



REVELATION AND FAITH



"Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17, NABRE)

Revelation and Faith

Revelation and **Faith** are central to understanding how God communicates with humanity and how we, in turn, respond to Him. Below is an explanation suitable for an RCIA setting.

Revelation

Revelation refers to God's self-disclosure—how He makes Himself known to humanity. Catholics believe that God reveals Himself in two primary ways: through **Sacred Scripture** (the Bible) and **Sacred Tradition** (the teachings of the Church). The Church teaches that God's ultimate revelation is found in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of God's communication to us.

Types of Revelation:

Natural Revelation: This is how God reveals Himself through creation. By observing the beauty and order of the world, we can come to recognize that there is a Creator. As it says in **Romans 1:20**:

- *"Ever since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what He has made."* Nature itself speaks of God's existence.

Divine Revelation: This is how God directly communicates with humanity through Scripture and Tradition. Divine revelation includes:

- **Scripture:** The written word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, through which God reveals His plan for salvation. The Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, contains God's inspired word.
- **Tradition:** The living transmission of the Gospel, preserved through the teachings, life, and worship of the Church. Tradition helps guide the interpretation of Scripture and ensures that the truth of God's revelation is passed on through generations.
- **Magisterium:** The Church's teaching authority, which authentically interprets Scripture and Tradition

Jesus Christ, the Fullness of Revelation: God's revelation reaches its fullness in Jesus Christ, who is the "Word made flesh" (John 1:14). Jesus reveals the nature of God and the way to salvation through His life, death, and resurrection.

- Paul wrote in his letter to the Hebrews, *"In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways... In these last days, he spoke to us through a son."* (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: *"Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father's one, perfect, and unsurpassable Word. In Him He has said everything; there will be no other word than this one"* (CCC 65).

The Role of the Church: The Catholic Church serves as the guardian and interpreter of both Scripture and Tradition. The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, helps to protect and pass down the truths that have been revealed by God.

Faith

Faith is our response to God's revelation. It is both a gift from God and a free human act. Faith is the personal assent to the truth God has revealed, trusting in Him and His promises, even though we do not see everything clearly. Faith enables us to embrace God's revelation and live in relationship with Him.

Characteristics of Faith:

- **Faith as Trust:** Faith is more than intellectual belief—it is trust in God. As it says in **Hebrews 11:1**: *"Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen."* Even when we don't fully understand, faith trusts in God's wisdom and love.
- **Faith is a Gift:** According to Catholic teaching, faith is first and foremost a gift from God, infused into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We cannot earn faith; it is given by God's grace. Faith requires our free will and cooperation.
- **Faith Seeking Understanding:** Faith prompts us to deepen our knowledge of God. A person of faith doesn't simply stop at believing but seeks to deepen their understanding of what they believe. As it says in **Mark 9:24**, *"I believe, help my unbelief!"*
- **Faith and Reason:** Faith and reason work together. The Church teaches that faith is not opposed to reason; rather, faith builds on reason. We can use our minds to explore and understand God's revelation, but ultimately, faith allows us to go beyond human reason to accept divine mysteries. A quote from **St. Augustine**: *"I believe in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe."*
- **Faith and the Church:** Faith is not only a personal relationship with God but also involves the community of believers. When we profess faith in the Creed, for example, we are joining the whole Church in affirming the truths God has revealed. The Church nurtures our faith through the sacraments, liturgy, and the teaching of the Magisterium (the Church's teaching authority).
- **Faith in Jesus Christ:** The heart of the Christian faith is belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Through faith, we enter into a personal relationship with Him. As **Romans 10:17** states: *"Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ."* Our faith grows as we listen to God's word and live it out in our lives.

How Revelation and Faith Work Together

In the context of the RCIA, it's important to show how **Revelation** and **Faith** are closely connected:

- **God reveals, and we respond.** Through Scripture and Tradition, God reveals who He is and what He desires for us. Our response to this revelation is faith—trusting in His word, following His commandments, and living according to the teachings of Christ.

- **Revelation invites us into a relationship with God.** Faith is our response to that invitation. It's not just about accepting facts about God but about entering into a loving relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.
- **Dynamic Interaction:** - The relationship is a dialogue—a two-way communication between God and us

Practical Application

Individuals gradually grow in faith by learning about what God has revealed through the Bible, Tradition, and the teachings of the Church. Their journey involves:

- **Hearing and learning about God's revelation** in Scripture and Tradition.
- **Responding to God's invitation** by developing a deeper faith in Christ.
- **Living out that faith** through the sacraments, prayer, and Christian moral life.
 - **Trust in God:** Relying on God's goodness and promises.
 - **Obedience of Faith:** Following God's will, as demonstrated by figures like Abraham.
 - **Community Aspect:** Faith is nurtured within the Church community through worship, sacraments, and fellowship

In the Catholic faith, Revelation and Faith are deeply interconnected. **Revelation** provides us with the knowledge of who God is and what He desires for us, guiding our understanding of salvation and the teachings of the Church. **Faith** is our response to that revelation—it is both the means by which we accept God's grace and the driving force that transforms our lives, enabling us to live in accordance with His will. Together, Revelation and Faith form the foundation of the Catholic Christian life, leading believers into a deeper relationship with God and ultimately to salvation.

Practical Steps to Embrace Revelation and Faith

Engage with Scripture and Tradition:

- **Read the Bible Regularly:** Start with the Gospels to learn about Jesus' life and teachings.
- **Learn from the Church:** Participate in Mass, listen to homilies, and engage with Church teachings.

Cultivate a Life of Prayer:

- **Personal Prayer:** Spend time talking and listening to God daily.
- **Communal Prayer:** Join prayer groups or participate in communal devotions like the Rosary.

Participate in the Sacraments:

- **Baptism:** The gateway to life in the Spirit.
- **Eucharist:** Nourishes our faith and unites us with Christ.
- **Confirmation:** Strengthens our faith and deepens our bond with the Church.

CONVERSION

In the Catholic context, **conversion** refers to a personal and spiritual transformation where one turns away from sin and turns toward God. It can happen gradually over time or as a sudden, life-changing experience, such as the conversion of St. Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). Conversion is ongoing—it's not a one-time event but a continuous process of growing closer to God and aligning one's life with His will.

METANOIA

The term **Metanoia** comes from the Greek word meaning "a change of mind" or "repentance." In the New Testament, it refers to a deep, internal transformation of one's heart and mind. It involves not only recognizing past sins but committing to a new way of living in faithfulness to God. Metanoia calls for a complete reorientation of one's life toward God and His Kingdom.

Conversion is the act of turning to God and leaving behind a sinful way of life, while **Metanoia** is the internal transformation that accompanies this change, marked by repentance and a renewed way of thinking.

DOGMA

In the Catholic Church, **dogma** refers to divinely revealed truths about faith and morals that the Church has formally defined as necessary for all believers to accept. These truths are infallibly taught by the Church's **Magisterium** (the teaching authority of the Church, composed of the pope and the bishops in union with him) and are rooted in **Sacred Scripture** and **Sacred Tradition**.

When the Church proclaims a dogma, it is making clear a truth revealed by God that all Catholics are required to believe. This is not something the Church "creates" but rather something it has faithfully received and carefully preserved through the guidance of the **Holy Spirit**.

Examples of Dogmas:

- The belief in the **Trinity** (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
- The belief in the **Incarnation**, that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man.
- The **Immaculate Conception** of Mary, meaning she was conceived without original sin.

Reference: Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 88: "The Church's Magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas - when it proposes truths contained in divine Revelation."