

# Journey of Faith



## In Short:

- God reveals himself to us and to the world.
- God reveals himself through many means.
- God wants us to know him fully and clearly.



## Divine Revelation

Think back to when you started a special friendship. As your relationship developed, you revealed more of yourself—thoughts and feelings, likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams. Over time, your friend came to have a pretty good sense of *who you are*. Yet as close as you may be, no other person can claim to understand you completely. We continue to discover and reveal new aspects of ourselves as we move through life.

We can apply some of these same relationship principles to how God reveals himself to us. Remember that God is a loving communion of persons—three divine persons in one God. God is loving relationship and provides a model for how we, who are created in his image, are to live—in relationship with God and the community of his Church.

## Our Universal Desire for God

Throughout time, people have longed for and sought union with God. This drive to know God is reflected in various writings from our tradition:

- “My soul longs for you, O God” (Psalm 42:2).
- “Our hearts are restless till they find rest in You” (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.1).
- “The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God” (CCC 27).
- Blaise Pascal—mathematician, physicist, and theologian—wrote of a God-shaped hole in the heart of every person that can only be filled by God as made known through Jesus Christ.

- Which of the above best fits your experience of seeking and being sought by God?



## Creation and Human Experience

We can find God in his creation of the universe. In seascapes and star fields, in woodland hikes, in animals, and in the deep emotions we feel for other people, we find evidence of an all-knowing, all-loving Creator.

As “wonderfully made” human persons, we also find God through our human nature and experience (Psalm 139:14). We have a soul and are designed to seek truth, beauty, and happiness. In creating us, God grants us freedom, consciences, and the use of reason to guide us. The more we become aware of ourselves and our relationship to God, the more convinced we’ll be that God is present and offers us wholeness and real satisfaction.

*"Ever since the creation of the world, [God's] invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made."*

Romans 1:20

- Where do you experience God—in the rhythms of nature, a loving friend, the wonders of space?



## Divine Revelation in Scripture

God didn't just create the world and leave us to our own devices (CCC 50). Our Creator communicates his love and will to us, for us. This is important, because there are moral and religious truths that reason and intelligence alone cannot fully grasp.

**Divine revelation** is God's making himself and his saving plan known to us. Just as we reveal our hearts to a friend, God shares his will with us and invites us to friendship.

God reveals himself and his plan *within history and to people*. From Adam, Eve, and Noah to St. Paul and the early Church, sacred Scripture contains the inspired and inerrant witness to God's presence, actions, and saving works.

Jesus is the full revelation of God, the Word of God made flesh who "made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Jesus is the historical and human "face of God" and mediator between God and all humankind.

In fact, "all the Scriptures—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms—are fulfilled in Christ" (CCC 2763, see Luke 24:44). This revelation was present in a veiled way in the Old Testament but made explicit in the New Testament (CCC 65–67). In the fullness of time, God's plan is revealed through Christ's

ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and Second Coming. Through Jesus, all can encounter God and be saved.

*"In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins."*

1 John 4:9–10

*"[God] wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth."*

1 Timothy 2:4

- Has the Spirit ever presented a Bible passage to you at a timely moment? Does a certain verse or figure resonate with you? If so, write it down and display it in a prominent place so you can revisit it often, perhaps even memorize it.
- What difference does it make that God became one of us in Jesus?



## Divine Revelation in Sacred Tradition

As Jesus' life on earth was coming to an end, he instructed his apostles to continue his mission of sharing the good news of God's love and the promise of eternal life. He sent them the Holy Spirit to be their helper and guide. With the Spirit's assistance, the apostles witnessed to, preached, and wrote about the revelation of God, rooted in Jesus' words and actions. They made sure the gospel was handed on intact.

The Spirit also guided and assisted the apostles in choosing successors and handing on to them “what they received from Jesus’ teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit” (CCC 83). So, beginning with Jesus, the line of authentic, Spirit-filled transmission of divine revelation continues through the apostles’ successors: the popes and bishops. The Church’s ongoing teaching, rooted in the **apostolic tradition** but not recorded in Scripture, is called **sacred Tradition** (note the capital T).

*“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”*

Matthew 28:19–20

*“The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you.”*

John 14:26

### Scripture and Tradition

The Bible is a major and special part of the apostolic tradition, and the Church is rooted, nourished, and ruled by Scripture. The Catholic Church’s teaching voice, the **magisterium**, was engaged before there was a New Testament. Today, the magisterium applies biblical teachings to new situations for each generation. Because we believe that the Church continues to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, these teachings become part of sacred Tradition, part of God’s divine revelation to us. When new questions of faith and morality emerge, the Spirit guides the Church to discern Christ’s will. The Church guides its members in right living, making Christ’s teachings clear to them.

*“You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

Matthew 16:18–20

### Core or Custom?

Through Scripture and sacred Tradition, God has revealed what we need to know for the sake of our salvation. We include in Tradition (big T) those truths that are core to Christianity. However, there are many traditions (small t) that aren’t necessary for our salvation and so aren’t part of (big T) Tradition. For example, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is core to our Tradition. The rosary is a prayer that enables us to meditate on the core truths of faith, but in itself is not part of sacred Tradition. It’s important to distinguish between what’s core and what’s not, what’s necessary for our salvation and what’s a cherished practice (“Scripture and Tradition: Revealing God’s Plan,” Margaret Nutting Ralph, PhD).

Life contains many distractions and obstacles. A person’s path to God is seldom straight and smooth. Yet here you are. God is present in your life and has led you to this moment. We can miss out on many wonderful things if we don’t pay attention to the truth and signs around us. Ask the Spirit to show you God’s hand in all of your experiences.

- What have been the greatest challenges to your life and faith?
- What opened your heart to seek God and truth?



## Guided Meditation

1. Find a quiet, distraction-free space.
2. Relax your body and calm your mind. Close your eyes.
3. Reflect on your faith journey. Think of the events that have brought you to this point of growth in relationship with God and his Church. Think of the people who have shown you love and forgiveness.
4. Ask the Lord to reveal his loving plan of salvation for you. Though it won't happen all at once, be open to receiving the faith, hope, and strength to journey on.
5. Reflect on how your desire for God can be realized today.
6. When you're ready, open your eyes.

- Who or what has revealed God's love, mercy, and presence to you?
- How have you responded to that revelation?
- How has God used you to reveal himself to others?



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