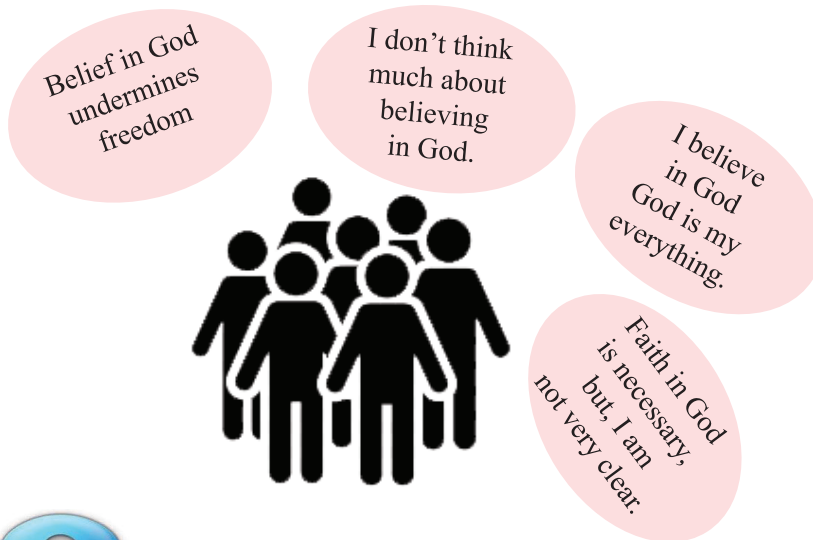




## Chapter 3

# Christian Faith: Content and Characteristics



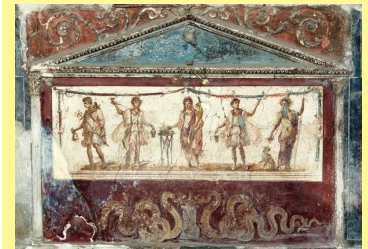
Haven't you heard different perceptions about faith? Don't we need more clarity on this? The search for God existed through all ages. Here are a few evidences from history:

1. Images of deities are found in ancient cave paintings.
2. In all cultures including tribal societies, concepts of God existed.
3. Epics abound in God concepts.
4. God was an important subject for ancient philosophers.
5. Religions are the manifestation of man's search for God.

### Has Man's Search for God Been Answered?

#### God Reveals Himself

Divine revelation began with the creation, continued with the election of Israel and consummated in Messiah. **Because human intelligence is limited, he cannot fully know God. Therefore, Man's search for God is completely answered by God himself. The invisible God lovingly reveals himself through his creation and objects of creation (Rom 1:20). We**



Ancient Roman Family Gods



Egyptian Mummy



Have you not thought about God?  
Under what circumstances did you think so?  
Share it.



What is the limitation of man's search for God?  
What is the need for God to reveal Himself?  
(CCC 37)

see the fullness of all revelation in Messiah. In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son (Heb 1:2).

### What is Faith?

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen (Heb 11:1). Faith is man's response to God who reveals himself through Jesus Christ (CCC 142). Faith is our response to God who reveals himself, loves us, and gives himself to us.

### Characteristics of Faith - A Scriptural View

The following Bible passages explain the various features of faith.

Ex 4:5,8,31; 19:9	God and God-ordained leaders are unwaveringly acknowledged and honoured
Ps 36:6	Since God is faithful, men are saved by faith; the righteous live by faith
Rom 1:17	The one who is righteous will live by faith
Mk 11: 20-24, Mt 9:18-26	Faith leads to dependence on God
Jn 3:12-16,36	Faith gives eternal life
Rom 3: 22, Heb 11:6	Those who take refuge in God believe that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him

### Characteristics of Faith

#### 1. Faith is a Divine Gift

Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the living God. When Peter declared his faith, Jesus said: "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Mt 16:17). Jesus makes us understand that faith does not come from human abilities, but is a gift from the Father in heaven. It is the Holy Spirit who leads us to faith. The faith is the gift of God because it is God who gives us the desire to seek God and the revelations while seeking.



Discuss the relevance of faith in each other and faith in God in everyday life.



**Why believe?  
To attain eternal  
salvation**  
CCC 161,826



What are the characteristics of faith?

## 2. Faith is a Mystery

“Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God’s almighty power” (CCC 273). God reveals mysteries beyond human understanding to us believers.

## 3. Faith is a Human Act

Although faith is a gift of God, it is also a human act. It is perfectly compatible with human freedom and reason to trust God, seek him, and embrace the truths he has revealed.

## 4. Faith and Reason are Complementary

Faith and reason are two divine gifts given to man by God. We must nurture these two gifts. Reason without faith and faith without reason are equally harmful. Faith feeds reason. Reason makes faith meaningful. The relationship between faith and reason can be summed up in the words of St. Augustine: "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe."

## 5. Faith is a Gift to be Guarded

The life of faith is a pilgrimage. There may be many temptations and difficulties in this pilgrimage. So, we must be very careful to protect the gift of faith. It takes constant prayer and effort to remain in the faith until the end of life.

“For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end” (Heb 3:14).

## 6. Faith is Essential for Eternal Salvation

Eternal life is impossible without faith in Jesus (Jn 6:47). It is what Jesus taught and revealed, which helps us to believe and hope in eternal life. In Jesus is eternal salvation and eternal life (Jn 10:28). Whoever hears the word of Jesus and believes in him who sent him, has eternal life (Jn 5:24).

### Contents of Christian Faith (Fidei Depositum)

Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you (Mt 28:20). From this verse, it is clear that the content of the Christian faith is what Jesus taught. It consists mainly of four things:



Faith is 'God's gift and also a human act.' Analyse this based on your faith-life.



What is the limitation of reasoning?

### To Protect and Nurture Faith

1. Pray for faith
2. Study about faith
3. Lead a sacramental life
4. Accept what the Bible says and Church teaches about faith
5. Make friendship with people having deep faith
6. Fight the battle with faith and good conscience
7. Faith must be practised with love
8. Persist in abounding hope (CCC 162)

Belief	Celebrations	Lived	Prayed
The foundational dogmas of faith, also known as the Creed of the Catholic Church	Mainly Holy Qurbana, other sacraments, liturgy of the hours, feasts, devotions and sacramentals	Chief among these are the Ten Commandments and Gospel Statutes. It includes the precepts of the Church and exhortations of the Church	The Lord's Prayer and the various prayers of the Church

### The Creed of the Catholic Church

The Creed is a code of teachings that the Church believes. In the Catholic Church there are two forms of the Creed which are of particular importance.

#### (1) The Creed of the Apostles

#### (2) The Nicene-Constantinople Creed

We use the Nicene-Constantinople Creed in our liturgy. In Nicene Creed, we profess 'We believe'. In Apostles Creed we profess 'I believe'. Both these forms of creed contain what we believe. The Creed contains 12 mysteries of faith.



Divide into four groups and introduce the content of each part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to the class.

#### The Nicene-Constantinople Creed

The Nicene-Constantinople Creed  
The Nicene - Constantinople Creed, which we recite in the Holy Qurbana, was formulated in the two universal councils of Nicene (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381).

This is the core of the Catholic Church's creed. It is a special prayer that contains the basic dogmas of faith of the Church

The English word 'creed' is derived from the Latin verb 'credo' meaning 'I believe'.

### The 12 Truths Confessed in the Creed

1. Belief in one God, Almighty and Father
2. Belief in Jesus Christ, his only Son and Our Lord
3. Belief that this Son was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary
4. Belief that he suffered, died on the cross and was buried during the time of Pontius Pilate
5. Belief that he resurrected on the third day
6. Belief that he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father
7. Belief that he will come again to judge the living and the dead
8. Belief in one Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth and the giver of life
9. Belief in the Holy Catholic Church and the unity of Saints
10. Belief in one Baptism for the remission of sins
11. Belief in the resurrection of the body
12. Belief in eternal life

### Three Parts of The Creed

#### 1. Belief in the Holy Trinity

The basis of the mysteries of faith of the Church is the belief in the Holy Trinity. By the grace we receive through Baptism, we are called to share in the communion of the Holy Trinity.

#### 2. Faith in the Church

The Church is the people of God, the mystical body of the Messiah, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Messiah has entrusted the Church to continue his salvific mission.

#### 3. Faith in Eternal Life

The Church believes that there is eternal life after death and that each person attains heaven or hell according to their life in this world. **It is this belief about the heavenly life that equips us to fight against the evil and live in hope in the midst of sorrows and suffering in this world.** It is faith

Let the creed be like a mirror for you. Look at yourself in it to see whether you really believe all that you claim to believe. And rejoice every day in your faith.

**St. Augustine**



What are the challenges faced by today's generation in their life of faith? Discuss.



#### The Holy Virgin Mary: A Shining Model

The Holy Virgin Mary accepted the divine message and promise given by the angel Gabriel with faith. Mary remained firm in her faith throughout her life, even in the death of her dear son Jesus on the cross. It is because of this belief that the Virgin Mary is hailed as blessed by all generations.



that gives us strength in our life in this world that extends from birth to death. Beyond the momentary pleasures and sorrows, life of faith is of utmost importance. Even when all possibilities seem to be exhausted, true faith leads us to the enlightenment that nothing is impossible with God. Living according to the God-given faith, makes it possible to get a foretaste of eternal life. Adverse circumstances may tempt us to lose faith. But as we move forward in daily life with strong faith, faith becomes life in reality, and life becomes faith in action.

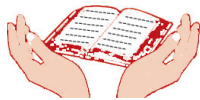


Organize a panel discussion on 'Jesus as a model for young people's faith lives.'

### **My Convictions**



1. My Christian faith is my response to God who revealed himself, loved me, and gave his life for me.
2. The content of Christian faith is what Jesus taught; The summation of it is the creed.
3. Faith must be reflected in life.



### **Let Us Read the Word of God**

The Gospel According to Matthew  
Chapters 15-21



### **Let Us Illumine Our Hearts**

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life" (Jn 5:24).



### **My Resolution**

Nothing can separate me  
from my faith in Jesus.