



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE FAITH IN GOD?



GOSPEL



ANSWERS

JESUS WENT WITH THEM, BUT WHEN HE WAS ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE HOUSE, THE CENTURION SENT FRIENDS TO TELL HIM, "LORD, DO NOT TROUBLE YOURSELF, FOR I AM NOT WORTHY TO HAVE YOU ENTER UNDER MY ROOF. THEREFORE, I DID NOT CONSIDER MYSELF WORTHY TO COME TO YOU; BUT SAY THE WORD AND LET MY SERVANT BE HEALED." - LUKE 7: 1-10

SAINTS & INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

ST GAETANO CATANOSO

St Gaetano led a simple life as a parish priest but made a huge impact in the world because of his great faith in God and devotion to the Eucharist. He not only spent his life spreading the faith to nearby towns and villages, but he started a group of nuns who would later continue his mission to the Philippines.



ST ANGELA OF THE CROSS

St Angela was inspired in her faith by the example of her employer who encouraged her to pray. Angela showed her great faith in God through delicate health and persevering in helping the poor.



TEAM DISCUSSION

After reading over the YOUCAT numbers on the following pages, how do you think the Youth Catechism answers the question of the week? Were there any words or ideas that you did not fully understand that you would like to understand better?

ANSWER IN YOUR OWN WORDS:



YOUCAT NUMBERS FOR THIS WEEK



#20 HOW CAN WE RESPOND TO GOD WHEN HE SPEAKS TO US? To respond to God means to believe him. Anyone who wants to believe needs a heart that is ready to listen. In many ways God seeks contact with us. In every human encounter, in every moving experience of nature, in every apparent coincidence, in every challenge, every suffering, there is a hidden message from God to us. He speaks even more clearly to us when he turns to us in his Word or in the voice of our conscience. He addresses us as friends. Therefore we, too, should respond as friends and believe him, trust him completely, learn to understand him better and better, and accept his will without reservation.

#21 FAITH-WHAT IS IT? Faith is knowledge and trust. It has seven characteristics: Faith is a sheer gift of God, which we receive when we fervently ask for it.

- Faith is the supernatural power that is absolutely necessary if we are to attain salvation.
- Faith requires the free will and clear understanding of a person when he accepts the divine invitation.
- Faith is absolutely certain, because Jesus guarantees it.
- Faith is incomplete unless it leads to active love.
- Faith grows when we listen more and more carefully to God's Word and enter a lively exchange with him in prayer.
- Faith gives us even now a foretaste of the joy of heaven.

Many people say that to believe is not enough for them; they want to know. The word "believe", however, has two completely different meanings. If a parachutist asks the clerk at the airport, "Is the parachute packed safely?" and the other man answers casually, "Hmm, I believe so", then that will not be enough for him; he would like to know it for sure. But if he has asked a friend to pack the parachute, then the friend will answer the same question by saying, "Yes, I did it personally. You can trust me!" And to that the parachutist will reply, "Yes, I believe you." This belief is much more than knowing; it means assurance. And that is the kind of belief that prompted Abraham to travel to the Promised Land; that is the faith that caused the MARTYRS to stand fast till death; that is the faith that still today upholds Christians in persecution. A faith that encompasses the whole person.

#22 HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT BELIEVING? Someone who believes is seeking a personal union with God and is ready to believe God in everything that he shows (reveals) about himself. At the beginning of faith, there is often an emotional disturbance or uneasiness. The person senses that the visible world and the normal course of things cannot be all there is. He feels touched by a mystery and follows the traces that point to the existence of God and gradually finds the confidence to speak to God and finally to unite himself to him in freedom. In John's Gospel it says, "No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (Jn 1:18). That is why we must believe Jesus, the Son of God, if we want to know what God would like to communicate to us. Believing, therefore, means accepting Jesus and staking one's whole life on him.



CONQUEST WEEKLY ACTIVITY GUIDE

#373: HOW SHOULD A FAMILY LIVE ITS FAITH TOGETHER?

A Christian family should be a miniature church. All Christian family members are invited to strengthen one another in faith and to outdo one another in their zeal for God. They should pray for and with each other and collaborate in works of charity. Parents stand in for their children with their own faith, have them baptized, and serve as their models of faith. That means that parents should make it possible for their children to experience how valuable and beneficial it is to live in the familiar presence of the loving God. At some time, however, the parents, too, will learn from their children's faith and hear how God speaks through them, because the faith of young people is often accompanied by greater devotion and generosity and "because the Lord often reveals to a younger person what is better" (St. Benedict of Nursia, Rule, chap. 3, 3).

#341: CAN SOMEONE EARN HEAVEN BY GOOD WORKS?

No. No man can gain heaven merely by his own efforts. The fact that we are saved is God's grace, pure and simple, which nevertheless demands the free cooperation of the individual. Although it is grace and faith through which we are saved, nevertheless, our good works ought to show the love produced by God's action in us.

#307: WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is the power by which we assent to God, acknowledge his truth, and commit ourselves personally to him. Faith is the path created by God leading to the truth that is God himself. Because Jesus is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), this faith cannot be merely an attitude or "confidence" about something or other. On the one hand, the faith has definite contents, which the Church professes in the CREED (= profession of faith), and it is her duty to safeguard them. Anyone who wants to accept the gift of faith, in other words, anyone who wants to believe, acknowledges this faith, which has been preserved constantly through the ages and in many different cultures. On the other hand, part of faith is a trusting relationship to God with heart and mind, with all one's emotional strength. For faith becomes effective only through charity, practical love (see Gal 5:6). Whether someone really believes in the God of love is shown, not in his solemn affirmations, but rather in charitable deeds.

#337: HOW ARE WE SAVED?

No man can save himself. Christians believe that they are saved by God, who for this purpose sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world. For us salvation means that we are freed by the Holy Spirit from the power of sin and have been brought back from the realm of death to a life without end, a life in God's presence. Paul observes: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). Sin cannot exist in the presence of God, who is justice and goodness through and through. If sin is worth nothing, what about the sinner, then? In his love, God found a way by which he destroys sin but saves the sinner. He makes him "right" again, that is to say, righteous or just. That is why from ancient times salvation has also been called justification. We are not made just by our own power. A man can neither forgive his own sins nor rescue himself from death. For that, God has to act on our behalf—out of mercy, not because we could deserve or merit it. In Baptism, God grants us "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom 3:22). Through the Holy Spirit, who is poured out into our hearts, we take part in the death and Resurrection of Christ—we die to sin and are born to new life in God. The divine gifts of faith, hope, and charity come over us and make us able to live in the light and to obey God's will.