in the cosmos, ordering it and giving it form and meaning. The 6th-century-bc Greek philosopher Heraclitus, discerned in the cosmic process a logos correspondent to the reasoning power in man. Later the Stoics defined the logos as an active rational and spiritual principle that permeated all reality. Philo of Alexandria, a 1st-century-ad Jewish philosopher, taught that the logos was the intermediary between God and the cosmos, being both the agent of creation and the agent through which the human mind can apprehend and comprehend God. According to the Middle Platonists the logos was both immanent in the world and at the same time the transcendent divine mind. So the Logos, the divine will and Word by which the universe was framed, the divine reason in which human reason shares, is God's first indirect revelation to humanity.
- ii) Directly by Revelation through the Holy Spirit; from the OT to the Chosen People, the Holy Spirit, in and through the Church, continues to lead us to an ever deeper understanding of God.
- iii) his definitive revelation, when God spoke once and for all, in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the same today, as he was yesterday. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta said: "I cannot picture God the Father. All I can see is Jesus." "The happiness you are seeking," said Pope Benedict XVI, "has a name and a face: it is Jesus of Nazareth."

Part 2 – In the Church by Transmission

It is the mission (mission in Latin = sending) of the Church to transmit the Good News of Salvation. That by our words, deeds and example we show how good it is to belong to the Kingdom of God.

This is done through Scripture and Tradition, which are bound closely together. The New Testament developed and was written out of the faith community of the early Church. However, handing on the faith is done less by documents than by personal witness: the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be written on our hearts more than in a book, as it was for the apostles (from the Greek, meaning messenger) and the martyrs (from the Greek, meaning witness).

The magisterium (from Latin, meaning teacher) presents and interprets the faith through the Holy Spirit, to protect it from false teachings. And although individuals can err or commit grave sins, the Church as a body can never fall away from its mission.

Part 3 – The Sacred Scriptures

“To be ignorant of Scripture is to be ignorant of Jesus Christ,” said Saint Jerome (who wrote the definitive Latin translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek). The books of the Bible (from Latin, meaning books) are “inspired” by the Holy Spirit (from the Latin, meaning “breathed in”). The right way to read the Bible is prayerfully, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3. Our Response

Part 1 – I Believe

“Credo ut intelligam – I believe in order to understand.” – St Anselm of Canterbury.

I believe in Jesus, I trust him as a person, in order to form a relationship of understanding, and then wisdom, the higher forms of knowledge.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and whoever seeks finds, and to whoever knocks it will be opened.” Mt 7:7-8

Only then, when we belong to a faith community of others who also say “I believe” can we join together with them and say

Part 2 – We Believe

Let me conclude with the **Foreword**, written to you young people by Pope Benedict.

“If you are now going to apply yourselves zealously to the study of the Catechism, I want to give you one last thing to accompany you: You all know how deeply the community of faith has been wounded recently through the attacks of the evil one, through the penetration of sin itself into the interior, yes, into the heart of the Church. Do not make that an excuse to flee from the face of God! You yourselves are the Body of Christ, the Church! Bring the undiminished fire of your love into this Church whose countenance has so often been disfigured by man. “Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the spirit, serve the Lord!” (Rom 12:11).

“When Israel was at the lowest point in her history, God called for help, not from the great and honoured ones of Israel, but from a young man by the name of Jeremiah. Jeremiah felt overwhelmed: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth” (Jer 1:6). But God was not to be deterred: “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak” (Jer 1:7).

I bless you and pray each day for all of you.”