

Topic: Divine Revelation

IHM

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and
the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

“Bless us, O Lord, and these thy
gifts, which we are about to
receive. From thy bounty, through
Christ our Lord, Amen.”

Guest Speaker

Jeff & Kira Andrea, IHM Life Teen Band

Discussion Questions

- Please share:

- What struck you from today's Mass readings?
- We believe that God reveals God's self to us in a variety of ways; through Scripture, Tradition, nature, other people, and even the events and experiences of our daily lives.
- What are some ways you may have already experienced God's "Revelation" in both big and small ways?
- How has Scripture been, or could be, a help in knowing God's love and person?
- How might Tradition also be a revelation of God's love and purpose for us?
- What questions did this topic and readings raise in your heart or mind?

The Three-Step Process to Learning About God



- God gives a communication
 - (Revelation)
- We receive the communication
 - (Prayer, Scripture, Church, Nature, etc.)
- We respond to the communication
 - (Faith)

What is Revelation?

- Revelation: God's self-disclosure to us over time.
 - Revelation is a loving free gift.
 - God reveals so we can grow in relationship with God.
 - Revelation prompts our response of faith (love moves to love).
- "As prayer is the voice of [human beings] to God, so [divine] revelation is the voice of God to [human beings]."—John Cardinal Newman

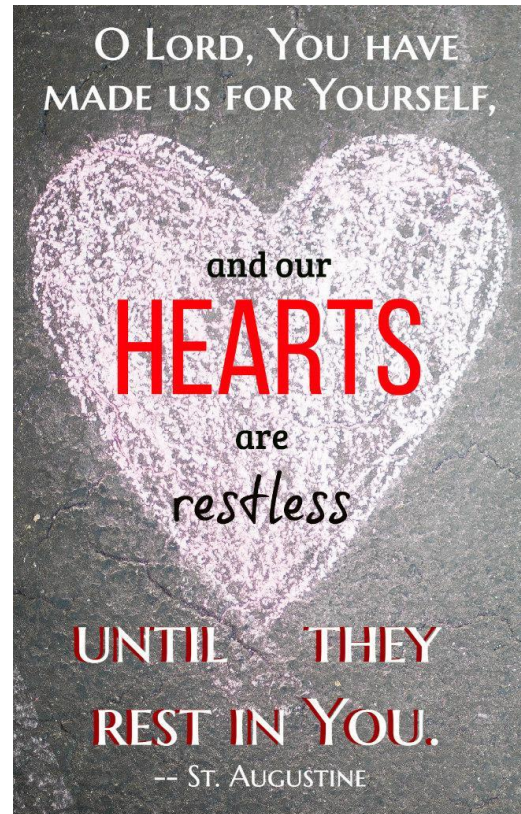
Revelation



We are made to KNOW, Love, and Serve God.

We can KNOW God only because he REVEALS Himself.

God reveals all the Truths necessary for our salvation.

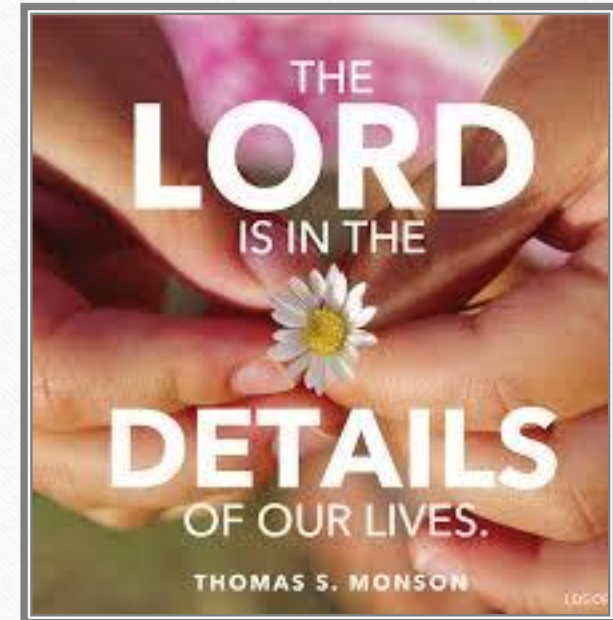


What does God reveal?

- Because we were created *by* God, we are destined *to* God.
- We come from love (Creation), are meant to receive that love (Revelation), respond to that love (Faith), and return to/become one with that love (Salvation/Heaven).
- Our truest “vocation” (calling from God) is to make a response to the love God has given us.

Three Ways God Reveals:

- Scripture
 - The Bible (Old & New Testaments)
- Tradition
 - (Apostles, Bishops, Magisterium)
- Our daily lives
 - Prayer, nature, others, ideas, insights, emotions, experience, etc
 - “The mystery of existence is always showing through the texture of ordinary lives.”—Flannery O’Connor



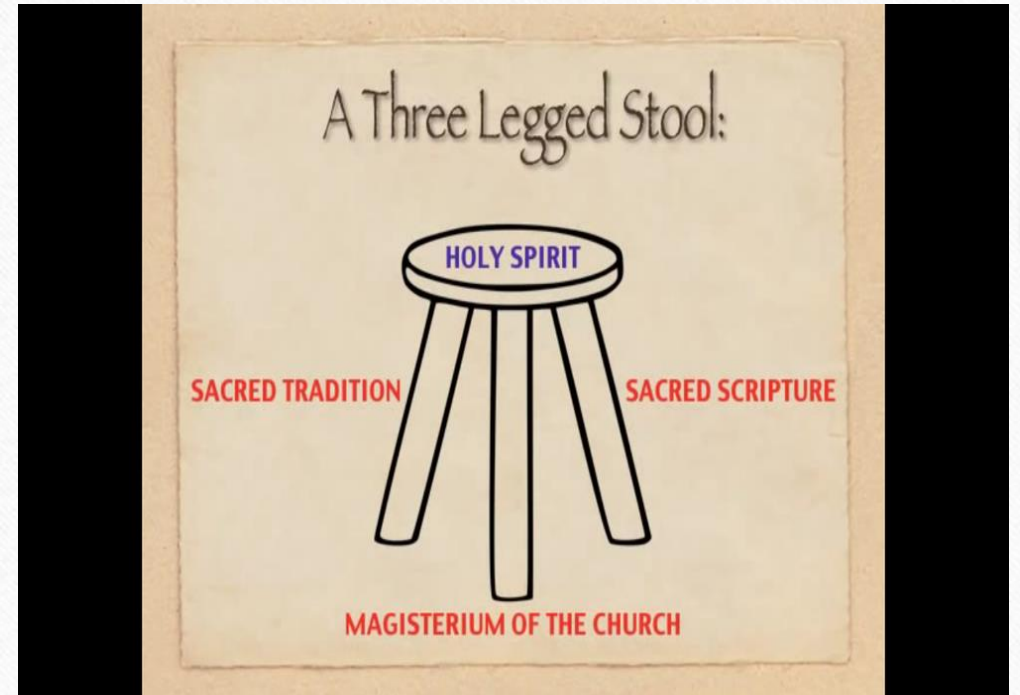
God's Revelation Through Scripture

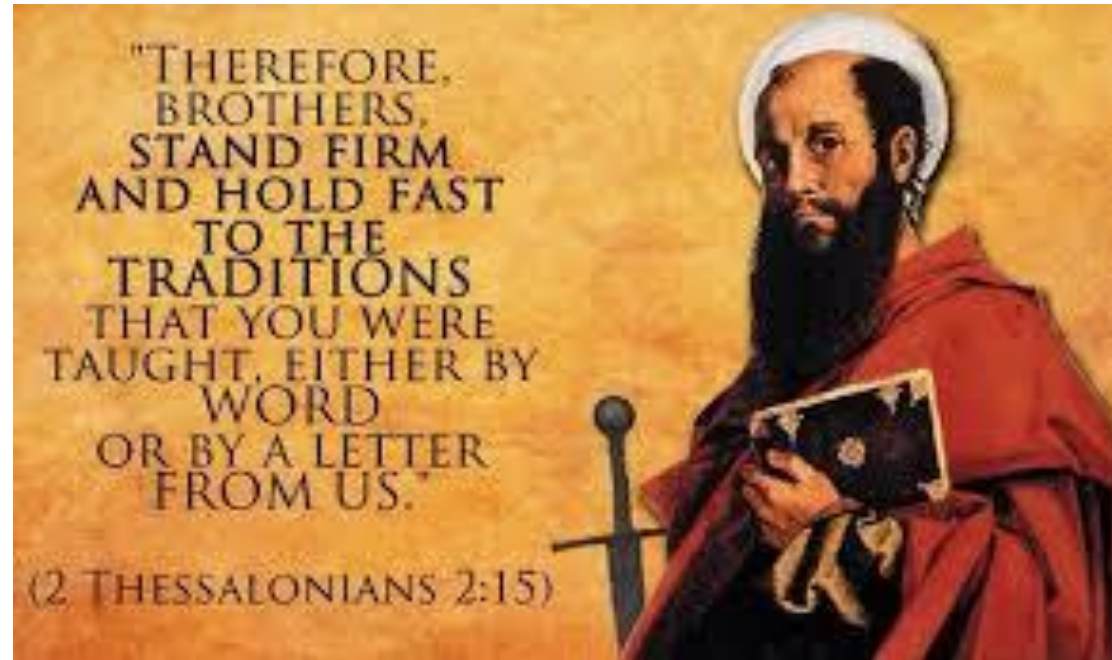


- The Bible is the inspired Word of God; written by human beings with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to teach without error those truths necessary for our salvation.
- Jesus Christ *fulfills* the Old Testament; He does not *abolish* it. God's story with humanity begins through the story of the Jewish people.
- The New Testament, particularly the 4 Gospels, tell us of the life and message of Jesus for our salvation.
- The Canon of Scripture was determined by the Church, and consists of 46 books in the Old Testament, and 27 books in the New Testament.

God's Revelation Through Tradition

- Tradition: the process of handing on beliefs and practices over time.
 - *Tradere*: 'to hand on'
 - A living process, NOT static: Beliefs grow, modify, and develop over time.
- Magisterium: "the official, authoritative teaching voice of the Church"
 - Bishops & the Pope, as successors to Peter and the Apostles (Apostolic Succession).
 - Guided by the same Holy Spirit that inspired the Sacred Scriptures, in order to faithfully pass on and interpret God's message of salvation.
 - Infallibility—gift of the Holy Spirit to the Pope (& Bishops when fully united together with the Pope; ie. At an Ecumenical Council) to teach without error when speaking *ex cathedra* ("from the chair") and proclaiming a doctrine pertaining to faith & morals (Vatican I).





‘Big T’ Traditions vs. ‘little t’ traditions

- ‘Big T’ Traditions
 - Authoritative beliefs and dogmas (Think Nicene & Apostles Creeds.)
 - Will not change, but can develop over time.
 - Ex.: Jesus is the Son of God, God is Trinity, Heaven exists
- ‘Little t’ traditions
 - Customs and practices
 - Can change over time
 - Ex.: no married priests, no meat on Fridays in Lent, responses at Mass

God's Revelation Through Others

- The Saints as models of holiness, intercessors praying with and for us, and as companions along our faith journey.
 - We are all called to be living “saints,” united with God in love; not merely those *canonized* by the Church.
- The Martyrs and the example of the early Church, many of whom died for their belief in God.
- Our family and friends
 - The family as the “Domestic Church,” and first place where we hear and learn of God.
- Ultimately, while faith is both personal and individual, it can only be possible through *communal* interactions.
 - “No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main...” —John Donne




“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...”

Hebrews 12:1



God's Revelation Through Creation



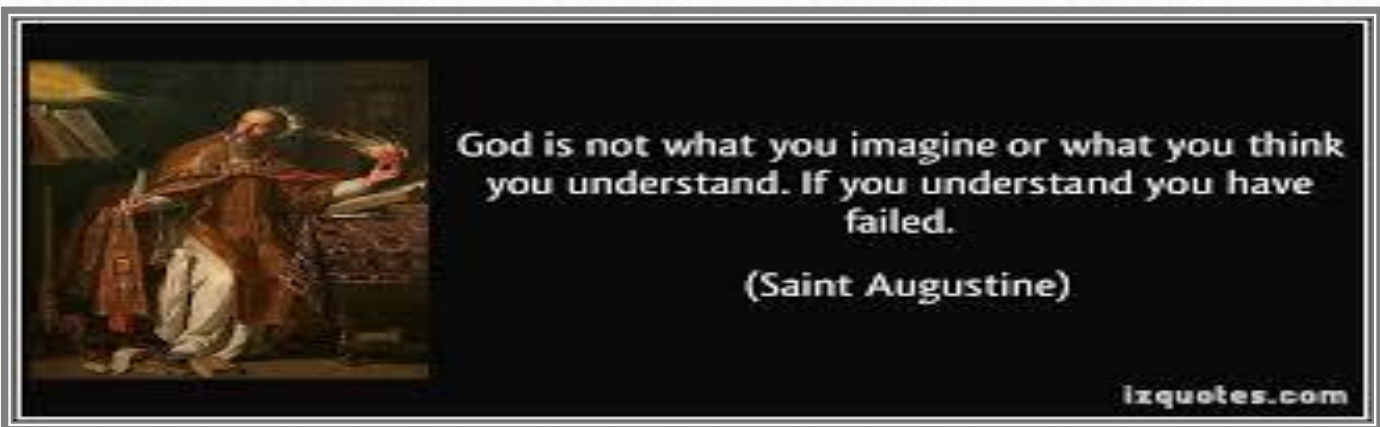
The heavens declare the glory of God;
the sky displays his handiwork.
Day after day it speaks out;
night after night it reveals his greatness.

Psalm 19:1-2

- By spending time in creation, we can be moved by the handiwork of the Creator.
- “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”—Gerard Manley Hopkins
- Science and faith should go hand in hand; for Catholics there is no conflict between the two (though there are limits to what both can reveal in their own spheres).
- We too are a part of creation, and therefore our own lives can help reveal to us a deeper sense of our Creator.

God's Revelation in Our Experiences & Intellect

- Finding God through the experiences of our lives.
 - “Finding God in all things...”—an insight from St. Ignatius of Loyola
 - Prayer & Daily Examen
- Finding God through the gift of our human intellect.
 - Theology as “faith seeking understanding.”—St. Anselm
 - St. Thomas Aquinas (patron saint of students) and his *Summa Theologica*.
 - Never finished. After a mystical vision, was reported to have said: "The end of my labors has come. All that I have written appears to be as so much straw after the things that have been revealed to me."
 - No words, images, metaphors can truly capture God fully. God is not a mathematical formula!



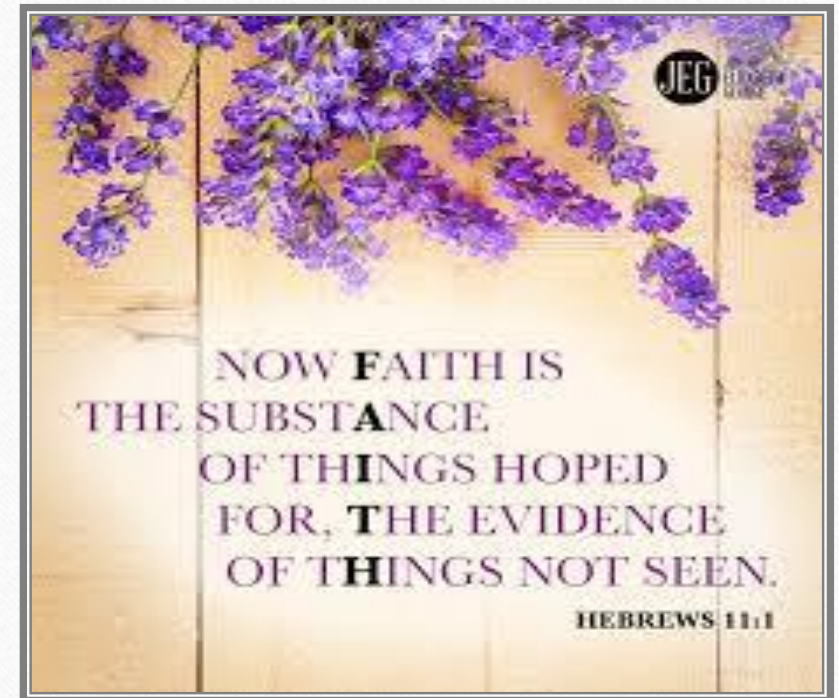
Faith: Our Response to Revelation



- Faith is our *personal* response to Revelation.
 - 'Belief' or 'Trust' in God's power, love, and forgiveness.
 - Willingness to commit to discipleship; conversion and transformation of our lives to the person, teachings, and values of Jesus Christ.
 - Commitment to evangelization; sharing the mission and message of Jesus with others (Relationship with God is *inclusive*, *NOT exclusive!*).
- Faith is a free gift.
 - Revelation is freely given by God; it is accepted freely by us. It can **NOT** be forced either way!

Faith *and* Doubt

- It is okay to have doubts!
 - “The enemy of faith is not doubt, but the suppression of doubt.”— John Davies
 - “Doubt isn't the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith.” --Paul Tillich
- Only by asking questions, can one begin to find answers; doubts and questions are part of the process of revelation and faith.
 - “Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart. And try to love the questions themselves.”-- Rainer Maria Rilke
- REMEMBER:
 - Theology is “faith seeking understanding.” (St. Anselm)
 - “If you understand it, it’s not God.” (St. Augustine)





Embracing
the Mystery
of God

Revelation & Faith as Mystery

- Revelation and faith are not problems to be solved (like a murder mystery or math equation), but rather mysteries that are meant to be lived/experienced/immersed in (like the mystery of love).

Closing Prayer

by Pedro Arrupe, SJ

Nothing is more practical
than finding God,

that is, than falling in love
in a quite absolute, final way.

What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.

It will decide what will get you out
of bed in the morning,
what you will do with your evenings,

how you will spend your weekends,
what you read, who you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love,
stay in love
and it will decide everything.

Amen.