

ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 8

The Church

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Our Sunday Visitor

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Nihil Obstat

Rev. Fr. Jeremiah L. Payne, S.Th.L.
Censor Librorum, Diocese of Orlando

Imprimatur

✠ Most Rev. John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando
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Revelation and Faith

Let Us Pray

Leader: Holy Lord, you have made yourself known to us through words and actions. Increase our faith!

“You will show me the path to life,
abounding joy in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.” **Psalm 16:11**

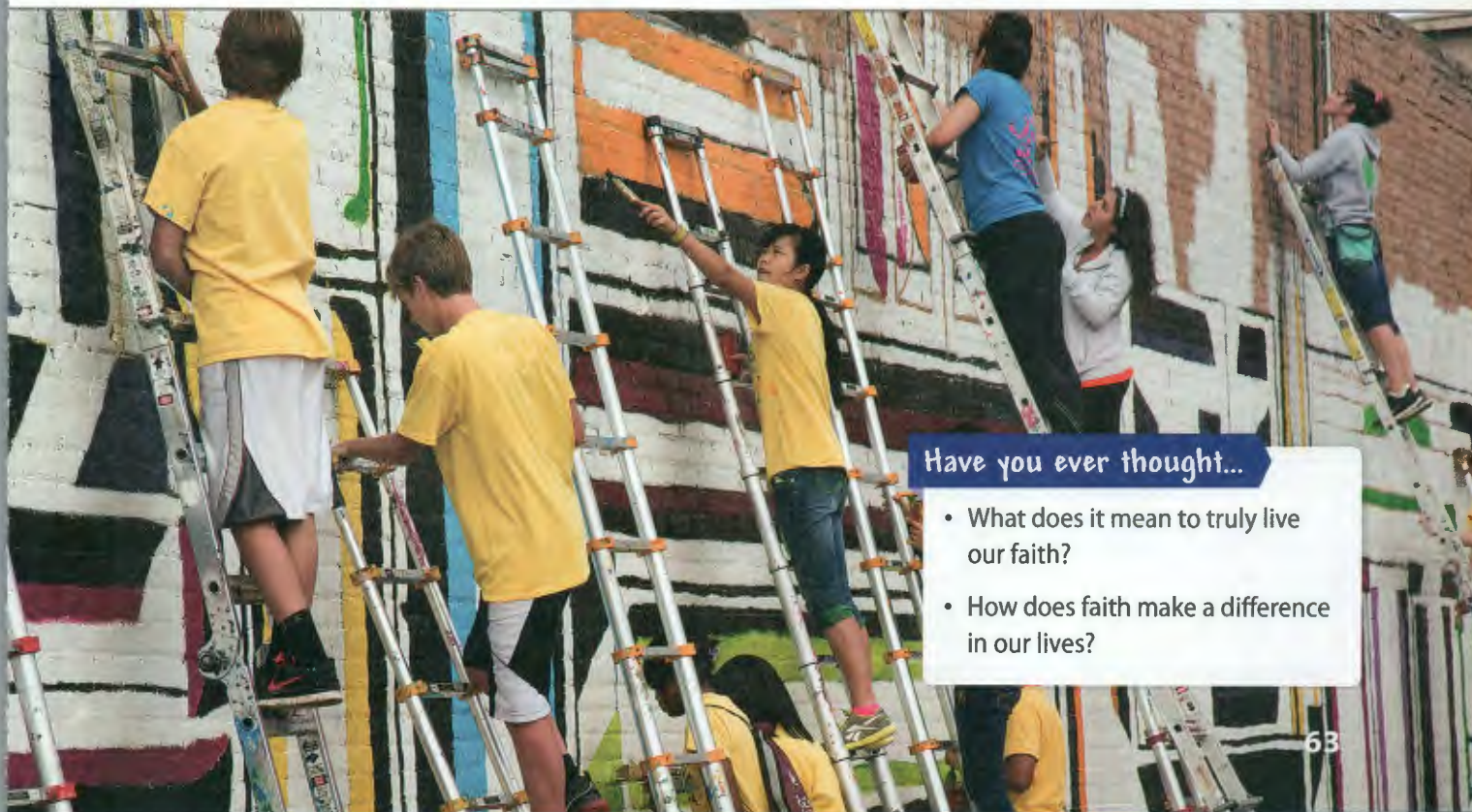
All: Help us be open to your ways, Lord. Make our faith stronger.

Scripture

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

James 2:14–17

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Have you ever thought...

- What does it mean to truly live our faith?
- How does faith make a difference in our lives?

Getting Started

In this chapter, you will learn more about God's Revelation and explore how we respond in faith to what God has made known to us. You will look at how faith affects the way we live.



Catholic Faith Words

- Sacred Tradition
- faith
- Church
- councils
- virtue
- Theological Virtues

In the chart below, write names of some people who showed great faith from the Old Testament and the New Testament. Then write how each person demonstrated his or her faith.



Examples of Faith	
Old Testament	
•	_____

•	_____

New Testament	
•	_____

•	_____

NAME

The Practice of Faith Faith and works go hand-in-hand (see James 2:14–17). Maybe you’ve heard the expression, “practice what you preach.” As Catholics, we practice what we believe. On the chart lines, list a Catholic belief in the left-hand column. Across from the belief, name one way that you practice that belief. In other words, how do you live what you believe?

Catholics Believe

Catholics Practice

God created us in his image and likeness.

→ We treat each other with respect.





God Made Known

Where do we find God's Revelation?

We all have doubts and uncertainties at times, even about God and his presence in the world. Sometimes it's hard to have faith, especially when things aren't going very well. You might even wonder what it means to have faith, to believe in God and all that he has made known to us. Faith is a gift that God gives to each of us. We each can accept this gift of faith, or reject it. By following up on the questions or doubts we have, we can get to the bottom of things. We can understand our faith better.

Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition

In order that the people would continue to hear the Good News of God's love, Jesus asked his followers to tell others all about him. The Apostles did just that, and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, they passed on the Good News through their preaching, writing, and baptizing.

The newly baptized believers first relied on the accounts and teachings of the Apostles and others who had known Jesus. They later turned to the letters of Saint Paul and other disciples, then to the Gospels recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

As the Church grew, the Apostles' successors, the bishops, looked to Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospel accounts about Christ, and they handed on verbally God's Word entrusted to them. They helped Christians interpret God's Word contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. **Sacred Tradition** is God's Word to the Church, safeguarded by the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, and handed down verbally—in her Creeds, Sacraments, and other teachings—to future generations.

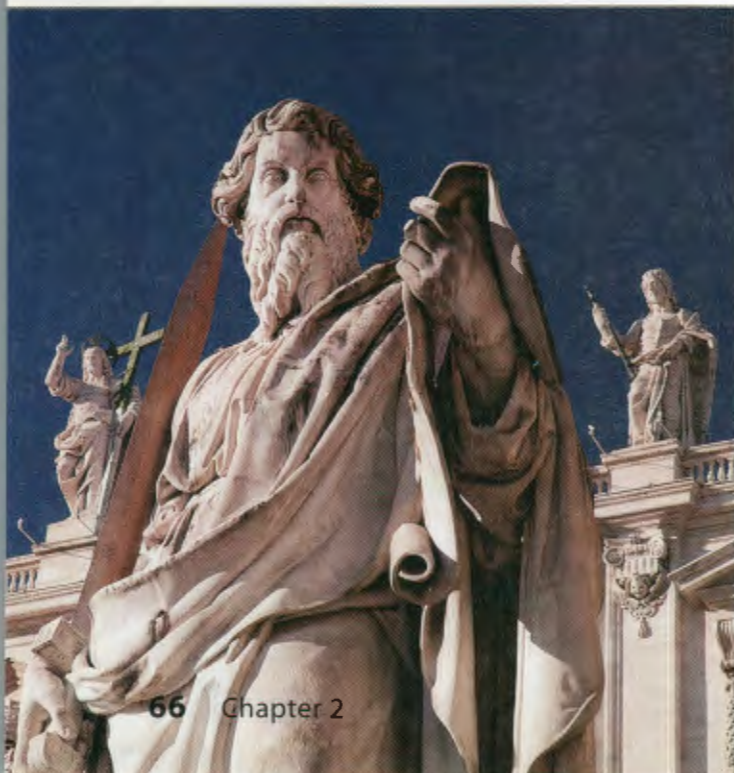
Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition together are the sources of God's Revelation to us. Scripture is the basis of the written Word of God, and Tradition is the Word of God handed down verbally since the time of the Apostles. Contained in them is the Deposit of Faith. We need both to help us understand who God is and our relationship with him.

Scripture

"This is good and pleasing to God our savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth."

1 Timothy 2:3-4

Statue of Saint Paul the Apostle in front of St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican, Rome



Handing It On

The Church strives to spread the message of God's Revelation by finding just the right words and actions that will help people say "yes" to God. In this way, the Church's leaders continue to share and apply the Word of God to the circumstances of our time, helping us to more fully know Jesus and live out his message.

In doctrine, the Church sets down in writing the important beliefs that are central for living a life of faith. An important example of this is a creed, or brief summary or statement of beliefs. Both the Apostles' and Nicene Creed capture the Sacred Tradition handed down from the Apostles.

Catholic Faith Words

Sacred Tradition God's Word to the Church, safeguarded by the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, and handed down verbally—in her Creeds, Sacraments, and other teachings—to future generations

We proclaim the Nicene Creed at Mass. In worship, like the Mass and the Seven Sacraments, the Church comes together to give God thanks and praise. In the life of the members of the Church, we see the faith of Christians put into action, especially for those who are in need of God's help.



THINK

What's one thing about your faith that you feel is certain?

What's one thing that you want more clarity about?



We Respond in Faith

What does it mean to have faith?

Most of us enjoy receiving a gift and hope it will be something we like. If we get something useless, we may pretend we like it, but then put it aside. The gift of **faith** that God gives to us is similar because he freely gives it. We may either accept or reject it.

Faith is a gift from God, but it is also your response to God's invitation to share in his life. It is your acceptance of what God has made known through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, and by your willingness to

let his love make a difference in your life. You show your faith through the things you think, the decisions you make, and your actions. Faith involves the whole of you: your heart, will, mind, and soul. Faith is a way of seeing life and the people around you as if through God's eyes.

Having faith in God influences our whole life. Because of faith, we come to an understanding of God's greatness and how unique we are. Faith leads us to be thankful to God for all he has given us and show our gratitude for others as well. Faith helps us to understand and respect the unity and dignity of people, and lets us put our trust in God, no matter what is happening in our lives.

Because people are imperfect, we need God's help to have faith. This is why Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit when he died. The Holy Spirit makes Christ present to us. With the Holy Spirit's help, it is possible for someone to have faith. But no one is ever forced to have faith. We are drawn toward faith by the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives. It is by God's grace—the free gift of his own life and help—that we are able to believe.

Catholic Faith Words

faith the Theological Virtue that makes it possible for us to believe in God and all that he has revealed. Faith leads us to obey God. It is both a gift from God and a free, human choice.

Church the community of all baptized people who believe in the Holy Trinity and follow Jesus

councils gatherings of bishops during which they speak about the faith of the Church, her teachings, and important issues

Having faith and believing in God is always a free decision. And it takes work. We have to respond to the gift God has given us so that our faith can grow and mature. One way we can strengthen our faith is by reading Sacred Scripture. Another is by asking Jesus to help us believe and increase our faith as one father did in the Gospel according to Mark: “I do believe, help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24). We rely on the Holy Spirit to do both.

➤ **When have you caught yourself believing in something that did not seem possible?**

Belief: An Act of the Church

Not only is “believing,” or having faith, a human act, but it is also an act of the community of people who believe in the Trinity. The community of baptized believers who believe in the Holy Trinity and follow Jesus is the **Church**. No one is alone when they have faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our faith in God flows from the faith of the Church.

In turn, the faith of the Church offers us support and helps us to become stronger in faith throughout our lifetime. Everything that the Church does and teaches relates to God’s Word revealed in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

One of the ways that the Catholic Church interprets and explains Sacred Tradition is by gathering bishops in **councils** to speak about the faith of the Church, her teachings, and important issues.

The last council was the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, between 1962 and 1965. Vatican II took place in Vatican City, Italy, beginning in October 1962. The council of over 2,500 bishops met in Saint Peter’s Basilica. This council produced teachings on the topics listed in the chart:

Topics of Vatican II	
• Revelation	• What the Church Is
• Liturgy and Worship	• How the Church Lives in the Modern World
• Religious Freedom	• Communications
• Ecumenism	• Bishops, Priests, Laity, and Religious Life
• Missions	• Education
• Eastern Churches	• Non-Christians

IDENTIFY

Imagine that you are a parent and you want to help your child to grow in faith. Identify five important things that you would do to help your child grow in faith.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



David Kills Goliath, by Reni Guido, 17th Century.

Strength through Faith

How does faith affect the way I live?

Faith is much more than belief in creeds and doctrines. If we look at some of the important people in Sacred Scripture, we see that faith made a difference in the way they

lived their lives. We can see the Holy Spirit giving them the initial promptings to turn to God the Father. The Holy Spirit is in our hearts, too, guiding us to see and believe in what the Son has revealed.

We find accounts in all four of the Gospels that Jesus often healed or forgave someone because they had faith in him. He would tell them that their faith in him had saved them. Jesus' followers understood the importance of faith for life.

Scripture

"The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!'

The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to [this] mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you."

Luke 17:5-6

> **What do you think Jesus is telling his followers in this passage?**

The Effects of Faith

- Abraham and Sarah were able to take the risk of moving to a foreign land because they believed that God would keep his promise to make them the parents of a great nation.
- David was willing to face the giant because he believed God would help him even though he was so much smaller than Goliath.
- The Apostle Paul, after he converted to belief in Jesus, continued to preach the Gospel even when people tried to imprison and persecute him.
- Mary, the Mother of Jesus, had such faith in God and trusted in him so much that she said "yes" to the angel at the Annunciation.
- Peter was the first of all the Apostles to identify Jesus' divinity, saying, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (**Matthew 16:16**).

Place a check mark next to the person whose experience you most identify with.



Catholic Faith Words

virtue a good spiritual habit that strengthens and enables you to do what is right and good. They develop over time with our practice and openness to God's grace.

Theological Virtues gifts from God that help us believe in him, trust in his plan for us, and love him as he loves us; they are faith, hope, and charity

With openness to God as a gift from God, faith is one of the Theological Virtues. A **virtue** is a good spiritual habit that enables you to do what is right and make good moral decisions. Virtues guide our conduct and our emotions. The word *theological* is a combination of the two Greek words for "God" and "word."

The three **Theological Virtues**, faith, hope, and charity (also called "love"), point us toward God. These gifts from God make it possible for Christians to live in relationship with God. They help us believe in him, trust in his plan for us, and love him as he loves us. They are the three virtues from which all other virtues flow. If a follower does not have them, it would be difficult to possess any other virtues. Saint Paul writes "So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

- Faith helps us to see beyond what is purely human, to recognize the mystery of God in our hearts, in other people, and in all of creation.
- Hope sets our vision in the future, helping us realize that no matter what happens on Earth, God will keep his promise to bring us to everlasting life. It helps us put our trust in God and his plan for us.
- Charity, or love, makes faith and hope concrete—through love of God we join with the Church in working with God to spread his Kingdom and make his reign known.

➤ **Why do you think Saint Paul says that the greatest of the Theological Virtues is love?**



Anchors are often shown as symbols of the Theological Virtue of hope.

IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

God reveals his love to us, and we are free to respond in love by what we say and do.

- God's Revelation is contained in his written Word of Sacred Scripture and his Word in Sacred Tradition safeguarded by the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, handed down from generation to generation.
- Faith is both a Theological Virtue (a gift from God) and a human choice and action. Faith is an individual act and act of the Church as a whole; the faith of the Church nourishes and strengthens the faith of each of us.
- Faith makes a difference in our lives; others can see by the way we live that we believe in God.

Our Catholic Life

You may have heard this saying before: "Faith without works is dead." It is a summary of the passages in James 2:14–26, in which James explains the effect our faith should have on our lives even outside of our Church. The Catholic Church demonstrates the power of her faith by performing **good works** all over the world, whether in relief settings or in missionary work. Good works are performed locally, too, in parishes and our neighborhoods. Catholic Churches work with each other and those from other faith communities to improve the lives of people in schools, neighborhoods, towns, and cities. We do this to show our gratitude for everything God has given us, and to honor the human dignity of everyone, because we are all made in God's image.

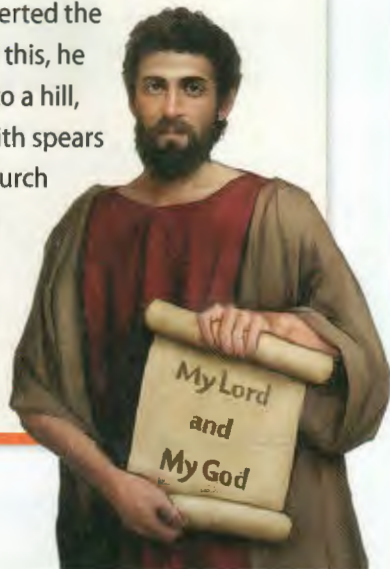


➤ How are you involved in the good works performed in your school or parish?

People of Faith

Saint Thomas, d. 72

Saint Thomas is best known for his response to reports of Jesus' Resurrection. Because he didn't believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, he is called "Doubting Thomas." Sacred Tradition says that after Pentecost, Thomas preached in India. A large group there still call themselves "Christians of Saint Thomas." When Thomas came to the city of King Misdai, he converted the king's wife and son. For this, he was led out of the city to a hill, and pierced through with spears by four soldiers. The Church celebrates his feast day on July 3.



For more, go to aliveinchrist.osv.com

INTERVIEW

Think of a Saint about whom you know. Imagine that you get an opportunity to spend time with him or her. What three questions you would like to ask about his or her relationship with God?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Celebration of the Word

Leader: Let us begin with the sign of our faith, the Sign of the Cross.

In today's reading, we hear the cry, "I do believe, help my unbelief!"

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Read Mark 9:14–29.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: Lord, you alone provide the grace to help us believe.

With all our heart, we pray to you:

All: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

Leader: When we are in doubt,
when we feel weak,
when we feel you have abandoned us,

All: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

Leader: When we want to make choices we know are wrong,
when we wonder whether or not you are real,
when we lose all our hope,

All: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.


Leader: When everything seems to be going right,
when we have more to be thankful for than to ask for,

when we need to remember that all our blessings come from you,

All: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

Leader: When we have lost our way,
when it seems like our prayers go unanswered,
when we doubt ourselves,

All: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

 *Sing or play "Open My Eyes"*

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A Work with Words Complete each sentence with the correct term from the Word Bank.

Church	virtue
councils	the Gospel
Sacred Tradition	inspiration
canon	faith

- _____ is the Word of God safeguarded by the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, handed down verbally through the generations.
- One of the ways that the Church interprets and applies Sacred Tradition is by gathering bishops in _____ to speak about the faith of the Church, her teachings, and important issues.
- _____ is the Theological Virtue that makes it possible for us to believe in God and the things that he has revealed to us.
- The _____ is the community of baptized believers who believe in the Holy Trinity and follow Jesus.
- A good spiritual habit that strengthens and enables you to do what is right is known as a _____.

B Check Understanding Indicate whether the following statements are true or false. Then rewrite false statements to make them true.

- Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition together are sources of God’s Revelation to us. **True/False**

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is founded on the commissioning of the Apostles by Jesus to share in his ministry and work as Church leaders. **True/False**

- Sacred Scripture is God’s Word handed down verbally to the Church in her Creeds, Sacraments, and other teachings. **True/False**

- The Theological Virtues—mercy, grace, and peace—are the three virtues from which all other virtues flow. **True/False**

- Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture together ensure that what the Church writes and hands down through the generations comes from God. **True/False**

C Make Connections On a separate sheet of paper, write a one-paragraph response to the questions: Think of someone—described in the Bible or from your life—who has great faith. What role does faith play in that person’s life? What have you learned from that person about your own faith?