



The year of Faith

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The Year of Faith is different from other holy years for it stands out in importance, urgency and vision. It is an alarming and loud wakeup call! The Holy Father called this “Year” in response to a serious and urgent crisis of Faith that is affecting western civilization and the many people within it.

What could be more important than our relationship with God and our understanding of that relationship and how we live it? Yet our Faith, our relationship with God, is increasingly threatened by secular movements which strive to undermine and rupture it, to replace Faith with the alleged certainty of science and technology, secularism and relativism (no objective Truth). Faith is no longer influencing society and culture;

rather it is the other way around, for many Christians at times are more concerned with what the world thinks than with what Jesus calls us to be. There are voices of discontent which claim that the Church is too this or too that. When morality is attacked, the target often centers on the Catholic Church. We see evidence of all this in popular culture, in government, in our schools, in the media, in attempts to de-Christianize our holy days, to eradicate God from the marketplace of ideas and to foist upon us a society of what? In many instances it is succeeding. Many of our churches are emptying and even being shut down. Most of us know someone who has turned their back on Christ and His Church, leaving to join other groups, or have stopped believing in God all together.

We can love only what we know, and we must know Jesus and His Church better! The crisis of Faith is threefold: too many Catholics don't know their Faith, don't live their Faith, and don't give witness to their Faith. The remedy is threefold: each of us must **know our Faith** better (learn what the Church teaches), each of us must **grow in holiness** (deepen our relationship with Jesus), each of us must **proclaim** the Gospel (witness our Faith).

It is no coincidence that this Year of Faith is linked to the New Evangelization and coincides with the 50th anniversary of Vatican II and the 20th anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Church knows that before we can evangelize others we must be evangelized ourselves: *"Modern man listens more to witnesses than to teachers, and if one is a teacher, it is because he is a witness"* (Pope Paul VI). We cannot give what we do not have: It is in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that we can discover and rediscover in a systematic and organic manner the knowledge of our Faith. *"On page after page, we find that what is presented here is no theory, but an encounter with a Person who lives within the Church"* (Pope Benedict XVI), nourishing us with the profession of faith, the liturgy, the sacraments and prayer.

We cannot inspire what we do not live: It is in the Gospel that we can rediscover the healing love of Jesus Christ. It is in knowing and loving the sacrifice of the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament that our Faith is nurtured and grows.

We can begin our journey in this Year of Faith by thanking God for His precious gift of our own Faith and asking the Lord to help us make it grow and thrive. Then, what can **we** do to help remedy the crisis of Faith? Different people will be called to do different things:

✠ **know our Faith** : memorize the Nicene Creed; read about the life of your favourite saint; read Scripture (start with the Gospels); deepen our knowledge and understanding of what the Church teaches (read Pope Benedict's *Porta Fidei*, a section of the Catechism daily, some of the Vatican II documents – all available online).

✠ **grow in holiness** : pray the rosary; pray a novena; set aside time (or more time) for daily prayer; go to church early and spend time before the Blessed Sacrament; know the Mass and actively participate in it; attend a week day Mass; make a good confession; join in or start a prayer group.

✠ **proclaim** : wear a cross; say grace before meals (even at restaurants); visit someone in your parish who is house-bound or bed-ridden or run an errand for them; hand out holy cards; give a gift of a rosary, share media (podcasts, CDs, DVDs); tell someone what a difference God has made in your life; introduce others to the Catholic Faith; invite someone to Mass.

The Church has called us, yes each one of us, individually and together, to reflect upon, grow in

knowledge of and deepen our Faith. We have an opportunity to fall more deeply in love with our Lord, to again say yes to Jesus and to recommit ourselves to His Church. If your parish is participating in the Year of Faith, please join in. If not and you are alone, **BE NOT AFRAID** to live the Year of Faith, for you are sharing it with Jesus. The Year of Faith is His gift to you! Make the Year of Faith your gift to Him!

Peter and Linda Krushelnyski

Heavenly Father,
send forth your Holy Spirit
to stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith
and deepen my relationship
with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News.
Open my heart to hear the Gospel
and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others.
Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth
and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life,
through my words and actions.

In moments of hesitation, remind me:

If not me, then **who** will proclaim the Gospel?

If not now, then **when** will the Gospel be proclaimed?

If not the truth of the Gospel, then **what** shall I proclaim?

God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit
I might hear the call of the New Evangelization to deepen my faith,
grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel
and courageously witness to the saving grace
of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.