



# The Catholic Family Connections Bible

Pray It! Study It! Live It!®  
resources offer a holistic approach  
to learning, living, and passing on the  
Catholic faith.

*For the text of the articles and introductions*

Nihil Obstat: Rev. William M. Becker, STD  
Censor Librorum  
February 26, 2010

Imprimatur: †Most Rev. John M. Quinn  
Bishop of Winona  
February 26, 2010

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*For the text of the New American Bible (NAB)*

#### OLD TESTAMENT

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Imprimatur: Most Rev. Daniel E. Pilarczyk  
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October 10, 1991

Based on the *Catholic Youth Bible* NAB © 2010 Saint Mary's Press of Minnesota. Virginia Halbur, development editor; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the production departments of Saint Mary's Press.

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The acknowledgments continue on page 1757.

#### *The Catholic Family Connections Bible*

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Printed in Canada

4400 (PO2470)

ISBN 978-1-59982-088-0, paper

This work is dedicated to Dr. Lisa-Marie Calderone. In honor of her lifelong dedication to family and youth ministry, and to the work of Tomorrow's Present, [www.tomorrowspresent.org](http://www.tomorrowspresent.org).



# The Catholic Family Connections Bible

NEW AMERICAN BIBLE  
INCLUDING THE REVISED PSALMS AND THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT  
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES WITH CRITICAL USE OF  
ALL THE ANCIENT SOURCES

Saint Mary's Press®

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# Welcome!

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## *The Catholic Family Connections Bible* is just for you!

This Bible is a true companion for your family and your Catholic faith practice. Studies among Christians in general and Catholics in particular show that parents and families play a crucial role in the faith formation and development of their children. Certain activities and practices engaged in at home in a family setting are critical to the faith development of young people.


In their book *The Search for Common Ground: What Unites and Divides Catholic Americans*, James D. Davidson and his colleagues acknowledge that family religious practice is a key predictor of a young person's adult faith practice. The factor with the most impact on adult Catholics' religious beliefs and practices is *childhood religiosity* that is nurtured in the family and by parish or school religious education.

A Search Institute study found that the most important factors that empower faith maturity among young people are family based. Faith maturity is a young person's ability to say yes to his or her beliefs, own them, and act on them by his or her own choice.

This is why we developed *The Catholic Family Connections Bible*, just for you! This Bible will be your family's Catholic faith-practice companion in three special ways:

- ***Building family faith conversations.*** Hearing their parents' faith stories is one of the most important influences on the faith of children and teenagers. It is just as important for parents to create opportunities for their children to talk about their own growing sense of faith. It is especially powerful when parents and children can talk about the role of their faith in difficult times, times of pain and suffering, as well as in times of joy and celebration.

This is why you will find so many tools and activities throughout this Bible to help you have wonderful family faith conversations. The special insert section "Family Activities to Learn the ABCs of the Bible" (pages C17-C24) provides engaging ways to involve the whole family in talking about the Bible and growing in an understanding of the Bible as communicating the love story of God's family—the love story of God's family and yours.



You will find the set of insert pages titled “Family Faith Conversations” (pages C25–C32) of special help by offering Bible passages related to many of life’s real issues and issues of faith that you and your family can read about and discuss.

- ***Growing family ritual and devotion.*** Families who regularly engage in devotions, prayer, or Bible reading at home tend to have deeper faith maturity. That is why you will find one whole section of insert pages, “Praying with the Bible” (pages C9–C16), dedicated to guiding you in praying with the Bible as a family. This special section includes guidance on how to pray using *lectio divina*, one of the Church’s most ancient forms of praying with the Bible. This section also provides step-by-step guidance in how to teach your family to pray the Rosary and ways to learn how to memorize Bible passages. Additional resources to enrich your family prayers and Scripture readings include a table listing the Church’s Sunday Mass readings for the entire year (pages 1768–1772), so you can prepare for each upcoming Sunday’s readings, and a summary of the seasons of the liturgical year and their importance and meaning (pages 1766–1767).
- ***Doing family outreach and service.*** A particularly powerful influence on faith and family unity is working together to help others. God seeks a relationship with every family. Therefore, families are called to respond to God’s graciousness. That is why the many articles and aids in this Bible will help you grow in and deepen your knowledge of God’s love, and guide you in responding to God’s love in service as a family. You will find many ideas and activities, especially in the special insert section on pages C25–C32, that can aid your family in becoming involved in serving others.

***The Catholic Family Connections Bible*** has one ultimate aim: to help Catholic families in achieving the pastoral principle of the earlier *Roman Catechism* that reminds us of the goal of all catechesis:

The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love. (Preface, 10; cf. 1 Cor 13:8)

May your family find joy and peace as you pray, study, and live the Good News you will discover in ***The Catholic Family Connections Bible***, through God’s abiding grace and love.

# Special Features

**The Catholic Family Connections Bible** is loaded with special features to help make it easier for you to read and understand the Bible. Here is a list of some of those features and where to find them.

## SECTION INTRODUCTIONS

Each major section of the Bible (the Pentateuch, the historical books, the wisdom books, the prophetic books, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and the Letters and Revelation) begins with background on the books in that section.

## BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions at the beginning of most books (sometimes two or three books share a single introduction) give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents.

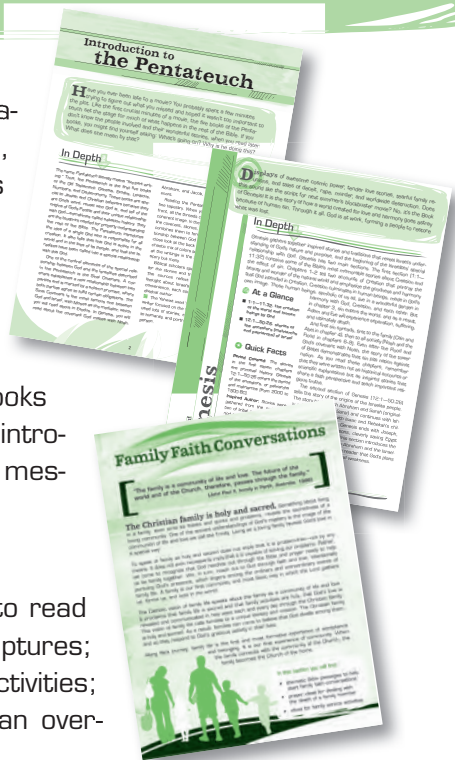
## COLOR INSERTS

The five sections of color inserts cover how to read and study the Bible; how to pray with the Scriptures; how to learn about the Bible through family activities; how to have family faith conversations; and an overview of Catholic practices and prayers.

**Live It!** The **“Live It!”** articles apply the Bible's messages to situations you may be facing now or will face in the future.

**Pray It!** The **“Pray It!”** articles can help you use the Bible for personal prayer. They show the biblical basis for the prayer and sacramental life of the Catholic Church.

**Did You Know?** The **“Did You Know?”** articles provide background from biblical scholars to help you understand the culture and traditions of biblical times, or the Church's interpretation of certain passages.







### Introducing...

The “**Introducing . . .**” articles give a quick introduction to the lives of important biblical people.

### Catholic Connection

The “**Catholic Connection**” articles are full-page articles that show the biblical basis for many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices.

### Cultural Connection

The “**Cultural Connection**” articles explain how people in different cultures have understood and lived out God’s revelation in the Bible. The articles represent many of the diverse cultures that have found their home in the United States.

### Catholic Social Teaching

These articles focus on the seven principles of Catholic social teaching and help the reader to understand their biblical basis.



## WHERE DO I FIND IT?

Several indexes are located at the back of the Bible. The first index helps you locate Bible passages on events, people, and teachings of Jesus. The second index helps you find Bible passages related to Catholic teaching. The third index helps you find Bible passages related to each sacrament. The fourth index helps you find Bible passages related to life and faith issues. The fifth index leads you to articles on specific topics.

## STUDY AIDS

A calendar of the Church year and Sunday readings, a glossary of Scripture-related terms, color maps, pictures, and a timeline are found at the back of the Bible. The timeline and maps will help you locate where and when different biblical events occurred.



# The Bible Is Multicultural

**The Bible** developed in the midst of great cultural diversity. In fact, the Bible was originally written in at least two languages, Hebrew and Greek. The people of the Old Testament were influenced by Arabic, Egyptian, and other Middle Eastern cultures that surrounded them. Later, they and the early Christian church were influenced by the Greek and Roman cultures. In the Bible, God is revealed as the God of all nations and all cultures.

As the word of God, the Bible's core message of God's love for human beings speaks to people of any culture. That is one reason the Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. Christians also believe that God is at work in the lives of people of every culture, whether or not they have been formally introduced to the Christian message. Listening to other cultures' experience of God can deepen Christian people's appreciation of God's message present in the Bible.

We also live in a multicultural world. ***The Catholic Family Connections Bible*** responds to this reality in two main ways. First, all the articles attempt to speak in a way that people of all cultures can appreciate and understand. Second, some articles have been specially written to represent distinct cultural perspectives. Most of these articles represent African American, Asian American, Hispanic and Latino, and Native American perspectives. ***The Catholic Family Connections Bible*** also includes additional articles representing cultural perspectives from around the world.

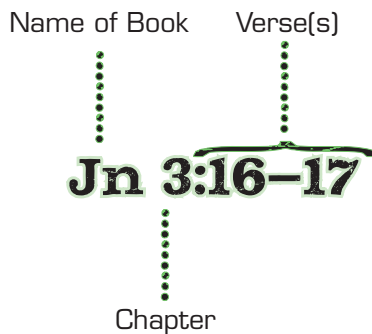
All the articles share cultural experiences and traditions, religious symbols, prayers, and poetry, and they connect all these elements to the Bible. If you would like to read articles from one of the four major cultural perspectives mentioned above, the subject index contains entries for those.

The cultural perspectives represented in ***The Catholic Family Connections Bible*** are a small sampling of the many unique cultures in the world. Because of space restrictions, articles on many cultures could not be included. Despite these limitations, the multicultural articles can deepen your appreciation of the Bible's message and of the rich ways different cultures live that message.

# Navigating The Catholic Youth Bible

**The Catholic Youth Bible** has several aids to help you locate references to Bible books and the Bible's special features. The contents on pages iv–v will be your main guide in locating the different books and features. However, the last page in the color section (facing the back cover) lists all the Bible books alphabetically and gives their abbreviations and beginning page numbers. You will find this a useful and easy-to-locate guide. Also, the section “Where Do I Find It?” offers several types of indexes to help you locate specific passages and articles.

Throughout **The Catholic Youth Bible**, there are many references to specific Bible passages. These references are given in shorthand form, such as Jn 3:16–17. The initial letters are the abbreviation for (or, in a few cases, the full name of) the Bible book. The number before the colon stands for the chapter, and the number(s) after the colon stands for the verse(s). So Jn 3:16–17 refers to the Gospel According to John, chapter 3, verses 16 to 17.



Most of the articles end with a citation identifying the Bible passage the article is based on. It is important to read the passage before reading the article.

In addition to the Bible text, you will find footnotes and Scripture cross-references printed along the bottom of each page. Every time you see an obelisk (†) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding footnote labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The footnotes provide you with added information about words and phrases mentioned in the Bible. Every time you see an asterisk (\*) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding cross-reference labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The cross-references direct you to similar Scripture passages.

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# Preface to the New American Bible The Old Testament

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On September 30, 1943, His Holiness Pope Pius XII issued his now famous encyclical on scripture studies, *Divino afflante Spiritu*. He wrote: "We ought to explain the original text which was written by the inspired author himself and has more authority and greater weight than any, even the very best, translation whether ancient or modern. This can be done all the more easily and fruitfully if to the knowledge of languages be joined a real skill in literary criticism of the same text."

Early in 1944, in conformity with the spirit of the encyclical, and with the encouragement of Archbishop Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, the Bishops' Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine requested members of The Catholic Biblical Association of America to translate the sacred scriptures from the original languages or from the oldest extant form of the text, and to present the sense of the biblical text in as correct a form as possible.

The first English Catholic version of the Bible, the Douay-Rheims (1582–1609/10), and its revision by Bishop Challoner (1750) were based on the Latin Vulgate. In view of the relative certainties more recently attained by textual and higher criticism, it has become increasingly desirable that contemporary translations of the sacred books into English be prepared in which due reverence for the text and strict observance of the rules of criticism would be combined.

*The New American Bible* has accomplished this in response to the need of the church in America today. It is the achievement of some fifty biblical scholars, the greater number of whom, though not all, are Catholics. In particular, the editors-in-chief have devoted twenty-five years to this work. The collaboration of scholars who are not Catholic fulfills the directive of the Second Vatican Council, not only that "correct translations be made into different languages especially from the original texts

of the sacred books," but that, "with the approval of the church authority, these translations be produced in cooperation with separated brothers" so that "all Christians may be able to use them."

The text of the books contained in *The New American Bible* is a completely new translation throughout. From the original and the oldest available texts of the sacred books, it aims to convey as directly as possible the thought and individual style of the inspired writers. The better understanding of Hebrew and Greek, and the steady development of the science of textual criticism, the fruit of patient study since the time of St. Jerome, have allowed the translators and editors in their use of all available materials to approach more closely than ever before the sense of what the sacred authors actually wrote.

Where the translation supposes the received text—Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, as the case may be—ordinarily contained in the best-known editions, as the original or the oldest extant form, no additional remarks are necessary. But for those who are happily able to study the original text of the scriptures at firsthand, a supplementary series of textual notes pertaining to the Old Testament was added originally in an appendix to the typical edition. (It is now obtainable in a separate booklet from The Catholic Biblical Association of America, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC 20064.) These notes furnish a guide in those cases in which the editorial board judges that the manuscripts in the original languages, or the evidence of the ancient versions, or some similar source, furnish the correct reading of a passage, or at least a reading more true to the original than that customarily printed in the available editions.

The Massoretic text of 1 and 2 Samuel has in numerous instances been corrected by the more ancient manuscripts Samuel a, b, and c from Cave 4 of Qumran, with the aid of important evidence

## Preface to the New American Bible: The Old Testament

from the Septuagint in both its oldest form and its Lucianic recension. Fragments of the lost Book of Tobit in Aramaic and in Hebrew, recovered from Cave 4 of Qumran, are in substantial agreement with the Sinaiticus Greek recension used for the translation of this book. The lost original Hebrew text of 1 Maccabees is replaced by its oldest extant form in Greek. Judith, 2 Maccabees, and parts of Esther are also translated from the Greek.

The basic text for the Psalms is not the Massoretic but one which the editors considered closer to the original inspired form, namely the Hebrew text underlying the new Latin Psalter of the Church, the *Liber Psalmorum* (1944<sup>1</sup>, 1945<sup>2</sup>). Nevertheless they retained full liberty to establish the reading of the original text on sound critical principles.

The translation of Sirach, based on the original Hebrew as far as it is preserved and corrected from the ancient versions, is often interpreted in the light of the traditional Greek text. In the Book of Baruch the basic text is the Greek of the Septuagint, with some readings derived from an underlying Hebrew form no longer extant. In the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel (3:24–91, chapter 13 and chapter 14 [these are Azariah, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon respectively in WORDsearch]), the basic text is the Greek text of Theodotion, occasionally revised according to the Greek text of the Septuagint.

In some instances in the Book of Job, in Proverbs, Sirach, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zechariah there is good reason to believe that the original order of lines was accidentally disturbed in the transmission of the text. The verse numbers given in such cases are always those of the current Hebrew text, though the arrangement differs. In these instances the textual notes advise the reader of the difficulty. Cases of exceptional dislocation are called to the reader's attention by footnotes.

The Books of *Genesis* to *Ruth* were first published in 1952; the Wisdom Books, *Job* to *Sirach*, in 1955; the Prophetic Books, *Isaiah* to *Malachi*, in 1961; and the Historical Books, *Samuel* to *Maccabees*, in 1969. In the present edition of *Genesis* to *Ruth* there are certain new features: a general introduction to the Pentateuch, a retranslation of the text of Genesis with an introduction, cross-references, and revised textual notes, besides new and expanded exegetical notes which

take into consideration the various sources or literary traditions.

The revision of *Job* to *Sirach* includes changes in strophe division in Job and Proverbs and in titles of principal parts and sections of Wisdom and Ecclesiastes. Corrections in the text of Sirach are made in Sir 39:27–44:17 on the basis of the Masada text, and in 51:13–30 on the basis of the occurrence of this canticle in the Psalms scroll from Qumran Cave 11. In this typical edition, new corrections are reflected in the textual notes of Job, Proverbs, Wisdom, and Sirach. In the Psalms, the enumeration found in the Hebrew text is followed instead of the double enumeration, according to both the Hebrew and the Latin Vulgate texts, contained in the previous edition of this book.

In the Prophetic Books *Isaiah* to *Malachi*, only minor revisions have been made in the structure and wording of the texts, and in the textual notes.

The spelling of proper names in *The New American Bible* follows the customary forms found in most English Bibles since the Authorized Version.

The work of translating the Bible has been characterized as "the sacred and apostolic work of interpreting the word of God and of presenting it to the laity in translations as clear as the difficulty of the matter and the limitations of human knowledge permit" (A. G. Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 6, [1944], 389–90). In the appraisal of the present work, it is hoped that the words of the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* will serve as a guide: "Let all the sons of the church bear in mind that the efforts of these resolute laborers in the vineyard of the Lord should be judged not only with equity and justice but also with the greatest charity; all moreover should abhor that intemperate zeal which imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed or suspected."

Conscious of their personal limitations for the task thus defined, those who have prepared this text cannot expect that it will be considered perfect; but they can hope that it may deepen in its readers "the right understanding of the divinely given Scriptures," and awaken in them "that piety by which it behooves us to be grateful to the God of all providence, who from the throne of his majesty has sent these books as so many personal letters to his own children" (*Divino afflante Spiritu*).



# Genesis

1:1—2:4

## I: The Primeval History

### First Story of Creation

**1**<sup>1\*†</sup> In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2\*</sup>† the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

<sup>3\*</sup> Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5†</sup> God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” Thus evening came, and morning followed—the first day.

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, “Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other.” And so it happened: <sup>7\*</sup> God made the dome, and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it. <sup>8</sup> God called the dome “the sky.” Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

<sup>9\*</sup> Then God said, “Let the water under the sky

be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear.” And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land “the earth,” and the basin of the water he called “the sea.” God saw how good it was. <sup>11\*</sup> Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it.” And so it happened: <sup>12</sup> the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw how good it was. <sup>13</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

<sup>14\*</sup> Then God said: “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years, <sup>15</sup> and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth.” And so it happened: <sup>16\*</sup> God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night; and he made the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the

<sup>†</sup> **1:1—2:4a** This section introduces the whole Pentateuch. It shows how God brought an orderly universe out of primordial chaos.

**1:2** *The abyss*: the primordial ocean according to the ancient Semitic cosmogony. After God’s creative activity, part of this vast body forms the salt-water seas (vv 9f); part of it is the fresh water under the earth (Ps 33:7; Ez 31:4), which wells forth on the earth as springs and fountains (Gn 7:11; 8:2; Prv 3:20). Part of it, “the upper water” (Ps 148:4; Dn 3:60), is held up by the dome of the sky (Gn 1:6f) from which rain descends on the earth (Gn 7:11; 2 Kgs 7:2, 19; Ps 104:13). A *mighty wind*: literally, “a wind of God,” or “a spirit of God”; cf Gn 8:1.

**1:5** In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset. Ac-

ording to the highly artificial literary structure of Gn 1:1—2:4a, God’s creative activity is divided into six days to teach the sacredness of the sabbath rest on the seventh day in the Israelite religion (Gn 2:2f).

**1:1** Gn 2:1, 4; Ps 8:4; 38–39; 90:2; Wis 11:17; Sir 16:24; Jer 10:12; 2Mc 7:28; Acts 14:15; Col 1:16f; Heb 1:2f; 3:4; 11:3; Rv 4:11.

**1:2** Jer 4:23; **1:3** 2Cor 4:6.

**1:7** Prv 8:27f; 2Pt 3:5.

**1:9** Jb 38:8; Ps 33:7; Jer 5:22.

**1:11** Ps 104:14.

**1:14** Jb 26:10; Ps 19:1f; Bar 3:33.

**1:16** Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7ff; Wis 13:2ff; Jer 31:35.

earth,<sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was.<sup>19</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

<sup>20\*</sup> Then God said, “Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky.” And so it happened:<sup>21</sup> God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw how good it was,<sup>22\*</sup> and God blessed them, saying, “Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds

<sup>†</sup>1:26 Man is here presented as the climax of God’s creative activity; he resembles God primarily because of the dominion God gives him over the rest of creation.

multiply on the earth.”<sup>23</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

<sup>24\*</sup> Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds.” And so it happened:<sup>25</sup> God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was.<sup>26\* †</sup> Then God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”

<sup>27</sup> God created man in his image;  
in the divine image he created him;  
male and female he created them.

1:20 Jb 12:7–10.  
1:22 Gn 8:17.  
1:24 Sir 16:27f; Bar 3:32.  
1:26f Gn 5:1, 3; 9:6; Ps 8:5f;

Wis 2:23; 10:2; Sir  
17:1, 3f; Jas 3:7; 1 Cor  
11:7; Eph 4:24; Col  
3:10; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6.

## In The Beginning

“**I**n the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth . . .” (Gn 1:1).

This simple verse is one of the foundational beliefs of Christianity. We are not a random collection of atoms. The world is not a lucky combination of cosmic circumstances. The universe did not just accidentally happen.

The beginning of wisdom is acknowledging that a higher power is at work in our lives, that the universe has purpose, and that everything was created by God. The ancient writers and editors of Genesis expressed these ideas in the Creation stories. The Church affirms these beliefs. They are expressed in a prayer called the Apostles’ Creed, which begins, “I believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”

Genesis expresses another foundational belief: God created everything good! Read the story in chapter 1, and see how this belief is constantly repeated: And humankind is “very good,” created in God’s own image. This is God’s message to you in the first chapter of the Bible: You carry God’s image within you. You are very good! Don’t let anyone try to convince you otherwise.

► Gn 1:1–2:4



## Did You Know?

### Literary Genres

**S**ome Christians believe that God actually created the world in seven twenty-four-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written not as a science article but as a series of symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that convey great moral and spiritual truths. We should not try to come to any scientific conclusions about the creation of the world from reading these stories.

Mythic stories are one literary type, or genre. You just have to look in a newspaper to see examples of different literary genres: news stories, advice columns, editorials, and comics. Each genre has different rules for interpreting its meaning. The Bible also contains many types of literary genres, including hero stories, poetry, laws, legends, fictional satire, debates, and letters. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre—otherwise, you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn’t intend.

► Gn 1:1–2:4



In the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, we read the wonderful story of God's creation of the universe. With each new day, God creates the light and darkness, the earth and sea, the plants and animals, and ultimately humankind. On the seventh day, God observes the amazing creation and we read, "God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good" (verse 31).

After God creates the man and woman, he commands them to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gn 1:28). In other words, human beings are to cooperate with God in the completion and care of creation. With God's grace, we participate in laying the foundation for God's reign on earth.

Catholic social teaching tells

us that as coworkers with God in caring for and sustaining the world, we have a responsibility to protect both the dignity of the human person as well as the planet. Amazing breakthroughs are happening in our world all the time, and yet, as Christians, we are asked to consider whether such developments are in keeping with the teachings of our Church. For example, we now have the ability to clone animals and genetically alter agricultural products, but will these practices sustain our world or ultimately destroy it? Do these practices really revere and value human life and the created order?

God has given us the amazing gift of intellectual inquiry, which can lead to wonderful advance-

ments for our world, but we must always ask ourselves how we might help promote ethical approaches to research so that future generations may continue to enjoy the beauty of creation and thrive in the universe.

- As a coworker with God, how do I sustain and care for God's creation?
- How might I use my gifts of knowledge and education to really improve the world and help bring about God's reign on earth?

### ▶ Genesis, chapters 1-2 *Caring for God's Creation*



<sup>28\*</sup> God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." <sup>29\*</sup> God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; <sup>30</sup> and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food." And so it happened. <sup>31\*</sup> God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.

**2** <sup>1\*</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. <sup>2\*</sup> Since on the seventh day God was finished with the work he had been doing, he rested on the seventh day

<sup>+</sup> **2:4b-25** This section is chiefly concerned with the creation of man. It is much older than the narrative of Gn 1:1—2:4a. Here God is depicted as creating man before the rest of his creatures, which are made for man's sake.

**2:7** God is portrayed as a potter molding man's body out of clay. There is a play on words in Hebrew between *adam* ("man") and *adama* ("ground"). *Being*: literally, "soul."

from all the work he had undertaken. <sup>3\*</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.

<sup>4</sup> Such is the story of the heavens and the earth at their creation.

### Second Story of Creation

† At the time when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens— <sup>5</sup> while as yet there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the LORD God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, <sup>6</sup> but a stream was welling up out of the earth and was watering all the surface of the ground— <sup>7\*</sup> † the LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

**1:28** Gn 8:17; 9:1; Pss 8:6-9; 115:16; Wis 9:2.

**1:29f** Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14f.

**1:31** 1 Tm 4:4.

**2:1** Is 45:12; Jn 1:3.

**2:2** Ex 20:9ff; 31:17; Heb 4:4, 10.

**2:3** Ex 20:11; Dt 5:14; Neh 9:14.

**2:7** Gn 3:19; 18:27; Tb 8:6;

Jb 34:15; Pss 103:14;

104:29; Eccl 3:20; 12:7;

Wis 7:1; Sir 33:10; 1 Cor 15:45.





## Cultural Connection

GN

According to Genesis, chapters 1–2, God created the universe and is the source of order in all creation. Creation is good, and its goodness is reflected in the harmony, peace, and love between the Creator and his creatures, and among the creatures themselves. In Hispanic theological traditions, this ideal relationship—symbolized by the way God and Adam and Eve relate in the Garden of Eden—is considered the foundation in which salvation history is rooted.

- How are your relationships with God, your friends, your family, and nature characterized by harmony, peace, and love?
- Reflect on how you can improve some of your strained

relationships, and ask God's help to do it.

Human beings are created in God's image and likeness and share God's attributes: freedom, love, knowledge, and the ability to create. With these gifts comes the responsibility of caring for all creation.

- Give thanks and praise to God for creation, especially for your own life and the lives of the people around you.
- Think of how you, your family, and your community can take better care of all creation. Pray that you fully develop your capacity to love, to know the truth, and to use your freedom wisely.

## God Is Our Creator

God established a covenant with us at the moment of our creation, and we keep this covenant by freely placing ourselves in God's hands and being responsive to God's invitation to live in communion with God and people.

- How do you use your freedom to respond to God's invitation?
- Think about the aspects of your life for which you most need God's wisdom to live in harmony and love. Put yourself in God's hands, and let God help and direct you.

### ▶ Genesis, chapters 1–2



<sup>8\*</sup>† Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and he placed there the man whom he had formed. <sup>9\*</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.

<sup>10</sup>† A river rises in Eden to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon; it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> The gold of that land is excellent; bdellium and lapis lazuli are also there. <sup>13\*</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon; it is the one that winds all through the land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is the Tigris; it is the one that flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

† <sup>2:8</sup> *Eden*: used here as the name of a region in southern Mesopotamia; the term is derived from the Sumerian word *eden*, “fertile plain.” A similar-sounding Hebrew word means “delight”; the *garden in Eden* could therefore be understood as the “garden of delight,” so that, through the Greek version, it is now known also as “paradise,” literally, a “pleasure park.”

<sup>2:10–14</sup> *Rises*: in flood to overflow its banks. *Beyond there*: as one travels upstream. *Branches*: literally, “heads,” i.e., upper courses. Eden is near the head of the Persian Gulf, where the Tigris and the

<sup>15\*</sup> The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. <sup>16\*</sup> The LORD God gave man this order: “You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden <sup>17\*</sup> except the tree of knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die.”

<sup>18\*</sup> The LORD God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.” <sup>19</sup> So the LORD God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.

Euphrates join with two other streams to form a single river. *The land of Cush* here and in Gn 10:8, is not Ethiopia (Nubia) as elsewhere, but the region of the Kassites east of Mesopotamia.

<sup>2:8</sup> Is 51:3; Ez 31:9.  
<sup>2:9</sup> Gn 3:22; Prv 3:18; Rv 2:7; 22:2, 14.  
<sup>2:13</sup> Sir 24:25.  
<sup>2:15</sup> Sir 7:15.

<sup>2:16</sup> Ps 104:14.  
<sup>2:17</sup> Gn 3:2f; Rom 6:23.  
<sup>2:18</sup> Tb 8:6; Sir 36:24; 1 Cor 11:9; 1 Tm 2:13.

<sup>21\*</sup> So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, <sup>23†</sup> the man said:

"This one, at last, is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
This one shall be called 'woman,'  
for out of 'her man' this one has been  
taken."

<sup>24\*†</sup> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

<sup>25</sup>The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.

### The Fall of Man

**3** <sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made.

<sup>+</sup> **2:23** There is a play on the similar-sounding Hebrew words *ish-sha* ("woman") and *ishah* ("her man, her husband").

**2:24** *One body*: literally "one flesh"; classical Hebrew has no specific word for "body." The sacred writer stresses the fact that conjugal union is willed by God.

**3:5** *Like gods who know*: or "like God who knows."

## Live It!

### In God's Image

**G**od does not make mistakes; people do. Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage, even to change their physical appearance in order to conform to the latest fad or fit the dominant cultural image of beauty. We must remember that physical features are not accidents. God planned for them—we are all made in God's image, inside and out.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. This includes a love for dark skin or light skin, straight hair or curly hair, wide nose or pug nose, and all the variations in between. Whatever our appearance, we are all blessed by God.

▶ Gn 1:26–27



The serpent asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" <sup>2</sup>The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3\*</sup> it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4\*</sup> But the serpent said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! <sup>5†</sup> No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad." <sup>6\*</sup> The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and

**2:21** Sir 17:1; 1 Cor 11:8f;  
1 Tm 2:13.

**2:24** Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7; 1 Cor  
7:10f; Eph 5:31.

**3:3** Gn 2:17; Rom 6:23.

**3:4f** Wis 2:24; Sir 25:14; Is  
14:14; Jn 8:44; 2 Cor  
11:3.

**3:6** Gn 3:22; 1 Tm 2:14.

## Pray It!

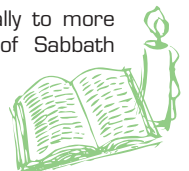
### The Sabbath

**E**ven God needed to take a rest. The writer of Genesis makes this point to remind readers to set aside a day for rest and prayer, which Jewish people call the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath is an act of trust in God. It means we believe that the world will not fall apart if we stop our activity. The world is in God's hands. We can hear this truth echoed in Jesus' words:

Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? (Lk 12:27–28)

Traditionally, Christians rest and pray on Sunday because it is the day on which Jesus was resurrected. In our culture today, it seems that many people are losing this practice.

- What could we gain if we recommitted ourselves to a day of rest, celebration, and prayer?
- What can you do personally to more fully honor the concept of Sabbath rest?



▶ Gn 2:1–3



### Original Sin

**B**efore the Fall, Adam and Eve had it all. God gave them freedom and established a close friendship with them. They could simply walk about the garden tending to it alongside of God. They lived in perfect harmony with each other and all of creation without fear, suffering, or death. Yet, Adam and Eve wanted more. By believing the serpent's lie, Adam and Eve sought to make themselves equal to God. They distrusted God's goodness, directly disobeyed God, and abused the freedom God had given them. The results were tragic. Adam and Eve's friendship with God turned into fear as they hid in the garden. After being expelled from the garden, tension and strife entered Adam and Eve's once harmonious relationship. The creation they once helped tend with God became hazardous and difficult to manage. Ultimately, through their sin, death became a reality for Adam and Eve. Though this account in chapter three of Genesis uses figurative language, it points to the reality that all of humanity has been affected by the sin our first parents freely chose to commit.

This original sin and its consequences have been handed down to every generation throughout all of history, with the exception of Jesus and his mother, Mary. Although we are not personally responsible for it, our nature also has been wounded by this sin. As a result, we do not have the original holiness and justice God intended for us, but are inclined to sin and subject to death. Fortunately, Jesus Christ, unlike Adam and Eve, came in total obedience to the will of God. As a result, the sin brought into the world by Adam and Eve has been overcome by the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Read Romans 5:12–21 to learn more about the relationship between Adam and Jesus.) Through the grace of the sacrament of Baptism, we are freed from original sin and turned back toward God. And the graces we receive through Christ will surpass those that Adam and Eve ever knew before the Fall!

#### ► Gn 3:1–24

*Catechism*, nos. 369–421



# Reading & Studying the Bible

## What Is the Bible?

**The Bible—which is also called the Sacred Scriptures—tells the story of the loving relationship between God and humankind.** Through the sacred writings, God reveals to humankind the truth about God and God’s will for us. It is a library of books that is divided into two parts: the Old Testament (before Jesus) and the New Testament (after Jesus’ birth). Each part consists of a collection of books that are grouped into these sections:

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■ *The Pentateuch* (five books) tells about God’s Chosen People, the Israelites. You’ll read about their early stories, their history, and the laws God gave them.

■ *The historical books* pick up Israelite history from 1250 BC to 100 BC. You will find accounts of the Israelites’ settling the Promised Land, the rise and fall of their kings, their dispersion into exile, and their eventual return to the Promised Land.

■ *The wisdom and poetry books* are a collection of hymns, poems, proverbs, and stories. They use imaginative language to make their points.

■ *The prophets* are people who speak God’s word. In these books, you will find comfort and promise, as well as be challenged to act with justice and mercy.

■ *The Gospels* (Good News) focus on the person and teachings of Jesus. *The Acts of the Apostles* shows how the Church was formed and how the first Christians spread the Good News. These books cover the time period from 5 BC to the early AD 60s.

■ The *letters*, or *epistles* (written by Paul, his followers, and other disciples), are actual letters that describe the new Christian faith, give advice, and offer words of hope. *Revelation* is a collection of mystical visions written to encourage the early Christians who were being persecuted.



# Core Catholic Teachings on Reason and Revelation

The Catholic Church makes frequent appeal to human reason in teaching about the religious truths God has revealed:

- Revelation is God making himself and his divine plan known to the human race through words and deeds in human history.
- The human person must trust that God has revealed to the Church what God wants it to know for its salvation.
- In listening to the message of Creation and to the voice of conscience, every person can come to certainty about the existence of God.
- Through the natural light of human reason, the one true God can be known from his works—that is, from the world and from the human person. This is one reason the Church teaches that salvation is possible for every person, even those who have never heard of Jesus Christ.
- God has revealed God's self in order to restore the communion that human beings were created to have with God, before the relationship was broken by original sin.
- Revelation is communicated in the Bible's stories of how God made God's self known to the Chosen People by acting throughout their history. But when those attempts met with failure, God took a radical step. God sent God's son, Jesus Christ, into the world as the savior. While remaining fully God, Jesus Christ took on a human nature: he is both true God and true man. Thus Jesus Christ is the full and complete Revelation of who God is, and through Christ, God established the covenant with the human race forever. As the Bible tells us, "[Christ] is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15).
- Everything needed to be known about God; everything needed to be known for eternal union with God has been revealed in Christ. Nothing more needs to be added or taken away.



**Click!** Chains snap shut around your ankles. Crack! The tip of a whip whistles past your head. Bang! A door shuts, leaving you in darkness. These are the sounds of slavery, and they come as a surprise at the beginning of the Book of Exodus. What happened after the happy ending in Genesis? Like an action-packed drama, Exodus tells a story of deceit and broken promises, and of how God's miraculous interventions delivered the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt.

## In Depth

The Book of Exodus is the ultimate story of Israel's liberation. *Exodus* literally means "departure," and this book's central event tells how God liberates the Israelite people from slavery in Egypt (an event called the Exodus). Its central character is Moses, who is chosen by God to become God's messenger and the instrument of God's power. Exodus was written hundreds of years after these events, using oral tradition that described the origin of many of the Israelites' beliefs and religious rituals.

Exodus is divided into four main sections. The first two sections, chapters 1–18, begin with the Israelites enslaved in Egypt and prohibited from worshiping their God.

### At a Glance

- I. **The Israelites in Egypt (1:1–12:36).**
- II. **The Exodus from Egypt and the Journey to Sinai (12:37–18:27).**
- III. **The Covenant at Mount Sinai (19:1–24:18).**
- IV. **The Dwelling and Its Furnishings (25:1–40:38).**

Israel cries out to God, and God answers by sending Moses. When Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go, God sends ten devastating plagues, and Pharaoh finally gives in. Later, Pharaoh changes his mind and chases the Israelites, only to have his army destroyed after the Israelites' escape through the Red Sea. This section ends with the people wandering through the wilderness, sustained by food and water miraculously provided by God.

Sections three and four of Exodus, chapters 19–40, occur at Mount Sinai. There God enters into a covenant with all the people. God's part of the Sinai Covenant is to guarantee continued protection. Israel's part is to be faithful to God alone, a faithfulness marked by special laws (see chapters 20–23) and special worship (see chapters 24–31) that unite them as a people. Exodus ends with Israel still encamped at Mount Sinai, struggling to become a people of the Covenant.

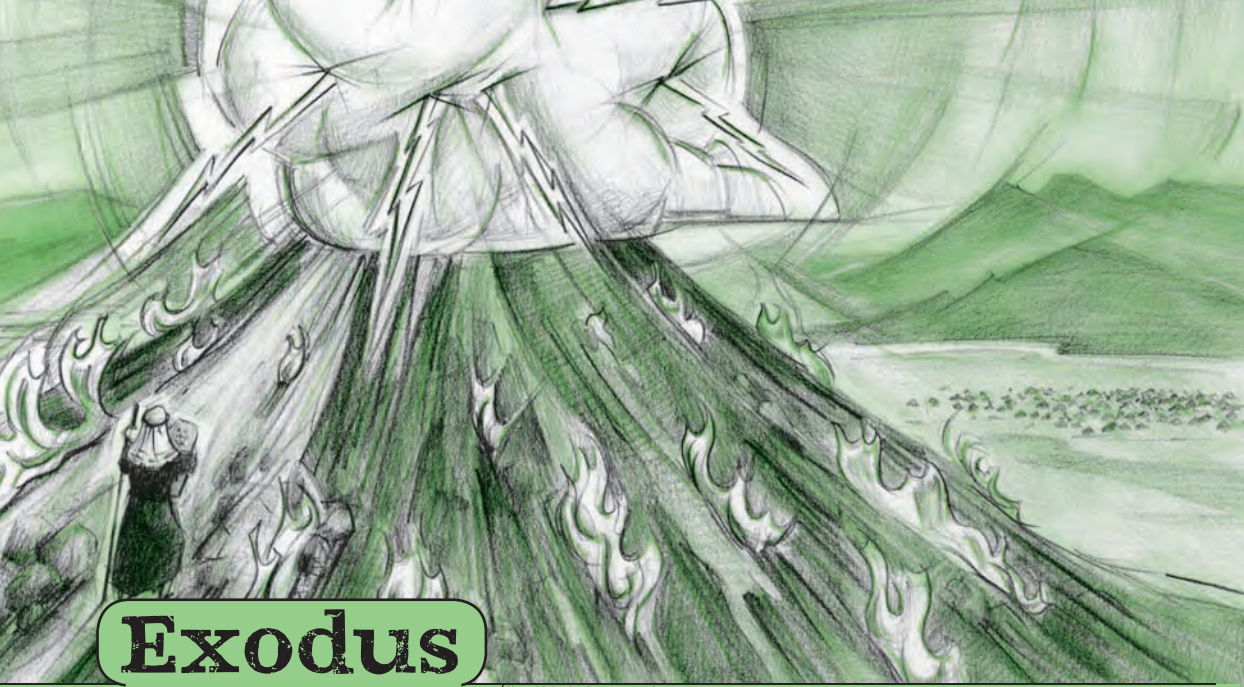
The stories and laws in Exodus are at the heart of both Jewish and Christian belief in a God who saves, a God of freedom. You cannot fully appreciate the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection without knowing these stories.

### Quick Facts

**Period Covered:** sometime from 1500 to 1250 BC

**Inspired Author:** unknown author gathering oral tradition and stories from various tribal peoples

**Themes:** God liberates people from slavery and oppression. God sustains the Israelites in the wilderness. God forms a covenant marked by laws and rituals.



# Exodus

Chapters 19–20

## I: The Israelites in Egypt

### Jacob's Descendants in Egypt

**1**<sup>†</sup> These are the names of the sons of Israel who, accompanied by their households, migrated with Jacob into Egypt: <sup>2</sup>† Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; <sup>3</sup> Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; <sup>4</sup> Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup>\*† The total number of the direct descendants of Jacob was seventy. Joseph was already in Egypt.

<sup>6</sup>\* Now Joseph and all his brothers and that whole generation died. <sup>7</sup> But the Israelites were fruitful and prolific. They became so numerous and strong that the land was filled with them.

### The Oppression

<sup>8</sup>\*† Then a new king, who knew nothing of Joseph, came to power in Egypt. <sup>9</sup> He said to his subjects, “Look how numerous and powerful the Israelite people are growing, more so than we ourselves! <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal shrewdly with them to stop their increase; otherwise, in time of war they

too may join our enemies to fight against us, and so leave our country.”

<sup>11</sup>\*† Accordingly, taskmasters were set over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. Thus they had to build for Pharaoh the supply cities of Pithom and Raamses. <sup>12</sup> Yet the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. The Egyptians, then, dreaded the Israelites <sup>13</sup> and reduced them to cruel slavery, <sup>14</sup>† making life bitter for them with hard work in mortar and brick and all kinds of field work—the whole cruel fate of slaves.

### Command to the Midwives

<sup>15</sup> The king of Egypt told the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was called Shiphrah and the other Puah, <sup>16</sup>† “When you act as midwives for the Hebrew women and see them giving birth, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she may live.” <sup>17</sup> The midwives, however, feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt had ordered them, but let the boys live. <sup>18</sup> So the king summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you acted thus, allowing the boys to live?” <sup>19</sup> The midwives

<sup>†</sup> **1:1** *Sons of Israel*: here literally the first-generation sons of Jacob. Cf v 5. However, beginning with Ex 1:7 the same Hebrew phrase refers to the more remote descendants of Jacob; hence, from there on, it is ordinarily rendered as “the Israelites.” *Households*: the family in its fullest sense, including wives, children and servants.

**1:2** The sons of Jacob are listed here according to the respective mothers. Cf Gn 29:31; 30:20; 35:16–26.

**1:5** *Direct descendants*: literally, persons coming from the loins of Jacob; hence, wives and servants are here excluded. Cf Gn 46:26.

**1:8** *Who knew nothing of Joseph*: this king ignored the services that Joseph had rendered to Egypt.

**1:11** *Pharaoh*: not a personal name, but a title common to all the kings of Egypt.

**1:14** *Mortar*: either the wet clay with which the bricks were made, as in Na 3:14, or the cement used between the bricks in building, as in Gn 11:3.

**1:16** *And see them giving birth*: the Hebrew text is uncertain.

**1:5** Gn 46:27; Dt 10:22;  
Acts 7:14;  
**1:6** Gn 50:26.

**1:8ff** Acts 7:18.  
**1:11** Dt 26:6.

answered Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women. They are robust and give birth before the midwife arrives." <sup>20</sup>Therefore God dealt well with the midwives. The people, too, increased and grew strong. <sup>21</sup>And because the midwives feared God, he built up families for them. <sup>22\*</sup>† Pharaoh then commanded all his subjects, "Throw into the river every boy that is born to the Hebrews, but you may let all the girls live."

### Birth and Adoption of Moses

**2** <sup>1\*</sup> Now a certain man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, <sup>2\*</sup> who conceived and bore a son. Seeing that he was a goodly child, she hid him for three months. <sup>3†</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took a papyrus basket, daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and putting the child in it, placed it among the reeds on the river bank. <sup>4</sup> His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

<sup>5</sup> Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe, while her maids walked along the river bank. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it. <sup>6</sup> On opening it, she looked, and lo, there was a baby boy, crying! She was moved with pity for him and said, "It is one of the Hebrews' children." <sup>7</sup> Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call one of the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" <sup>8</sup> "Yes, do so," she answered. So the maiden went and called the child's own mother. <sup>9</sup> Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will repay you." The woman therefore took the child and nursed it. <sup>10\*†</sup> When the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her son and called him Moses; for she said, "I drew him out of the water."

### Moses' Flight to Midian

<sup>11\*†</sup> On one occasion, after Moses had grown up, when he visited his kinsmen and witnessed their forced labor, he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his own kinsmen. <sup>12</sup> Looking about and seeing no one, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> The next day he went

† **1:22** *The river*: the Nile, which was "the" river for the Egyptians.  
**2:3** *Basket*: literally, "chest" or "ark"; the same Hebrew word is used in Gn 6:14 for Noah's ark. Here, however, the chest was made of papyrus stalks.

**2:10** *When the child grew*: probably when he was weaned or a little later. *Moses*: in Hebrew, *Mosheh*; the Hebrew word for "draw out" is *moshah*. This explanation of the name is not intended as a scientific etymology but as a play on words. The name is probably derived from an Egyptian word for "has been born," referring the

## Live It!

### Saving Lives

**I**n the story of the birth of Moses, Pharaoh orders the Egyptian midwives to kill all the male Israelite babies at birth. The midwives recognize such killing as an atrocity and refuse to obey Pharaoh. Their actions might be considered civil disobedience against unjust laws.

Some people claim that the right to have an abortion is a just law. Most of us have seen the images of an unborn baby resting within its mother's womb, thanks to the technology of ultrasounds. Clearly, there is a living human being there, who only needs a safe and protective environment in which to grow. Doesn't society have an obligation to protect this completely defenseless life? Where is the justice for the unborn child?

As the Egyptian midwives knew, all human life is sacred, no matter where or in what stage of development it exists.

### ▶ Ex 1:15-22



out again, and now two Hebrews were fighting! So he asked the culprit, "Why are you striking your fellow Hebrew?" <sup>14</sup> But he replied, "Who has appointed you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses became afraid and thought, "The affair must certainly be known."

<sup>15\*</sup> Pharaoh, too, heard of the affair and sought to put him to death. But Moses fled from him and stayed in the land of Midian. As he was seated there by a well, <sup>16</sup> seven daughters of a priest of Midian came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. <sup>17</sup> But some shepherds came and drove them away. Then Moses got up and defended them and watered

birth to a god thought to be its sponsor.

**2:11** *After Moses had grown up*: Acts 7:23 indicates that this was after an interval of nearly forty years. Cf Ex 7:7. *Striking*: probably in the sense of "flogging"; according to some, "slaying."

**1:22** Acts 7:19.

**2:1** Ex 6:20; Nm 26:59.

**2:2** Acts 7:20; Heb 11:23.

**2:10** Acts 7:21; Heb 11:24.

**2:11-14** Acts 7:23-28.

**2:15** Acts 7:29; Heb 11:27.





## Cultural Connection

## Holy Ground

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In many Asian cultures, before people enter a home, they remove their shoes. People do this before entering a mosque too. Perhaps you remove your shoes before entering your home as well. Removing one's shoes is a common sign of respect. Moses is commanded to remove his sandals in Exodus 3:5. Why? Because he is standing on holy ground. Why is the ground holy? Because God is present.

Moses is awestruck and hum-

bled by his experience of God's presence. In today's multimedia culture, we are rarely awed by anything. Even the burning bush would be just another special effect. How can we regain our sense of awe at God's majesty? Some people experience it in nature, looking at a star-filled sky or the waves rolling in on the ocean. Others experience it in getting to know other people deeply. Still others find it in the amazing patterns that science reveals. The

one common element to experiencing awe seems to be the ability to slow down, look closely, and appreciate what we discover.

So, slow down, find your own holy ground, take your shoes off, and let God fill you with awe!

▶ Ex 3:1-6



their flock. <sup>18†</sup> When they returned to their father Reuel, he said to them, "How is it you have returned so soon today?" <sup>19†</sup> They answered, "An Egyptian saved us from the interference of the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock!" <sup>20</sup> "Where is the man?" he asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him there? Invite him to have something to eat." <sup>21</sup> Moses agreed to live with him, and the man gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage. <sup>22\*†</sup> She bore him a son, whom he named Gershom; for he said, "I am a stranger in a foreign land."

### The Burning Bush

<sup>23\*</sup> A long time passed, during which the king of Egypt died. Still the Israelites groaned and cried out because of their slavery. As their cry for release went up to God, <sup>24\*</sup> he heard their groaning and was mindful of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. <sup>25</sup> He saw the Israelites and knew. . . .

<sup>218</sup> *Reuel*: he was also called Jethro. Cf Ex 3:1; 4:18; 18:1.

<sup>219</sup> *An Egyptian*: Moses was probably wearing Egyptian dress, or spoke Egyptian to Reuel's daughters.

<sup>222</sup> *Gershom*: the name is explained as if it came from the Hebrew word *ger*, "stranger," joined to the Hebrew word *sham*, "there." Some Greek and Latin manuscripts add here a passage taken from Ex 18:4.

<sup>31</sup> *The mountain of God*: probably given this designation because of the divine apparitions which took place there, such as on this occasion and when the Israelites were there after the departure from Egypt.

<sup>32</sup> *An angel of the Lord*: the visual form under which God appeared and spoke to men is referred to indifferently in some Old

<sup>31†</sup> Meanwhile Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock across the desert, he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2\*†</sup> There an angel of the LORD appeared to him in fire flaming out of a bush. As he looked on, he was surprised to see that the bush, though on fire, was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> So Moses decided, "I must go over to look at this remarkable sight, and see why the bush is not burned."

### The Call of Moses

<sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw him coming over to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." <sup>5\*</sup> God said, "Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. <sup>6\*†</sup> I am the God of your father," he continued, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said, "I have witnessed the affliction of

Testament texts either as God's angel or as God himself. Cf Gn 16:7, 13; Ex 14:19, 24f; Nm 22:22-35; Jgs 6:11-18.

<sup>36</sup> The appearance of God caused fear of death, since it was believed that no one could see God and live; cf Gn 32:30. *The God of Abraham . . . Jacob*: cited by Christ in proof of the resurrection since the patriarchs, long dead, live on in God who is the God of the living. Cf Mt 22:32; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37.

<sup>222</sup> Ex 18:3.

<sup>223</sup> Ex 3:7, 9; Dt 26:7.

<sup>224</sup> Ex 6:5; Pss 105:8f; 106:44f.

<sup>32-10</sup> Acts 7:30-35.

<sup>35</sup> Jos 5:15.

<sup>36</sup> Ex 4:5; Mt 22:32; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:37.

my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. <sup>8\*</sup>† Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> So indeed the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have truly noted that the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> Come, now! I will send you to Pharaoh to lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

<sup>11</sup>† But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup> He answered, "I will be with you; and this shall be your proof that it is I who have sent you: when you bring my people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this very mountain." <sup>13</sup> "But," said Moses to God, "when I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' if they ask me, 'What is his name?' what am I to tell them?" <sup>14</sup>† God replied, "I am who am." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you."

<sup>15</sup>\* God spoke further to Moses, "Thus shall you say to the Israelites: The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.

"This is my name forever;  
this is my title for all generations.

<sup>16</sup>† "Go and assemble the elders of the Israelites, and tell them: The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I am concerned about you and about the way you are being treated in Egypt; <sup>17</sup> so I have decided to lead you up out of the misery of Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.

<sup>18</sup>\* "Thus they will heed your message. Then

<sup>+</sup> **3:8** *I have come down*: a figure of speech signifying an extraordinary divine intervention in human affairs. Cf Gn 11:5, 7. *Flowing with milk and honey*: an expression denoting agricultural prosperity, which seems to have been proverbial in its application to Palestine. Cf Ex 13:5; Nm 13:27; Jos 5:6; Jer 11:5; 32:22; Ez 20:6, 15.

**3:11** *Who am I*: besides naturally shrinking from such a tremendous undertaking, Moses realized that, as a fugitive from Pharaoh, he could hardly hope to carry out a mission to him. Perhaps he also recalled that on one occasion even his own kinsmen questioned his authority. Cf Ex 2:14.

**3:14** *I am who am*: apparently this utterance is the source of the word *Yahweh*, the proper personal name of the God of Israel. It is commonly explained in reference to God as the absolute and necessary Being. It may be understood of God as the Source of all created



## Did You Know?

### God's Mysterious Name

"I am who I am"—one possible translation of *Yahweh* from Exodus 3:14—seems more like a definition than a name. Some scholars have suggested *Yahweh* might be better translated "he causes to be what exists." In any case, the four Hebrew letters *YHWH* (or *Yahweh* in English) are difficult to translate. Over the centuries, the Jewish people stopped pronouncing the four letters out of reverence for God and replaced them with the word *Adonai*, meaning "my Lord." Most English translations of the Bible respect this long-standing tradition, translating the original *YHWH* as "LORD." This mysterious name of God reminds us that no name or symbol can fully express who God is.

#### ▶ Ex 3:13–15

you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him: The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent us word. Permit us, then, to go a three-days' journey in the desert, that we may offer sacrifice to the LORD, our God.

<sup>19</sup> "Yet I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go unless he is forced. <sup>20</sup> I will stretch out my hand, therefore, and smite Egypt by doing all kinds of wondrous deeds there. After that he will send you away. <sup>21</sup> I will even make the Egyptians so well-disposed toward this people that, when you leave, you will not go empty-handed. <sup>22</sup>\*† Every woman shall ask her neighbor and her house guest for silver and gold articles and for clothing to put on your sons and daughters. Thus you will despoil the Egyptians."

beings. Out of reverence for this name, the term *Adonai*, "my Lord," was later used as a substitute. The word *LORD* in the present version represents this traditional usage. The word "Jehovah" arose from a false reading of this name as it is written in the current Hebrew text.

**3:16** *Elders*: the Israelite leaders, who were usually older men. They were representatives of the people.

**3:22** *Articles*: probably jewelry. *Despoil*: this was permissible, that the Israelites might compensate themselves for their many years of servitude; besides, the Egyptians would give these things willingly. Cf Ex 12:33–36.

**3:8f** Gn 15:19ff.  
**3:15** Ps 135:13.

**3:18** Ex 5:3.  
**3:21f** Ex 11:2f; 12:35f.



### God the Father

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**H**ave you ever asked your parents what your name means or why they chose it for you? Generally, behind each name is a story or a meaning that says something about the individual. The same is true about God's own name, which was revealed to Moses from the burning bush. God tells Moses that his name in Hebrew is "Yahweh," which can be translated as "I AM WHO AM" or "he causes to be what exists." From this name we learn that God alone is the source of all things.

But the meaning from one name alone cannot be enough to truly encompass all that God is. Perhaps that is why, along with Yahweh, the Old Testament has many descriptive names for God, such as "God the Almighty" (Gn 17:1), "the eternal God" (Is 40:28) and "the Most High" (Is 14:14).

One name the Israelites often used was Father (see Dt 32:6) in reference

to God as the creator of all things. But it was not until Jesus came into the world that we learned the true meaning of the name "Father" for God. By revealing himself as God's only Son, Jesus also revealed his relationship with God as Father. (See "The Trinity," near Jn 17:20–26, for more information about the relationship between God the Father and Jesus.) From the name Father, we are reminded of our role as God's adopted daughters and sons and the endless love the Father has for each one of us. The name Father also helps us to remember God's authority and power over us and all of creation. Jesus taught us to pray calling God Father, and so we are able to address God intimately and realize that God desires a loving and personal relationship with us.

#### ► Ex 3:13–15

*Catechism*, nos. 232–242





## Cultural Connection

## The Name of God

**M**any Native American peoples, such as the Lakota and the Sioux, have several names for God. *Wakan-Tanka* and *Tun-ka-shi-la* are still commonly used today. These words for God are often translated as “Great Spirit.”

This is a good translation because *Wakan* is a word that brings together the concepts of

mystery, sacredness, holiness, awe, and inspiration. *Tanka* describes something that is great.

*Tun-ka-shi-la* is often used the same way as *Wakan-Tanka*, but its meaning is slightly different. *Tun-ka-shi-la* is often translated as “Grandfather or Great Grandfather,” but it means the “one who is the oldest, so old that nothing

or no one is older.” *Tun-ka-shi-la* is a name that reflects the Great Spirit as the source of all things, the one who has existed from the beginning.

▶ Ex 3:13–15



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### Confirmation of Moses' Mission

**4**<sup>1</sup> “But,” objected Moses, “suppose they will not believe me, nor listen to my plea? For they may say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’”

<sup>2</sup>The LORD therefore asked him, “What is that in your hand?” “A staff,” he answered. <sup>3</sup>\* The LORD then said, “Throw it on the ground.” When he threw it on the ground it was changed into a serpent, and Moses shied away from it. <sup>4</sup> “Now, put out your hand,” the LORD said to him, “and take hold of its tail.” So he put out his hand and laid hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand. <sup>5</sup> “This will take place so that they may believe,” he continued, “that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, did appear to you.”

<sup>6</sup> Again the LORD said to him, “Put your hand in your bosom.” He put it in his bosom, and when he withdrew it, to his surprise his hand was leprous, like snow. <sup>7</sup> The LORD then said, “Now, put your hand back in your bosom.” Moses put his hand back in his bosom, and when he withdrew it, to his surprise it was again like the rest of his body. <sup>8</sup> “If they will not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, they should believe the message of the second. <sup>9</sup>\* And if they will not believe even these two signs, nor heed your plea, take some water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water

you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.”

### Aaron's Office as Assistant

<sup>10</sup>\* Moses, however, said to the LORD, “If you please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor recently, nor now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue.” <sup>11</sup> The LORD said to him, “Who gives one man speech and makes another deaf and dumb? Or who gives sight to one and makes another blind? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>12</sup> Go, then! It is I who will assist you in speaking and will teach you what you are to say.” <sup>13</sup>† Yet he insisted, “If you please, Lord, send someone else!” <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD became angry with Moses and said, “Have you not your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know that he is an eloquent speaker. Besides, he is now on his way to meet you. <sup>15</sup> When he sees you, his heart will be glad. You are to speak to him, then, and put the words in his mouth. I will assist both you and him in speaking and will teach the two of you what you are to do. <sup>16</sup>\*† He shall speak to the people for you: he shall be your spokesman, and you shall be as God to him. <sup>17</sup>† Take this staff in your hand; with it you are to perform the signs.”

### Moses' Return to Egypt

<sup>18</sup>† After this Moses returned to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, “Let me go back,

understand it here of a new staff now given by God to Moses.

**4:18** Moses did not tell his father-in-law his main reason for returning to Egypt, but this secondary motive which he offered was also true.

+ **4:13** *Send someone else*: literally, “Send by means of him whom you will send,” that is, “Send whom you will.”

**4:16** *Spokesman*: literally, “mouth”; Aaron was to serve as a mouthpiece for Moses, as a prophet does for God; hence the relation between Moses and Aaron is compared to that between God and his prophet. Cf Ex 7:1.

**4:17** *This staff*: probably the same as that of vv 2ff; but some

**4:3** Ex 7:10.

**4:9** Ex 7:17, 19f.

**4:10** Ex 6:12.

**4:15f** Ex 7:1.



## Cultural Connection

### God Sends Prophets to Liberate His People

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God responded to the cry of his people, choosing Moses as a prophet and commissioning him to lead the Israelites to freedom. Despite Moses' first doubts, with God's assistance, Moses became an effective and powerful leader. God would not let Moses' excuses stand in the way of God's mission of liberation.

Christians share in Jesus Christ's prophetic work as well. We too need to speak out against injustice and help the victims of

oppression. Like the prophets before us, we can succeed only with God's help.

In our time, great spiritual leaders have risen up to lead people to freedom: Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, Archbishop Oscar Romero, and César Chávez are just a few. As in the case of Moses, God inspired these leaders to see their people experiencing injustice and to seek to liberate them from oppressive powers. You can be sure

that these people also had their doubts and relied on God for their strength and hope.

- Are you aware of any group that is being oppressed today? How might God be calling you to help?
- Ask God for wisdom, strength, and help in your mission.

#### ▶ Ex 4:1–17



please, to my kinsmen in Egypt, to see whether they are still living." Jethro replied, "Go in peace."<sup>19\*</sup> In Midian the LORD said to Moses, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who sought your life are dead."<sup>20</sup> So Moses took his wife and his sons, and started back to the land of Egypt, with them riding the ass. The staff of God he carried with him.<sup>21</sup>† The LORD said to him, "On your return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have put in your power. I will make him obstinate, however, so that he will not let the people go."<sup>22\*</sup> So you shall say to Pharaoh: Thus says the LORD: Israel is my son, my first-born.<sup>23\*</sup> Hence I tell you: Let my son go, that he may serve me. If you refuse to let him go, I warn you, I will kill your son, your first-born."

<sup>24</sup>† On the journey, at a place where they spent the night, the Lord came upon Moses and would have killed him.<sup>25\*</sup> But Zipporah took a piece of flint and cut off her son's foreskin and, touching his person, she said, "You are a spouse of blood to me."<sup>26</sup> Then God let Moses go. At that time she said, "A spouse of blood," in regard to the circumcision.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he went, and when they met at the mountain of God, Aaron kissed him.

<sup>28</sup> Moses informed him of all the LORD had said in sending him, and of the various signs he had enjoined upon him.<sup>29</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites.<sup>30</sup> Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses, and he performed the signs before the people.<sup>31</sup> The people believed, and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their affliction, they bowed down in worship.

#### Pharaoh's Obduracy

**5**<sup>1</sup> After that, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Let my people go, that they may celebrate a feast to me in the desert."<sup>2</sup> Pharaoh answered, "Who is the LORD, that I should heed his plea to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD; even if I did, I would not let Israel go."<sup>3\*</sup> They replied, "The God of the Hebrews has sent us word. Let us go a three days' journey in the desert, that we may offer sacrifice to the LORD, our God; otherwise he will punish us with pestilence or the sword."

<sup>4</sup> The king of Egypt answered them, "What do you mean, Moses and Aaron, by taking the people away from their work? Off to your labor!

life is spared when his wife circumcises their son.

† **4:21** Make him obstinate: literally, "harden his heart." God permitted Pharaoh to be stubborn in his opposition to the departure of the Israelites. Cf Rom 9:17f.

**4:24ff** Apparently God was angry with Moses for having failed to keep the divine command given to Abraham in Gn 17:10ff. Moses'

**4:19** Ex 2:15, 23.

**4:22** Sir 36:11.

**4:23** Ex 11:5; 12:29.

**4:25** Is 6:2; 7:20.

**5:3** Ex 3:18.



## Catholic Social Teaching

### Slave Labor

**D**emanding bosses. Long hours. Poor working conditions. Although this story details Pharaoh's unjust treatment of the Israelites almost 3,500 years ago, it is a story that is unfortunately and remarkably similar to the work lives of many laborers throughout the world today. The word *sweatshop* is commonly used to describe a working environment with dangerous and unjust working conditions. Workers in sweatshops typically have very few rights and are often made to work long hours for low wages. The companies that use sweat-

shops to produce their goods are familiar names to us all. You may even be wearing clothes right now that have been manufactured under unjust conditions, without even knowing it!

Catholic social teaching, however, demands that we become more aware of the origins of the things we buy. If we ignore the conditions under which these products were produced, then in a small way, we contribute to the injustice. But if we refuse to buy these products and stand up in a unified way against those companies that continue to use sweat-

shop labor, we will emphatically assert that all workers deserve to be treated with dignity and that low wages, unfair labor practices, and dangerous working conditions are unjust and unacceptable in our world today.

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#### ▶ Exodus, chapter 5

*The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers*



<sup>5</sup>Look how numerous the people of the land are already," continued Pharaoh, "and yet you would give them rest from their labor!"

<sup>6</sup>† That very day Pharaoh gave the taskmasters and foremen of the people this order: <sup>7</sup>† "You shall no longer supply the people with straw for their brickmaking as you have previously done. Let them go and gather straw themselves! <sup>8</sup>Yet you shall levy upon them the same quota of bricks as they have previously made. Do not reduce it. They are lazy; that is why they are crying, 'Let us go to offer sacrifice to our God.' <sup>9</sup>Increase the work for the men, so that they keep their mind on it and pay no attention to lying words."

<sup>10</sup>So the taskmasters and foremen of the people went out and told them, "Thus says Pharaoh: I will not provide you with straw. <sup>11</sup>Go and gather the straw yourselves, wherever you can find it. Yet there must not be the slightest reduction in your work." <sup>12</sup>The people, then, scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw, <sup>13</sup>while the taskmasters kept driving them on, saying, "Finish your work, the same daily amount as when your straw was supplied."

#### Complaint of the Foremen

<sup>14</sup>The foremen of the Israelites, whom the taskmasters of Pharaoh had placed over them, were beaten, and were asked, "Why have you not completed your prescribed amount of bricks yesterday and today, as before?"

<sup>15</sup>Then the Israelite foremen came and made this appeal to Pharaoh: "Why do you treat your servants in this manner? <sup>16</sup>No straw is supplied to your servants, and still we are told to make bricks. Look how your servants are beaten! It is you who are at fault." <sup>17</sup>Pharaoh answered, "It is just because you are lazy that you keep saying, 'Let us go and offer sacrifice to the LORD.' <sup>18</sup>Off to work, then! Straw shall not be provided for you, but you must still deliver your quota of bricks."

<sup>19</sup>The Israelite foremen knew they were in a sorry plight, having been told not to reduce the daily amount of bricks. <sup>20</sup>When, therefore, they left Pharaoh and came upon Moses and Aaron, who were waiting to meet them, <sup>21</sup>they said to them, "The LORD look upon you and judge! You have brought us into bad odor with Pharaoh and his servants and have put a sword in their hands to slay us."

† **5:6** *The taskmasters and foremen*: the former were higher officials and probably Egyptians; the latter were lower officials, chosen from the Israelites themselves. Cf v 14.

**5:7** Straw was mixed with the clay to give the sun-dried bricks greater consistency.

## Renewal of God's Promise

<sup>22</sup>Moses again had recourse to the LORD and said, "Lord, why do you treat this people so badly? And why did you send me on such a mission?"


 Pray It!

## Why Me?

**R**ead Exodus 5:22–23. Can you imagine how Moses must have felt? He did what God told him to do, and things only got worse for the Israelites. But Moses was still able to talk to God, even if only to say, "Why did you send me?" (verse 22).

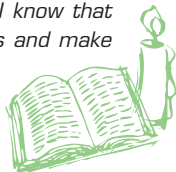
Thomas Merton, a famous Trappist monk and spiritual writer, knew that Christians sometimes feel like Moses did:

The Christian  
must have the courage  
to follow Christ.  
The Christian  
who is risen in Christ  
must dare  
to be like Christ:  
he must dare  
to follow conscience  
even in unpopular causes.  
He must, if necessary,  
be able to disagree with the majority  
and make decisions  
that he knows  
to be according to the Gospel  
and teaching of Christ,  
even when others  
do not understand  
why he is acting this way.

(*He Is Risen*, p. 22)

The next time you are feeling a little like Moses and wondering, Why me? try this prayer:

*Faithful God, help me to trust in you during times of disappointment and disillusion. I want to believe you are working in ways I cannot see. Please help my disbelief, for I know that you will honor my best efforts and make things come out right in the end. Amen.*



 Ex 5:22–23

<sup>23</sup>Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has maltreated this people of yours, and you have done nothing to rescue them."

**6**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD answered Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. Forced by my mighty hand, he will send them away; compelled by my outstretched arm, he will drive them from his land."

<sup>2</sup>God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. <sup>3\*</sup> As God the Almighty I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but my name, LORD, I did not make known to them. <sup>4\*</sup> I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they were living as aliens. <sup>5\*</sup> And now that I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are treating as slaves, I am mindful of my covenant. <sup>6</sup>Therefore, say to the Israelites: I am the LORD. I will free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians and will deliver you from their slavery. I will rescue you by my outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. <sup>7\*</sup> I will take you as my own people, and you shall have me as your God. You will know that I, the LORD, am your God when I free you from the labor of the Egyptians <sup>8</sup>and bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I will give it to you as your own possession—I, the LORD!" <sup>9</sup>But when Moses told this to the Israelites, they would not listen to him because of their dejection and hard slavery.

<sup>10</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>11</sup>"Go and tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to let the Israelites leave his land." <sup>12\*</sup> But Moses protested to the LORD, "If the Israelites would not listen to me, how can it be that Pharaoh will listen to me, poor speaker that I am!" <sup>13</sup>Still, the LORD, to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them his orders regarding both the Israelites and Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

## Genealogy of Moses and Aaron

<sup>14\*</sup>† These are the heads of the ancestral houses. The sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi; these are the clans of Reuben. <sup>15\*</sup> The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar and Shaul, who was the son of a Canaanite woman;

† **6:14** The purpose of the genealogy here is to give the line from which Moses and Aaron sprang. Reuben and Simeon are first mentioned because, as older brothers of Levi, their names occur before his in the genealogy.

**6:3** Gn 17:1; 35:11.  
**6:4** Gn 15:18; 17:4–8.  
**6:5** Ex 2:24,  
**6:7** Lv 26:12.

**6:12** Ex 6:30.  
**6:14** Nm 26:5f; 1 Chr 5:3.  
**6:15** Nm 26:12; 1 Chr 4:24.

# Family Activities to Learn the ABCs of the Bible

A great way to help your family become familiar with the Bible is through activities that encourage a close look inside the Bible. This section contains a variety of enjoyable activities you can do as a family to help you get to know the Bible better and grow in your understanding of its meaning for your lives.

## The ABCs of Reading the Bible as a Family

The ABCs of reading the Bible will help you become comfortable with reading and understanding the Bible. This will lead to wonderful, rich sharing of your faith with one another, in ways beyond what you may have imagined before.

**A** stands for **Access** to the stories and teachings of the Bible. These family activities will help everyone in the family learn how to find different books, passages, and stories of the Bible.

**B** stands for the **Big-picture** perspective that is important in reading the Bible. These family activities will help you discover how to read different Bible passages in light of the whole story of God's saving work.

**C** stands for the ability to interpret a passage in the Bible in its proper **Context**. These family activities will help everyone in the family become comfortable with talking about the meaning of the Bible and sharing how the word of God speaks to them in their personal life.

The more you become comfortable with and understand the ABCs of reading the Bible, the more enjoyable and enriching your family conversations will become.





## Bible Post-it Tabs

This activity helps you learn how to identify the major sections of the Bible.

**Materials needed:** six small Post-it notes in two different colors

1. Distribute the six Post-it notes to the members of the family, two of one color and four of another.
2. As a family (or you may take turns, individually), locate and place the four Post-it notes of the same color on the first page of the following Old Testament books: Genesis, Joshua, Job, and Isaiah. Then place the remaining two Post-it notes of the second color on the first page of the New Testament books of Matthew and Romans. Be sure to place the Post-it notes so that about one-fourth inch of the note protrudes from the long edge of the book.
3. Explain that the Post-it notes serve as tabs marking the Bible's six major sections:
  - the Pentateuch
  - the historical books
  - the wisdom and poetry books
  - the prophetic books
  - the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles
  - the letters and Revelation
4. You may wish to have members of the family take turns and write the name of each Bible section on the edge of the Post-it note tab placed at the beginning of that section. You may leave these tabs on the pages as a way to help learn and remember the six major sections of the Bible.

## Bible Bang

This activity helps you learn how to look up particular passages of the Bible.

**Materials needed:** a pen or pencil, a sheet of blank paper, scissors, 12 balloons

Before the activity, copy the following list onto a blank sheet of paper and cut apart each line, making narrow slips of paper. Fold each slip of paper and insert it into a balloon, one slip for each balloon. Do not blow up the balloons. Hide the

uninflated balloons throughout your living room, or whatever room you will gather in as a family to do this activity.

1. Genesis 22:15–18 (Abraham’s Covenant)
2. Exodus 20:2–3 (the First Commandment)
3. 1 Samuel 12:13–15 (a king)
4. 2 Chronicles 36:15–17,20 (the Exile)
5. Psalm 100 (praising God)
6. Wisdom 6:22 (Lady Wisdom)
7. Isaiah 60:1–3 (God’s promise)
8. Amos 1:4–6 (God’s judgment)
9. Luke 1:30–33 (the Annunciation)
10. John 3:16–17 (salvation)
11. Galatians 3:26–29 (faith)
12. Revelation 22:12–13 (a new heaven)

1. Tell everyone that you have found a treasure that can answer life’s questions and help each member of the family to live a happy, healthy, and holy life, and that clues to finding that treasure are hidden throughout the room. Announce that as a family they are going to search for and find the clues and discover how to use them. Invite everyone to begin the search.

As the hidden balloons are found, family members will discover that they contain a clue. Encourage them to think of a creative (and noisy) way to retrieve the clues. They will soon figure out that to get the clues, they have to blow up and pop the balloons.

2. After all the clues have been recovered, ask what is needed to decode the clues. Of course, the answer is the Bible.



3. Pass the Bible around to each member of the family in turn to look up the passage listed on each clue. As a way to begin to learn how to look up a Bible passage, you can show each other how to look in the table of contents on page iv in the front of the Bible. Then, as a family, you may wish to read through page xi, “Navigating *The Catholic Family Connections Bible*,” in the front of the Bible.
4. Once the Bible passage has been found, ask the family members to read aloud their passage(s), starting with Genesis and proceeding in order through Revelation.

**D**oes your family have a traditional way of celebrating a holiday? Family traditions are usually handed down from one generation to the next. They give meaning to our special celebrations and help us know where we came from. The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the promised Messiah and highlights Jesus' Jewish origins. The author wanted Jewish-Christian readers to know that believing in Jesus as the Son of God was not a break with their tradition but the fulfillment of it.

## In Depth

The author of Matthew was probably a Jewish Christian writing for a community of Jewish Christians. This community's main mission was to bring the gospel message to its Jewish brothers and sisters (see 10:6) but there are also indications that this mission was beginning to be spread to the Gentile world (see 4:12–25). In defense of the community's belief in Jesus, the Gospel of Matthew links Jesus to important Jewish traditions and gives them new meanings. The Gospel begins

### At a Glance

- I. **The Infancy Narrative (1:1–2:23).**
- II. **The Proclamation of the Kingdom (3:1–7:29).**
- III. **Ministry and Mission in Galilee (8:1–11:1).**
- IV. **Opposition from Israel (11:2–13:53).**
- V. **Jesus, the Kingdom, and the Church (13:54–18:35).**
- VI. **Ministry in Judea and Jerusalem (19:1–25:46).**
- VII. **The Passion and Resurrection (26:1–28:20).**

### Quick Facts

**Inspired Author:** unknown; traditionally associated with the Apostle Matthew

**Date Written:** approximately AD 85

**Audience:** Christian Jews

**Image of Jesus:** the greatest prophet, who brings the New Law

with a list of Jesus' Jewish ancestors, connecting Jesus to Abraham, the father of Judaism, and David, Israel's greatest king. Then it makes frequent references to Old Testament laws, prophecies, and events that Jesus fulfills or completes.

The author of Matthew also wanted to show how Jesus broke with certain Jewish beliefs—no doubt to help explain why his community of Jewish Christians was protesting against the Jewish religious establishment that it considered corrupt and wayward. So in the Sermon on the Mount (see 5:1–7:29), the Gospel has Jesus giving a deeper interpretation to Jewish laws. And Jesus is frequently in conflict with the scribes and Pharisees over things like healing on the Sabbath (see 12:9–14). Such incidents probably reflect the experience of the author's community with Jewish leaders as much as Jesus' own conflicts.

Gradually, the Gospel of Matthew paints a picture of Jesus as the promised Son of David who would reign as king forever and a prophet / teacher like Moses, the true law giver. He is the Messiah, the fulfillment of all that the Jewish people have been waiting for, the one who will bring their liberation and salvation. This Good News should be proclaimed to Jews and non-Jews alike. And so the Gospel ends with the risen Jesus telling his disciples, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (28:19).



2:1–12

# Matthew

## I: The Infancy Narrative†

### The Genealogy of Jesus

**1** <sup>1\*</sup> The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.†

<sup>2\*</sup> Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. <sup>3\*</sup> Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, <sup>4\*</sup> Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, <sup>5\*</sup> Salmon the father of

Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, <sup>6\*</sup> Jesse the father of David the king.

David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. <sup>7\*†</sup> Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. <sup>8</sup>Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. <sup>9</sup>Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. <sup>10†</sup> Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos

† **1:1–2:23** The infancy narrative forms the prologue of the gospel. Consisting of a genealogy and five stories, it presents the coming of Jesus as the climax of Israel’s history, and the events of his conception, birth, and early childhood as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The genealogy is probably traditional material that Matthew edited. In its first two sections (1:2–11) it was drawn from Ru 4:18–22 and 1 Chr 1–3. Except for Jechoniah, Shealtiel, and Zerubbabel, none of the names in the third section (1:12–16) is found in any Old Testament genealogy. While the genealogy shows the continuity of God’s providential plan from Abraham on, discontinuity is also present. The women Tamar (1:3), Rahab and Ruth (1:5), and the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba (1:6), bore their sons through unions that were in varying degrees strange and unexpected. These “irregularities” culminate in the supreme “irregularity” of the Messiah’s birth of a virgin mother; the age of fulfillment is inaugurated by a creative act of God.

Drawing upon both biblical tradition and Jewish stories, Matthew portrays Jesus as reliving the Exodus experience of Israel and the persecutions of Moses. His rejection by his own people and his passion are foreshadowed by the troubled reaction of “all Jerusalem” to the question of the magi who are seeking the “newborn king of the Jews” (2:2–3), and by Herod’s attempt to have him killed. The magi who do him homage prefigure the Gentiles who will accept the preaching of the gospel. The infancy narrative proclaims who Jesus is, the savior of his people from their sins (1:21), Emmanuel in whom “God is with us”

(1:23), and the Son of God (2:15).

**1:1** *The Son of David, the son of Abraham*: two links of the genealogical chain are singled out. Although the later, David is placed first in order to emphasize that Jesus is the royal Messiah. The mention of Abraham may be due not only to his being the father of the nation Israel but to Matthew’s interest in the universal scope of Jesus’ mission; cf Gn 22:18, “. . . in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing.”

**1:7** The successor of Abijah was not Asaph but Asa (see 1 Chr 3:10). Some textual witnesses read the latter name; however, *Asaph* is better attested. Matthew may have deliberately introduced the psalmist Asaph into the genealogy (and in v 10 the prophet Amos) in order to show that Jesus is the fulfillment not only of the promises made to David (see 2 Sm 7) but of all the Old Testament.

**1:10** *Amos*: some textual witnesses read *Amon*, who was the actual successor of Manasseh (see 1 Chr 3:14).

**1:1** Gn 5:1; 1 Chr 17:11; Gn 22:18.

**1:2–17** Lk 3:23–38.

**1:2** Gn 21:3; 25:26; 29:35;

1 Chr 2:1.

**1:3** Gn 38:29–30; Ru 4:18;

1 Chr 2:4–9.

**1:4** Ru 4:19–20;

1 Chr 2:10–11.

**1:5** Ru 4:21–22; 1 Chr

2:11–12.

**1:6** 2 Sm 12:24; 1 Chr 2:15;

3:5.

**1:7–11** 2 Kgs 25:1–21; 1 Chr

3:10–15.

the father of Josiah. <sup>11</sup>Josiah became the father of Jehoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile.

<sup>12\*</sup> After the Babylonian exile, Jehoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, <sup>13</sup>Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, <sup>14</sup>Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, <sup>15</sup>Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, <sup>16</sup>Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah.

<sup>17†</sup> Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen

generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

### The Birth of Jesus

<sup>18†</sup> Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,<sup>†</sup> but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. <sup>19†</sup> Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. <sup>20\*</sup>† Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. <sup>21†</sup> She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

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## Did You Know?

### Jesus' Family Tree

In the first two chapters of Matthew, the author begins to reveal the unique focus of the Gospel. He starts by tracing Jesus' family tree, making his case that Jesus was the Messiah who would restore the covenant promised to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. He also traces Jesus' ancestry back to David to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made to David (see 2 Samuel, chapter 7).

Things get even more interesting with a closer look at all the people mentioned in the list. There is a wide assortment of groups and social classes: patriarchs and slaves, kings and peasants, men and women, Jews and non-Jews. This genealogy is based on clan relations where non-Jews are included because they have been incorporated into the clan that traces itself back to David and Abraham. Essentially, this genealogy demonstrates that God has been at work from the call of Abraham, the “father” of Judaism, through the high point of their history (David), and even through their darkest times (the Babylonian Exile). And “God is with us” still in Jesus (Mt 1:23).

▶ Mt 1:1–17

† **1:17** Matthew is concerned with fourteen generations, probably because fourteen is the numerical value of the Hebrew letters forming the name of David. In the second section of the genealogy (6b–11), three kings of Judah, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, have been omitted (see 1 Chr 3:11–12), so that there are fourteen generations in that section. Yet the third (12–16) apparently has only thirteen. Since Matthew here emphasizes that each section has fourteen, it is unlikely that the thirteen of the last was due to his oversight. Some scholars suggest that *Jesus who is called the Messiah* (16b) doubles the final member of the chain: *Jesus*, born within the family of David, opens up the new age as *Messiah*, so that in fact there are fourteen generations in the third section. This is perhaps too subtle, and the hypothesis of a slip not on the part of Matthew but of a later scribe seems likely. On *Messiah*, see the note on Lk 2:11.

**1:18–25** This first story of the infancy narrative spells out what is summarily indicated in v 16. The virginal conception of Jesus is the work of the Spirit of God. Joseph's decision to divorce Mary is overcome by the heavenly command that he take her into his home and accept the child as his own. The natural genealogical line is broken but the promises to David are fulfilled; through Joseph's adoption the child belongs to the family of David. Matthew sees the virginal conception as the fulfillment of Is 7:14.

**1:18** *Betrothed to Joseph*: betrothal was the first part of the marriage, constituting a man and woman as husband and wife. Subsequent infidelity was considered adultery. The betrothal was followed some months later by the husband's taking his wife into his home, at which time normal married life began.

**1:19** *A righteous man*: as a devout observer of the Mosaic law, Joseph wished to break his union with someone whom he suspected of gross violation of the law. It is commonly said that the law required him to do so, but the texts usually given in support of that view, e.g., Dt 22:20–21, do not clearly pertain to Joseph's situation. *Unwilling to expose her to shame*: the penalty for proved adultery was death by stoning; cf Dt 22:21–23.

**1:20** *The angel of the Lord*: in the Old Testament a common designation of God in communication with a human being. *In a dream*: see 2:13, 19, 22. These dreams may be meant to recall the dreams of Joseph, son of Jacob the patriarch (Gn 37:5–11, 19). A closer parallel is the dream of Amram, father of Moses, related by Josephus (*Antiquities* 2:9, 3 §§212:215–16).

**1:21** *Jesus*: in first-century Judaism the Hebrew name Joshua (Greek *Iêsous*) meaning “Yahweh helps” was interpreted as “Yahweh saves.”

23\*† “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means “God is with us.”<sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.<sup>25</sup>\*† He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

### The Visit of the Magi

**2**† When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,† behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem.<sup>2\*</sup>† saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.<sup>4</sup>† Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.<sup>5</sup>\* They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

7 Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance.<sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.”<sup>9</sup> After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

† **1:23** *God is with us*: God’s promise of deliverance to Judah in Isaiah’s time is seen by Matthew as fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, in whom God is with his people. The name Emmanuel is alluded to at the end of the gospel where the risen Jesus assures his disciples of his continued presence, “. . . I am with you always, until the end of the age” (28:20).

**1:25** *Until she bore a son*: the evangelist is concerned to emphasize that Joseph was not responsible for the conception of Jesus. The Greek word translated “until” does not imply normal marital conduct after Jesus’ birth, nor does it exclude it.

**2:1–12** The future rejection of Jesus by Israel and his acceptance by the Gentiles are retrojected into this scene of the narrative.

**2:1** *In the days of King Herod*: Herod reigned from 37 to 4 B.C. *Magi*: originally a designation of the Persian priestly caste, the word became used of those who were regarded as having more than human knowledge. Matthew’s magi are astrologers.

**2:2** *We saw his star*: it was a common ancient belief that a new star appeared at the time of a ruler’s birth. Matthew also draws upon the Old Testament story of Balaam, who had prophesied that “A star shall advance from Jacob” (Nm 24:17), though there the star means not an astral phenomenon but the king himself.

**2:4** Herod’s consultation with the chief priests and scribes has some similarity to a Jewish legend about the child Moses in which the “sacred scribes” warn Pharaoh about the imminent birth of one



## Did You Know?

### Jesus, Emmanuel

**I**n announcing Jesus’ birth, the Gospel of Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14, in which Isaiah tells King Ahaz that his young wife will conceive a son and they will name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us” (Mt 1:23). This is the perfect description for Jesus, the Son of God, who fully shares our humanity. The Gospel ends with the same promise, when the risen Jesus tells his disciples, “I am with you always” (28:20).

### ▶ Mt 1:23

<sup>10</sup>They were overjoyed at seeing the star,<sup>11</sup>\*† and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.<sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

### The Flight to Egypt

<sup>13</sup>† When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,† and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.”<sup>14</sup> Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.<sup>15</sup>\*† He stayed

who will deliver Israel from Egypt and the king makes plans to destroy him.

**2:11** Cf Ps 72:10, 15; Is 60:6. These Old Testament texts led to the interpretation of the magi as kings.

**2:13–23** Biblical and nonbiblical traditions about Moses are here applied to the child Jesus, though the dominant Old Testament type is not Moses but Israel (see v 15).

**2:13** *Flee to Egypt*: Egypt was a traditional place of refuge for those fleeing from danger in Palestine (see 1 Kgs 11:40; Jer 26:21), but the main reason why the child is to be taken to Egypt is that he may relive the Exodus experience of Israel.

**2:15** The fulfillment citation is taken from Hos 11:1. Israel, God’s son, was called out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus; Jesus, the Son of God, will similarly be called out of that land in a new exodus. The father-son relationship between God and the nation is set in a higher key. Here the son is not a group adopted as “son of God,” but the child who, as conceived by the holy Spirit, stands in unique relation to God. He is son of David and of Abraham, of Mary and of Joseph, but, above all, of God.

**1:23** Is 7:14 LXX.

**1:25** Lk 2:7.

**2:2** Nm 24:17.

**2:5–6** Mi 5:1; 2 Sm 5:2.

**2:11** Ps 72:10–11, 15; Is 60:6.

**2:15** Hos 11:1.



**Cultural Connection**

**Jesus Brought the Good News of Salvation to People of All Races**

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The wise men from another culture, who came to offer Jesus gifts for a royal messiah, symbolize that Jesus came as the savior of all races and cultures. Matthew 2:1–12 is the biblical basis for the religious feast day of Epiphany, which officially is January 6 but is celebrated on the first Sunday after the New Year.

In some Latin American traditions, children receive gifts on Epiphany, in remembrance of the

gifts the wise men offered to Jesus. The evening before, at parties celebrated in homes and offices, a special bread is shared, known as *La Rosca*, that has a figure of the baby Jesus baked inside of it. Whoever finds the figure of the baby Jesus in a piece of bread has to host a party to celebrate Jesus' presentation in the Temple (see Lk 2:22–24). The Church celebrates this feast on February 2.

- How do you accept and celebrate people of different cultures?
- Think of spiritual gifts you have received from other people. Express your gratitude to God for those gifts.

▶ **Mt 2:1–12**



there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

**The Massacre of the Infants**

<sup>16</sup>When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet:

<sup>18</sup>\* † "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
sobbing and loud lamentation;  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
and she would not be consoled,  
since they were no more."

**The Return from Egypt**

<sup>19</sup>When Herod had died, behold, the angel

† **2:18** Jer 31:15 portrays Rachel, wife of the patriarch Jacob, weeping for her children taken into exile at the time of the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom (722–21 B.C.). Bethlehem was traditionally identified with Ephrath, the place near which Rachel was buried (see Gn 35:19; 48:7), and the mourning of Rachel is here applied to her lost children of a later age. *Ramah*: about six miles north of Jerusalem. The lamentation of Rachel is so great as to be heard at a far distance.

**2:20** For those who sought the child's life are dead: Moses, who had fled from Egypt because the Pharaoh sought to kill him (see Ex 2:15), was told to return there, "for all the men who sought your life are dead" (Ex 4:19).

**2:22** With the agreement of the emperor Augustus, Archelaus received half of his father's kingdom, including Judea, after Herod's death. He had the title "ethnarch" (i.e., "ruler of a nation") and reigned from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6.

**2:23** Nazareth . . . He shall be called a Nazorean: the tradi-

tion of Jesus' residence in Nazareth was firmly established, and Matthew sees it as being in accordance with the foreannounced plan of God. The town of Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and no such prophecy can be found there. The vague expression "through the prophets" may be due to Matthew's seeing a connection between Nazareth and certain texts in which there are words with a remote similarity to the name of that town. Some such Old Testament texts are Is 11:1 where the Davidic king of the future is called "a bud" (*nēser*) that shall blossom from the roots of Jesse, and Jgs 13:5, 7 where Samson, the future deliverer of Israel from the Philistines, is called one who shall be consecrated (a *nāzīr*) to God.

<sup>21</sup>He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup>† But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>\* † He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazorean."

**II: The Proclamation of the Kingdom**

**The Preaching of John the Baptist**

**3**<sup>1</sup>\* † In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea† <sup>2</sup>\* † [and]

tion of Jesus' residence in Nazareth was firmly established, and Matthew sees it as being in accordance with the foreannounced plan of God. The town of Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and no such prophecy can be found there. The vague expression "through the prophets" may be due to Matthew's seeing a connection between Nazareth and certain texts in which there are words with a remote similarity to the name of that town. Some such Old Testament texts are Is 11:1 where the Davidic king of the future is called "a bud" (*nēser*) that shall blossom from the roots of Jesse, and Jgs 13:5, 7 where Samson, the future deliverer of Israel from the Philistines, is called one who shall be consecrated (a *nāzīr*) to God.

**3:1–12** Here Matthew takes up the order of Jesus' ministry found

**2:18** Jer 31:15. **2:20** Ex 4:19. **2:23** Mt 13:54; Mk 1:9; Lk 2:39; 4:34; Jn 19:19. **3:1–12** Mk 1:2–8; Lk 3:2–17. **3:2** Mt 4:17; 10:7.

saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3\*† It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:

† in the gospel of Mark, beginning with the preparatory preaching of John the Baptist.

3:1 Unlike Luke, Matthew says nothing of the Baptist's origins and does not make him a relative of Jesus. *The desert of Judea*: the barren region west of the Dead Sea extending up the Jordan valley.

3:2 *Repent*: the Baptist calls for a change of heart and conduct, a turning of one's life from rebellion to obedience toward God. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*: "heaven" (literally, "the heavens") is a substitute for the name "God" that was avoided by devout Jews of the time out of reverence. The expression "the kingdom of heaven" occurs only in the gospel of Matthew. It means the effective rule of God over his people. In its fullness it includes not only human obedience to God's word, but the triumph of God over physical evils, supremely over death. In the expectation found in Jewish apocalyptic, the kingdom was to be ushered in by a judgment in which sinners would be condemned and perish, an expectation shared by the Baptist. This was modified in Christian understanding where the

"A voice of one crying out in the desert,  
'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths.' "

kingdom was seen as being established in stages, culminating with the parousia of Jesus.

3:3 See the note on Jn 1:23.

3:3 Is 40:3.



## Did You Know?

### Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes

**I**n Jesus' day, several groups of Jews held positions of status or leadership. The *Pharisees* were devoted laymen who were scholars of the Law of Moses and experts at interpreting it, so as many as possible could obey it. People looked up to them for guidance about how they should live as good Jews. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the body at the end time. The *Sadducees* were associated with the Temple and the ruling class. They thought the well-being of the Jewish people was dependent on proper operation and support of the Temple. They did not believe in the resurrection of body as the Pharisees did. The *scribes* were skilled at reading and writing, and most likely performed those services for the ruling class and those who were able to pay them. Scribes were not a religious group within Judaism, but they would have been familiar with the Torah and other aspects of religious practice because they worked as secretaries for the Pharisees and Sadducees. Scribes probably were involved in copying some of the Old Testament manuscripts.

The negative reaction of John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees is typical in Matthew. But in general, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and scribes were respected leaders during Jesus' time. The persecution later experienced by the community in which the author of Matthew lived probably affected his portrayal of them. (See "Introducing Jewish Sects," near the end of Second Maccabees, for more information on these groups.)

## Live It!

### Jesus' Family Lives as Immigrants

**F**ollowing an angel's order and facing the massacre of all boys under age two, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod's threats. They become immigrants to avoid persecution.

Every year, millions of people in the world become immigrants, fleeing their countries because of hunger, poverty, or persecution. Often, they find themselves feeling like unwelcome strangers, not able to communicate in the language of their new land and even persecuted by its inhabitants—many who believe that these immigrants have come simply to take advantage of services provided by the government. Christians, however, should have a special compassion for immigrants because Jesus told us to love everyone, especially those who suffer. By honoring the plight of today's immigrants, we honor the Holy Family.

- Imagine Jesus, Mary, and Joseph exiled in this country. How would you treat them?
- What is your attitude toward refugees and immigrants in our country?
- Ask God to bless legislators with the love and wisdom to welcome immigrants, and to give your generation a courageous heart to seek justice and peace in the world.

▶ Mt 2:13



▶ Mt 3:7





## Catholic Social Teaching

### The Slaughter of the Innocents

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The event described in Matthew 2:16–18 is often called the Slaughter of the Innocents. In many circumstances in history, innocent people, including infants and young children, have been victims of war and other acts of violence. Today, abortion has unfortunately continued this trend, prematurely ending the lives of innocent children. To many people, abortion is a simple solution to an unwanted pregnancy. The Church teaches, however, that human life begins at the moment of con-

ception, and that these lives, no matter how small, are sacred and must always be protected. Abortion, therefore, is wrong in all circumstances.

Catholic social teaching extends this belief in the dignity of human life from “womb to tomb” to numerous other life issues, including capital punishment, war, and euthanasia. We, in turn, must reflect this consistent ethic of life in all that we believe, say, and do, working hard to ensure that human dignity is always upheld.

- How might we as individuals or communities support pregnant women to ensure they do not choose abortion?
- How difficult is it to have a truly consistent ethic of life in our world today?

#### ▶ Mt 2:16–18

*Life and Dignity of the Human Person*



<sup>4</sup>\*† John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him <sup>6</sup>† and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

<sup>7</sup>\*† When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup>Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. <sup>9</sup>\*And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. <sup>10</sup>Even

now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup>\*† I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup>\*† His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

#### The Baptism of Jesus

<sup>13</sup>\*† Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup>† John tried

destroying power of God’s judgment. However, some see *the holy Spirit and fire* as synonymous, and the effect of this “baptism” as either purification or destruction. See the note on Lk 3:16.

**3:12** The discrimination between the good and the bad is compared to the procedure by which a farmer separates wheat and chaff. The *winnowing fan* was a forklike shovel with which the threshed wheat was thrown into the air. The kernels fell to the ground; the light chaff, blown off by the wind, was gathered and burned up.

**3:13–17** The baptism of Jesus is the occasion on which he is equipped for his ministry by the holy Spirit and proclaimed to be the Son of God.

**3:14–15** This dialogue, peculiar to Matthew, reveals John’s awareness of Jesus’ superiority to him as the mightier one who is coming and who will baptize with the holy Spirit (11). His reluctance to admit Jesus among the sinners whom he is baptizing with water is overcome by Jesus’ response. *To fulfill all righteousness*: in this gospel to *fulfill* usually refers to fulfillment of prophecy,

<sup>3:4</sup> The clothing of John recalls the austere dress of the prophet Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8). The expectation of the return of Elijah from heaven to prepare Israel for the final manifestation of God’s kingdom was widespread, and according to Matthew this expectation was fulfilled in the Baptist’s ministry (11:14; 17:11–13).

<sup>3:6</sup> Ritual washing was practiced by various groups in Palestine between 150 B.C. and A.D. 250. John’s baptism may have been related to the purificatory washings of the Essenes at Qumran.

<sup>3:7</sup> *Pharisees and Sadducees*: the former were marked by devotion to the law, written and oral, and the scribes, experts in the law, belonged predominantly to this group. The Sadducees were the priestly aristocratic party, centered in Jerusalem. They accepted as scripture only the first five books of the Old Testament, followed only the letter of the law, rejected the oral legal traditions, and were opposed to teachings not found in the Pentateuch, such as the resurrection of the dead. Matthew links both of these groups together as enemies of Jesus (16:1, 6, 11, 12; cf Mk 8:11–13, 15). The threatening words that follow are addressed to them rather than to “the crowds” as in Lk 3:7. *The coming wrath*: the judgment that will bring about the destruction of unrepentant sinners.

<sup>3:11</sup> *Baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire*: the water baptism of John will be followed by an “immersion” of the repentant in the cleansing power of the Spirit of God, and of the unrepentant in the

**3:4** Mt 11:7–8; 2 Kgs 1:8; Zec 13:4.

**3:7** Mt 12:34; 23:33; Is 59:5.

**3:9** Jn 8:33, 39; Rom 9:7–8; Gal 4:21–31.

**3:11** Jn 1:26–27, 33; Acts 1:5.

**3:12** Mt 13:30; Is 41:16; Jer 15:7.

**3:13–17** Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22; Jn 1:31–34.

to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. <sup>16\*</sup>† After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. <sup>17\*</sup>† And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

### The Temptation of Jesus

**4** <sup>1\*</sup>† Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2\*</sup>† He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." <sup>4\*</sup>† He said in reply, "It is written:

'One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes forth from  
the mouth of God.' "

<sup>5</sup>† Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, <sup>6\*</sup> and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

'He will command his angels concerning you'  
and 'with their hands they will  
support you,  
lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

<sup>7\*</sup> Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" <sup>8</sup> Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, <sup>9</sup>† and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will

and righteousness to moral conduct in conformity with God's will. Here, however, as in 5:6 and 6:33, *righteousness* seems to mean the saving activity of God. *To fulfill all righteousness* is to submit to the plan of God for the salvation of the human race. This involves Jesus' identification with sinners; hence the propriety of his accepting John's baptism.

**3:16** *The Spirit . . . coming upon him:* cf Is 42:1.

**3:17** *This is my beloved Son:* the Marcan address to Jesus (Mk 1:11) is changed into a proclamation. The Father's voice speaks in terms that reflect Is 42:1; Ps 2:7; and Gn 22:2.

**4:1-11** Jesus, proclaimed Son of God at his baptism, is subjected to a triple temptation. Obedience to the Father is a characteristic of true sonship, and Jesus is tempted by the devil to rebel against God, overtly in the third case, more subtly in the first two. Each refusal of Jesus is expressed in language taken from the Book of Deuteronomy (Dt 8:3; 6:13, 16). The testings of Jesus resemble those of Israel during the wandering in the desert and later in Canaan, and the victory of Jesus, the true Israel and the true Son, contrasts with the failure of the ancient and disobedient "son," the old Israel. In the temptation account Matthew is almost identical with Luke; both seem to have

## Pray It!

### Jesus' Temptations, My Temptations

“**C**ommand that these stones become loaves of bread” (4:3).

*Jesus, you trusted God to provide your material needs. Help me to avoid placing my priorities on material things.*

*“Throw yourself down. For it is written: . . .  
'with their hands they will support you,  
lest you dash your foot against a stone.'”*

[Verse 6]

*Jesus, you resisted using your power for vain and foolish reasons. Help me to resist doing foolish things only to impress others.*

*“All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.”*

[Verse 9]

*Jesus, you refused to cooperate with the devil to achieve status and power. Help me to refuse to cooperate with evil and injustice in achieving my life's goals.*



▶ Mt 4:1-11

prostrate yourself and worship me.” <sup>10\*</sup> At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written:

'The Lord, your God, shall you worship  
and him alone shall you serve.' "

drawn upon the same source.

**4:2** *Forty days and forty nights:* the same time as that during which Moses remained on Sinai (Ex 24:18). The time reference, however, seems primarily intended to recall the forty years during which Israel was tempted in the desert (Dt 8:2).

**4:4** Cf Dt 8:3. Jesus refuses to use his power for his own benefit and accepts whatever God wills.

**4:5-7** The devil supports his proposal by an appeal to the scriptures, Ps 91:11a, 12. Unlike Israel (Dt 6:16), Jesus refuses to "test" God by demanding from him an extraordinary show of power.

**4:9** The worship of Satan to which Jesus is tempted is probably intended to recall Israel's worship of false gods. His refusal is expressed in the words of Dt 6:13.

**3:16** Is 42:1.

**3:17** Mt 12:18; 17:5; Gn

22:2; Ps 2:7; Is 42:1.

**4:1-11** Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13.

**4:2** Ex 24:18; Dt 8:2.

**4:4** Dt 8:3.

**4:6** Ps 91:11-12.

**4:7** Dt 6:16.

**4:10** Mt 16:23; Dt 6:13.



## Baptism

**I**magine the scene . . . John the Baptist dressed in camel hair, standing by the Jordan River calling for people to turn from their sin and to be ritually washed (baptized) in water as a sign of their conversion. And who steps forward? Jesus, the Son of God, who is without sin! Jesus convinces John to baptize him as a sign of how fully Jesus embraces his humanity. As Jesus comes out of the water, God reveals Jesus' true identity to the world—"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17)—thus beginning Jesus' public ministry leading toward his Passion, death, and Resurrection.

The sacrament of Baptism also serves as a beginning for all Catholics. As the first of the three sacraments of initiation, Baptism establishes our identity as adopted sons or daughters of God and makes us members of the Christian community.

Although many Catholics are baptized as infants, some young people and adults, referred to as catechumens, are baptized at the Easter Vigil each year. During the Baptism ritual, the person is immersed in water or has water poured over his or her head

three times with the words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, no. 226). By being washed in water, the person dies to sin and rises freed from sin, both original sin and personal sin, as a new creation in Christ. The individual is then anointed with chrism (sacred oil) to strengthen him or her to "remain for ever a member of Christ" (no. 228), who was anointed priest, prophet, and king. (In the Old Testament, such oil was used to anoint priests, prophets, and kings for service.) Afterward, a white garment is put on the newly baptized person, signifying his or her new life in Christ, and a candle is given to the person, calling him or her to always walk in the light of Christ and be a light to the world.

Together the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are a person's initiation into the Christian community. They call Christians to continual conversion in following Jesus.

### ▶ Mt 3:13–17

*Catechism*, nos. 1213–1284



<sup>11</sup>Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

### The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

<sup>12\*</sup>† When he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13\*</sup> He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

- <sup>15\*</sup> “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,  
the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles,  
<sup>16\*</sup> the people who sit in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
on those dwelling in a land overshadowed  
by death  
light has arisen.”

<sup>17\*†</sup> From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

### The Call of the First Disciples

<sup>18\*†</sup> As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” <sup>20†</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

† **4:12–17** Isaiah’s prophecy of the light rising upon Zebulun and Naphtali (Is 8:23–9:1) is fulfilled in Jesus’ residence at Capernaum. The territory of these two tribes was the first to be devastated (733–32 B.C.) at the time of the Assyrian invasion. In order to accommodate Jesus’ move to Capernaum to the prophecy, Matthew speaks of that town as being “in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali” (13), whereas it was only in the territory of the latter, and he understands the sea of the prophecy, the Mediterranean, as the sea of Galilee.

**4:17** At the beginning of his preaching Jesus takes up the words of John the Baptist (3:2) although with a different meaning; in his ministry the kingdom of heaven has already begun to be present (12:28).

**4:18–22** The call of the first disciples promises them a share in Jesus’ work and entails abandonment of family and former way of life. Three of the four, Simon, James, and John, are distinguished among the disciples by a closer relation with Jesus (17:1; 26:37).

**4:20** Here and in v 22, as in Mark (1:16–20) and unlike the Lucan account (5:1–11), the disciples’ response is motivated only by Jesus’ invitation, an element that emphasizes his mysterious power.

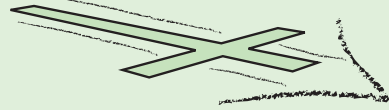
**4:23–25** This summary of Jesus’ ministry concludes the narrative part of the first book of Matthew’s gospel (chs 3–4). The activities of his ministry are teaching, proclaiming the gospel, and healing; cf 9:35.

**4:23** *Their synagogues*: Matthew usually designates the Jewish synagogues as *their synagogue(s)* (9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54) or, in

## Follow Me

**A**s the first disciples chose to follow Jesus, what did they leave behind? Nets, boats, even parents—the very things they depended on for life and security! Knowing what you know of Jesus, what are you ready to “leave behind” in order to follow him and continue his mission?

▶ Mt 4:18–22



### Ministering to a Great Multitude

<sup>23\*†</sup> He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,† proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people. <sup>24†</sup> His fame spread to all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain, those who were possessed, lunatics, and paralytics, and he cured them. <sup>25\*†</sup> And great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

### The Sermon on the Mount

**5**† When he saw the crowds,† he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down,

address to Jews, *your synagogues* (23:34), an indication that he wrote after the break between church and synagogue.

**4:24** *Syria*: the Roman province to which Palestine belonged.

**4:25** *The Decapolis*: a federation of Greek cities in Palestine, originally ten in number, all but one east of the Jordan.

**5:1–7:29** The first of the five discourses that are a central part of the structure of this gospel. It is the discourse section of the first book and contains sayings of Jesus derived from Q and from M. The Lucan parallel is in that gospel’s “Sermon on the Plain” (Lk 6:20–49), although some of the sayings in Matthew’s “Sermon on the Mount” have their parallels in other parts of Luke. The careful topical arrangement of the sermon is probably not due only to Matthew’s editing; he seems to have had a structured discourse of Jesus as one of his sources. The form of that source may have been as follows: four beatitudes (5:3–4, 6, 11–12), a section on the new righteousness with illustrations (5:17, 20–24, 27–28, 33–48), a section on good works (6:1–6, 16–18), and three warnings (7:1–2, 15–21, 24–27).

**5:1–2** Unlike Luke’s sermon, this is addressed not only to the disciples but to the crowds (see 7:28).

**4:12–13** Mk 1:14–15; Lk 4:14, 31.

**4:13** Jn 2:12.

**4:15–16** Is 8:23 LXX; 9:1.

**4:16** Lk 1:79.

**4:17** Mt 3:2.

**4:18–22** Mk 1:16–20; Lk 5:1–11.

**4:23** Mt 9:35; Mk 1:39; Lk

4:15, 44.

**4:25** Mk 3:7–8; Lk 6:17–19.



### The Beatitudes

**H**ave you ever thought if you only had the latest technology, or if only you were more popular, then you would be happy? Those feelings are natural, but in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers a radically different view of true happiness. Jesus provides a list of attitudes, called the Beatitudes, that will bring us happiness. This list has nothing to do with material goods or popularity contests but focuses instead on our response to God's love and our love of neighbor. True happiness is found not here on earth, but in the gift of eternal reward in the kingdom of heaven.

Our desire for happiness was placed within us by God and can only be satisfied by loving God and doing God's will. Real happiness is attained not through the accumulation of possessions, but through the moral choices we make. The Beatitudes call us to turn from our desire for false or temporary happiness to seek the eternal happiness only God can give. By focusing on heaven, the decisions we make and the trials we endure on a daily basis are seen in a new light—the light of Christ's Passion and Resurrection.

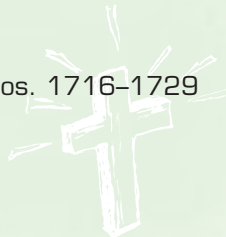
Having heaven as our goal enables us to . . .

- realize that heaven is a gift from God that we receive only through God's grace
- find comfort when we mourn the loss of a loved one
- be humble
- desire righteousness (a right relationship with God and others) with every ounce of our being
- be merciful when others offend or harm us
- purify our heart so that we only desire God
- seek peace when conflict arises
- stick to our convictions when it is a question of right and wrong
- endure being made fun of or threatened because of our faith in Jesus Christ

Each and every day, God calls us to seek happiness by loving God and others generously, compassionately, humbly, with a hunger for justice, with a pure heart, and in a desire for peace. Make the Beatitudes part of your daily prayer, and know that you are not alone in the pursuit of happiness. You walk this journey with the Church, with Mary and the saints, who encourage you along the way!

▶ **Mt 5:1-12**

*Catechism*, nos. 1716-1729





## Catholic Social Teaching

### An Upside-Down Kingdom

**R**ead Matthew 5:1–12. These familiar words of Jesus, called the Beatitudes, begin what is called the Sermon on the Mount. In chapters 5–7, Jesus speaks about life in a way that challenged the attitudes of his listeners. Many thought it was enough to follow the letter of the law by performing minimal acts of caring for the poor; burying the dead, and giving alms. Jesus, however, turns their worldview upside down, asserting that they should do these things generously, compassionately, and humbly, with a hunger for justice, with a pure heart, and in a desire for peace.

Catholic social teaching promotes this same message, reminding us that God has a special love for those who are poor and those who are oppressed. If we are to be authentic Christians, we must show a similar love for those who are most in need in our world. Thankfully, our world has been blessed with numerous modern-day prophets who have shown us what it truly means to love and care for the poor. People like Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, who risked and eventually lost his own life because he was unafraid to speak out against the grave injustices being inflicted

upon the poor in his country. Or Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker movement and devoted her adult life to promoting peace while serving the most poor and destitute. With these people and so many others as examples for us to follow, we too must always opt to love and serve the poor in our midst.

#### ▶ Mt 5:1–12

*Option for the Poor and Vulnerable*



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his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>He began to teach them, saying:

#### The Beatitudes †

- 3\* “Blessed are the poor in spirit, †  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
4\*† Blessed are they who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.  
5\*† Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the land.  
6† Blessed are they who hunger and thirst  
for righteousness,  
for they will be satisfied.  
7\* Blessed are the merciful,

for they will be shown mercy.

- 8\*† Blessed are the clean of heart,  
for they will see God.  
9 Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.  
10\*† Blessed are they who are persecuted for the  
sake of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11\* Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. <sup>12</sup>\*† Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

† **5:3–12** The form *Blessed are (is)* occurs frequently in the Old Testament in the Wisdom literature and in the psalms. Although modified by Matthew, the first, second, fourth, and ninth beatitudes have Lucan parallels (5:3 // Lk 6:20; 5:4 // Lk 6:21b; 5:6 // Lk 6:21a; 5:11–12 // Lk 5:22–23). The others were added by the evangelist and are probably his own composition. A few manuscripts, Western and Alexandrian, and many versions and patristic quotations give the second and third beatitudes in inverted order.

**5:3** *The poor in spirit*: in the Old Testament, the *poor* (*anāwīm*) are those who are without material possessions and whose confidence is in God (see Is 61:1; Zep 2:3; in the NAB the word is translated *lowly* and *humble*, respectively, in those texts). Matthew added *in spirit* in order either to indicate that only the devout poor were meant or to extend the beatitude to all, of whatever social rank, who recognized their complete dependence on God. The same phrase *poor in spirit* is found in the Qumran literature (1QM 14:7).

**5:4** Cf Is 61:2, “(The Lord has sent me) . . . to comfort all who mourn.” *They will be comforted*: here the passive is a “theological passive” equivalent to the active “God will comfort them”; so also in vv 6 and 7.

**5:5** Cf Ps 37:11, “. . . the poor will possess the land.” In the psalm “the land” means the land of Palestine; here it means the kingdom.

**5:6** *For righteousness*: a Matthean addition. For the meaning of *righteousness* here, see the note on 3:14–15.

**5:8** Cf Ps 24:4. Only one “pure of heart” can take part in the temple worship. To be with God in the temple is described in Ps 42:3 as “seeing” the face of God,<sup>†</sup> but here the promise to the *clean of heart* is that they will see God not in the temple but in the coming kingdom.

**5:10** *Righteousness* here, as usually in Matthew, means conduct in conformity with God’s will.

**5:12** *The prophets who were before you*: the disciples of Jesus stand in the line of the persecuted prophets of Israel. Some would see the expression as indicating also that Matthew considered all Christian disciples as prophets.

**5:3–12** Lk 6:20–23.

**5:4** Is 61:2–3; Rv 21:4.

**5:5** Gn 13:15; Ps 37:11.

**5:7** Mt 18:33; Jas 2:13.

**5:8** Pss 24:4–5; 73:1.

**5:10** 1 Pt 2:20; 3:14; 4:14.

**5:11** Mt 10:22; Acts 5:41.

**5:12** 2 Chr 36:16; Heb

11:32–38; Jas 5:10.

# Family Faith Conversations

**“The family is a community of life and love. The future of the world and of the Church, therefore, passes through the family.”**

(John Paul II, homily in Perth, Australia, 1986)

**The Christian family is holy and sacred.** Something about living in a family, even amid its foibles and quirks and problems, reveals the sacredness of a loving community. One of the ancient understandings of God’s mystery is the image of the communion of life and love we call the Trinity. Living as a loving family reveals God’s love in a special way.

To speak of family as holy and sacred does not imply that it is problem-free—not by any means. It does not even necessarily imply that it is capable of solving our problems. Rather, we come to recognize that God reaches out through the Bible and prayer ready to help us be family together. We, in turn, reach out to God through faith and love, intentionally pursuing God’s presence, which lingers among the ordinary and extraordinary events of family life. A family is our first community and most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world.

The Catholic vision of family life speaks about the family as a community of life and love. It proclaims that family life is sacred and that family activities are holy, that God’s love is revealed and communicated in new ways each and every day through the Christian family. This vision of family life calls families to a unique identity and mission. The Christian family is holy and sacred. As a result, families can come to believe that God dwells among them, and so they respond to God’s gracious activity in their lives.

Along life’s journey, family life is the first and most formative experience of acceptance and belonging. It is our first experience of community. When the family connects with the community of the Church, the family becomes the Church of the home.



**In this section you will find:**

- thematic Bible passages to help start family faith conversations
- prayer ideas for dealing with the death of a family member
- ideas for family service activities

# Bible Passage Starters

Bible stories can serve as a basis for rich family faith conversations. Use these themes to help identify stories from the Bible that help you bring the immense heart of God's word into your family conversations. You may also use these passages in some of the "Family Activities" on pages C17–C24, for example, in the "Bible Bang" activity.

## Pregnancy Stories

- Hagar conceives. (Gn 16:1–14)
- Sarah's pregnancy is foretold. (Gn 18:1–15)
- Rebekah's twins struggle in the womb. (Gn 25:21–28)
- Samson's birth is foretold. (Judges, chapter 13; 1 Sm 1:1–2:11)
- John's birth is foretold. (Lk 1:5–25)
- Jesus' birth is foretold. (Lk 1:26–38)
- Mary visits Elizabeth. (Lk 1:39–56)

## Birth Stories

- Sarah gives birth. (Gn 21:1–7)
- Moses is born and hidden. (Ex 1:8–2:10)
- John is born to Elizabeth. (Lk 1:57–80)
- Jesus is born to Mary. (Mt 1:18–25, Lk 2:1–21)

## Stories of Mothers Loving Their Children, of God Loving Us

- Rachel weeps for her children. (Jer 31:15–17)
- safe in my mother's arms (Ps 22:9–11)
- knit in my mother's womb (Ps 139:13)
- cannot forget her child (Is 49:15–16)

## Proverbs and Sayings

- true security for tough times (Prv 3:21–26)
- laziness (Prv 6:6–11)
- gossip (Prv 11:13)
- integrity (Prv 28:6)
- God of all seasons (Eccl 3:8)
- honoring parents (Sir 3:1–7)
- friends (Sir 6:5–17)
- ruining reputations (Sir 28:12–18)
- irresponsible drinking (Sir 31:25–31)

## Laws and Commandments

- the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1–17, Dt 5:1–21)
- the Greatest Commandment (Dt 6:4–9, Mt 22:36–38)

## Jesus' Teachings

- salt of the earth, light of the world (Mt 5:13–16)
- the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:5–15, Lk 11:1–4)
- welcoming children (Mt 19:13–15, Mk 10:13–16, Lk 18:15–17)
- Woe to hypocrites. (Mt 23:13–36)
- become like children (Mt 18:1–5, Mk 9:33–37, Lk 9:46–48)
- blessings and woes (Lk 6:20–26)

“What might God be saying to YOU through these sacred words?”



- the bread of life (Jn 6:35–40)
- the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:1–18)
- the way, the truth, the life (Jn 14:6–7)
- the vine and branches (Jn 15:1–11)
- The golden rule (Jn 15:12–17)

### Reconciliation and Forgiveness

- Joseph and his brothers (Genesis, chapter 45)
- Jonah and Nineveh (Jonah)
- Forgive seventy-seven times. (Mt 18:21–22)
- the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23–35)
- a sinful woman forgiven (Lk 7:36–50)
- the prodigal son (Lk 15:11–52)
- forgiving sins (Jn 20:21–23)

### Sin and Salvation

- the Tower of Babel (Gn 11:1–9)
- Abram and Sarai (Genesis, chapter 12)
- the golden calf (Exodus, chapter 32)
- the scapegoat (Lv 16:20–22)
- Deborah (Judges, chapters 4–5)
- resurrection (Dn 12:2)
- the Paschal Mystery (Rom 6:1–8)

### The Holy Spirit

- the spirit of God (Jb 33:4)
- a new heart and spirit (Ez 36:25–27)
- no other God (Jl 2:27)
- the power of God (Wis 7:24–30)
- gifts of the Spirit (Is 61:1–2)
- fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–26)

### Stories of Justice in the Gospels

- loving your enemies (Mt 5:43–48)
- giving alms (Mt 6:2–4)

- welcoming the little ones (Mt 19:13–15)
- the Final Judgment (Mt 25:31–46)
- the Greatest Commandment (Mk 12:28–34)
- Mary's song (Lk 1:46–56)
- Blessed are you, woe to you. (Lk 6:20–26)
- the good Samaritan (Lk 10:29–37)
- the Pharisee's cup (Lk 11:37–42)
- the great dinner (Lk 14:7–24)
- the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:13–15)
- Who is the greatest? (Lk 22:24–27)
- a Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:1–30)
- a man born blind (John, chapter 9)

### Images of God

- God as Creator (Genesis, chapter 1)
- God of ancestors (Ex 3:13–15)
- holy God (Lv 11:44–45)
- God as warrior (Deuteronomy, chapter 20)
- God as mystery (Jb 42:1–5)
- God of poor people (Ps 12:5)
- God as shepherd (Psalm 23)
- God as potter (Jer 18:1–6)
- universal God (Jonah)
- God as wisdom (Wis 6:12–20)
- God as just judge (Mt 25:31–46)
- God as father (Lk 11:12)
- God as housewife (Lk 15:8–10)
- Jesus as Word of God (Jn 1:1–18)
- God as love (1 Corinthians, chapter 13)
- Jesus as image of God (Col 1:15–20)

## When a Family Member Dies

The time of a family member's death is especially difficult. Often, our first instinct when receiving the news of a family member's death (as well as when a loved one or friend dies) is to cry out in agony and wonderment, much like King David (2 Sm 19:1) or like the Psalmist (Psalm 6) or as we might imagine Mary at the foot of the cross where her son hung (Mk 15:40–47) or like Jesus at the death of Lazarus (Jn 11:35).

The death of a family member is a tender time in life. Everyone in the family may experience different emotions and have different thoughts in their own time. So it is especially important to not force one another into feeling or thinking the same way at the same time.

Following is a list of articles in this Bible that can bring comfort and peace to family members as they work through their grief and remembrances of their loved one, and as they begin the journey toward hope and trust in the resurrection to new life in Christ.

- “Surviving Grief,” page 358 (2 Sm 19:1–9)
- “Praying for Death,” page 524 (Tobit, chapter 3)
- “Being There,” page 627 (Jb 2:11–13)
- “Suffering,” page 630 (Job, chapter 7)
- “Why?” page 656 (Jb 38:1—42:6)
- “Our Cross to Bear,” page 662 (Psalm 6)
- “The Balance of Life,” page 804 (Eccl 3:1–8)
- “Resurrection Hope,” page 1400 (Lk 24:1–12)
- “Alive Again!” page 1427 (Jn 11:1–44)
- “A God Who Cries,” page 1428 (Jn 11:35)
- “Dying for New Life,” page 1430 (Jn 12:24–26)
- “Trusting the Grace of God,” page 1515 (Rom 5:1–11)
- “Life After Death,” page 1560 (1 Cor 15:35–58)

Praying together as a family during the special time of loss and grief can provide comfort and strength. Using the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, or the ancient forms found in the “Praying with the Bible” section (pages C9–C16) can be a start.

O God our Father,

Creator of all the living, we entrust to your gentle care [name],  
and all those we love who have gone before us,  
and have gone to their rest in the hope of rising again.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

2. On the top half of the newsprint or large sheet of paper, write, "Act. Love. Walk justly." Share that during Lent we are called to act, love, and walk in ways that reflect God's justice.
3. On the bottom half of the newsprint or large sheet of paper, write, "Fast. Pray. Give love." Share that especially during Lent, Christians are called to do justice to others through the traditional practices of fasting, praying, and almsgiving.
4. Give each member of the family two craft sticks (like Popsicle sticks). Walk everyone through the following instructions:
  - a. Carefully place one stick on top of the other to make a cross. Holding the cross in the center, mark where the stick will later be overlapped and glued. Before you glue them, you will write some words on them. Do not write any part of the words in the area where the sticks overlap.
  - b. Write the word "Act" on the left side of the horizontal crossbeam. Write "Walk" on the right side.
  - c. On the top of the vertical beam, write the word "Love." On the bottom part, write "justly."
  - d. Turn both sticks over.
  - e. On the left side of the horizontal beam, write the word "Fast." Write "Pray" on the right side.
  - f. On the top part of the vertical beam, write the word "Give." On the bottom part, write "love."
5. Have each family member glue her or his sticks together. When the glue is dry, have everyone carefully wrap and tie a piece of thin cord or yarn around the area of overlap so that the cross can hang.
6. For each of the six weeks of Lent, you can have the cross of each family member hang in a prominent place in your house. Each Sunday night (or another night when you have a family meal), have a family faith conversation about one of the six different commands. Each member of the family might share one way she or he practiced that Christian act during the week.

Some other Bible passages related to this activity that you may wish to read as a family are Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 6:5-7, Luke 9:23, and 1 Corinthians 13:3.

## Count Your Blessings

This activity involves the whole family in learning to give from our blessings to those in greater need, especially those who are poor. In this activity you will collect household items for the poor, and experience the joy that comes from giving to others as an act of Christian charity.

**Materials needed:** a phone book or local social services directory, a collection box large enough for common household objects, a jar or receptacle for money collections

This activity can be done in six consecutive weeks or at various times throughout the year.

1. Place a big box in a central place in your home for the material possessions you will be giving away. Label the box "Sharing box." In the middle of your kitchen table, place a receptacle for a cash collection.
2. Follow the plan for each of the six weeks described below. At the end of the six weeks, or at the end of each week, choose a local charity or social service agency to which you will donate the items and the cash you have collected. As a family, deliver the donations to the charity or social service agency.

### **Week 1: Light Up the World**

Just before dinner one night this week, have everyone in the family count the number of lightbulbs you have burning. Determine an amount of cash you will donate for each light that is on. Collect the money and place it in the container you have set out for that purpose. For example, if you decide to donate five cents for each burning lightbulb and eleven lights are on, put fifty-five cents in the jar. Also, put a package of lightbulbs in the sharing box that you prepared.

### **Week 2: Walk the Walk**

Have everyone count how many pairs of shoes your family owns and determine an amount of cash you will donate for each pair. Place the money in your jar. Collect any pairs of good shoes that you don't wear and any shoes people have outgrown that you are willing to give away, and put them in the sharing box.

### **Week 3: Clothe the Naked**

Count all the sweaters and coats your family owns. Determine an amount of cash you will donate for each item and place the money in your jar. Have everyone in the family select one of their good sweaters or coats and place it in the sharing box.

### **Week 4: Rest Your Weary Head**

Have the family members go around the house and count all the pillows they find, even decorative pillows and those stored in closets. Determine an amount of cash you will donate for each pillow and place the money in your jar. Place two new pillows or pillows in very good condition in your sharing box. You may also include a gift of two new pillowcases.

### **Week 5: For You Were Thirsty**

Gather the family in the kitchen and count the drinking glasses there. Then check other places in your home where glasses may be stored or used, such as the china cupboard or the bathroom. Determine an amount of cash you will donate for each glass and place the money in your jar. Find six nice matching glasses and place them in the sharing box.

### **Week 6: May God's Love Warm You**

Have your family count the blankets in your house, including afghans or coverlets. Determine an amount of cash you will donate for each one and place the money in your jar. Find a good blanket and place it in the sharing box.

You may wish to read one of the following Bible passages as a family each week before or after you complete the activity: Isaiah 58:3,6-9; Psalm 34:6,18; Proverbs 31:8-9; Matthew 5:3,6.

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# The New American Bible

## Introduction to Acts

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The Acts of the Apostles, the second volume of Luke's two-volume work, continues Luke's presentation of biblical history, describing how the salvation promised to Israel in the Old Testament and accomplished by Jesus has now under the guidance of the holy Spirit been extended to the Gentiles. This was accomplished through the divinely chosen representatives (10:41) whom Jesus prepared during his historical ministry (1:21–22) and commissioned after his resurrection as witnesses to all that he taught (1:8; 10:37–43; Lk 24:48). Luke's preoccupation with the Christian community as the Spirit-guided bearer of the word of salvation rules out of his book detailed histories of the activity of most of the preachers. Only the main lines of the roles of Peter and Paul serve Luke's interest.

Peter was the leading member of the Twelve (1:13, 15), a miracle worker like Jesus in the gospel (3:1–10; 5:1–11, 15; 9:32–35, 36–42), the object of divine care (5:17–21; 12:6–11), and the spokesman for the Christian community (2:14–36; 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32; 10:34–43; 15:7–11), who, according to Luke, was largely responsible for the growth of the community in the early days (2:4; 4:4). Paul eventually joined the community at Antioch (11:25–26), which subsequently commissioned him and Barnabas to undertake the spread of the gospel to Asia Minor. This missionary venture generally failed to win the Jews of the diaspora to the gospel but enjoyed success among the Gentiles (13:14–14:27).

Paul's refusal to impose the Mosaic law upon his Gentile converts provoked very strong objection among the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem (15:1), but both Peter and James supported his position (15:6–21). Paul's second and third missionary journeys (16:36–21:16) resulted in the same pattern of failure among the Jews generally but of some success among the Gentiles. Paul, like Peter, is presented as a miracle worker (14:8–18; 19:12; 20:7–12; 28:7–10) and the object of divine care (16:25–31).

In Acts, Luke has provided a broad survey of the church's development from the resurrection of Jesus to Paul's first Roman imprisonment, the point at which the book ends. In telling this story, Luke describes the emergence of Christianity from its origins in Judaism to its position as a religion of worldwide status and appeal. Originally a Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem, the church was placed in circumstances impelling it to

include within its membership people of other cultures: the Samaritans (8:4–25), at first an occasional Gentile (8:26–30; 10:1–48), and finally the Gentiles on principle (11:20–21). Fear on the part of the Jewish people that Christianity, particularly as preached to the Gentiles, threatened their own cultural heritage caused them to be suspicious of Paul's gospel (13:42–45; 15:1–5; 28:17–24). The inability of Christian missionaries to allay this apprehension inevitably created a situation in which the gospel was preached more and more to the Gentiles. Toward the end of Paul's career, the Christian communities, with the exception of those in Palestine itself (9:31), were mainly of Gentile membership. In tracing the emergence of Christianity from Judaism, Luke is insistent upon the prominence of Israel in the divine plan of salvation (see the note on 1:26; see also 2:5–6; 3:13–15; 10:36; 13:16–41; 24:14–15) and that the extension of salvation to the Gentiles has been a part of the divine plan from the beginning (see 15:13–18; 26:22–23).


In the development of the church from a Jewish Christian origin in Jerusalem, with its roots in Jewish religious tradition, to a series of Christian communities among the Gentiles of the Roman Empire, Luke perceives the action of God in history laying open the heart of all humanity to the divine message of salvation. His approach to the history of the church is motivated by his theological interests. His history of the apostolic church is the story of a Spirit-guided community and a Spirit-guided spread of the Word of God (1:8). The travels of Peter and Paul are in reality the travels of the Word of God as it spreads from Jerusalem, the city of destiny for Jesus, to Rome, the capital of the civilized world of Luke's day. Nonetheless, the historical data he utilizes are of value for the understanding of the church's early life and development and as general background to the Pauline epistles. In the interpretation of Acts, care must be exercised to determine Luke's theological aims and interests and to evaluate his historical data without either exaggerating their literal accuracy or underestimating their factual worth.

Finally, an apologetic concern is evident throughout Acts. By stressing the continuity between Judaism and Christianity (13:16–41; 23:6–9; 24:10–21; 26:2–23), Luke argues that Christianity is deserving of the same toleration accorded Judaism by Rome. Part of Paul's

defense before Roman authorities is to show that Christianity is not a disturber of the peace of the Roman Empire (24:5, 12–13; 25:7–8). Moreover, when he stands before Roman authorities, he is declared innocent of any crime against the empire (18:13–15; 23:29; 25:25–27; 26:31–32). Luke tells his story with the hope that Christianity will be treated as fairly.

Concerning the date of Acts, see the Introduction to the Gospel according to Luke.

The principal divisions of the Acts of the Apostles are the following:

- The Preparation for the Christian Mission (1:1–2:13).
  - The Mission in Jerusalem (2:14–8:3).
  - The Mission in Judea and Samaria (8:4–9:43).
  - The Inauguration of the Gentile Mission (10:1–15:35).
  - The Mission of Paul to the Ends of the Earth (15:36–28:31).
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**I**n your history classes in school, you probably studied stories about the heroic men and women who helped create the United States: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, and Harry S. Truman to name a few. The stories about these famous people are an important part of our national identity. The Acts of the Apostles is a book containing stories like these. It continues the account of salvation history by telling about the beginnings of the Christian movement, primarily through stories about two of its most important missionaries, Peter and Paul.

## In Depth

The Acts of the Apostles—sometimes simply called Acts—was written by the same author as the Gospel of Luke. So Acts is really the second volume of a two-volume history. Like the Gospels, it is not a history in the sense of an eyewitness account of the beginnings of Christianity; rather, it is an interpretation of this history, explaining how Christianity spread outside of Judaism to the Gentile world under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

### At a Glance

- I. **The Preparation for the Christian Mission** (1:1–2:13).
- II. **The Mission in Jerusalem** (2:14–8:3).
- III. **The Mission in Judea and Samaria** (8:4–9:43).
- IV. **The Inauguration of the Gentile Mission** (10:1–15:35).
- V. **The Mission of Paul to the Ends of the Earth** (15:36–28:31).

### Quick Facts

**Inspired Author:** often identified as Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke

**Date Written:** approximately AD 80

**Audience:** Gentile (Greek) Christians represented by Theophilus (see Acts 1:1)

Lots of great stories are in the Acts of the Apostles. We read about the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (see 2:1–41), Paul's conversion to the Christian way (see 9:1–19), and some miraculous escapes from prisons and riots (see 12:6–11, 16:16–40). We learn about the first church council in Jerusalem, where a decision was made to accept Gentiles (non-Jews) as Christians without requiring that they also become practicing Jews (see 15:1–35). Acts continuously emphasizes how faith in Christ is shared and supported through Christian community.

The Acts of the Apostles gives us information about how Christians lived in the years after Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension. We learn how the believers celebrated the Eucharist together and shared their belongings (see 2:42–47). We learn how the Gospel message was preached, first to Jews in the synagogues and later to Gentiles. We learn how traveling missionaries like Paul went on long journeys and suffered many hardships to form new groups of believers across the Roman Empire. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church miraculously went from a small group of disciples in Jerusalem to a movement spreading across the entire Roman Empire, even to Rome itself.



# Acts

## I: The Preparation for the Christian Mission

### The Promise of the Spirit

**1**<sup>1\*</sup>† In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught <sup>2\*</sup> until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3\*</sup>† He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. <sup>4\*</sup>† While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about

which you have heard me speak; <sup>5\*</sup> for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the holy Spirit.”

### The Ascension of Jesus

<sup>6</sup>† When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7\*</sup>† He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. <sup>8\*</sup>† But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” <sup>9\*</sup> When he had said this, as they were looking

**1:1–26** This introductory material (1–2) connects Acts with the Gospel of Luke, shows that the apostles were instructed by the risen Jesus (3–5), points out that the parousia or second coming in glory of Jesus will occur as certainly as his ascension occurred (6–11), and lists the members of the Twelve, stressing their role as a body of divinely mandated witnesses to his life, teaching, and resurrection (12–26).

**1:3** *Appearing to them during forty days:* Luke considered especially sacred the interval in which the appearances and instructions of the risen Jesus occurred and expressed it therefore in terms of the sacred number forty (cf Dt 8:2). In his gospel, however, Luke connects the ascension of Jesus with the resurrection by describing the ascension on Easter Sunday evening (Lk 24:50–53). What should probably be understood as one event (resurrection, glorification, ascension, sending of the Spirit—the paschal mystery) has been historicized by Luke when he writes of a visible ascension of Jesus after forty days and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. For Luke, the ascension marks the end of the appearances of Jesus except for the extraordinary appearance to Paul. With regard to Luke’s understanding of salvation history, the ascension also marks the end of the time of Jesus (Lk 24:50–53) and signals the beginning of the time of the church.

**1:4** *The promise of the Father:* the holy Spirit, as is clear from the next verse. This gift of the Spirit was first promised in Jesus’ final instructions to his chosen witnesses in Luke’s gospel (Lk 24:49) and formed part of the continuing instructions of the risen Jesus on the

kingdom of God, of which Luke speaks in v 3.

**1:6** The question of the disciples implies that in believing Jesus to be the Christ (see the note on Lk 2:11) they had expected him to be a political leader who would restore self-rule to Israel during his historical ministry. When this had not taken place, they ask if it is to take place at this time, the period of the church.

**1:7** This verse echoes the tradition that the precise time of the parousia is not revealed to human beings; cf Mk 13:32; 1 Thes 5:1–3.

**1:8** Just as Jerusalem was the city of destiny in the Gospel of Luke (the place where salvation was accomplished), so here at the beginning of Acts, Jerusalem occupies a central position. It is the starting point for the mission of the Christian disciples to “the ends of the earth,” the place where the apostles were situated and the doctrinal focal point in the early days of the community (15:2, 6). *The ends of the earth:* for Luke, this means Rome.

**1:1** Lk 1:1–4.

**1:2** Mt 28:19–20; Lk 24:44–49; Jn 20:22; 1 Tm 3:16.

**1:3** Acts 10:41; 13:31.

**1:4** Jn 14:16, 17, 26.

**1:5** Acts 11:16; Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:26;

Eph 1:13.

**1:7** Mt 24:36; 1 Thes 5:1–2.

**1:8** Acts 2:1–13; 10:39; Is

43:10; Mt 28:19; Lk

24:47–48.

**1:9** 2 Kgs 2:11; Mk 16:19; Lk

24:51.



on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. <sup>10\*</sup> While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. <sup>11\*</sup> They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven." <sup>12\*</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away.

### The First Community in Jerusalem

<sup>13</sup> When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14\*</sup> All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

### The Choice of Judas's Successor

<sup>15</sup> During those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (there was a group of about one hundred and twenty persons in the one place). He said, <sup>16\*</sup> "My brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled which the holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who was the guide for those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> He was numbered among us and was allotted a share in this ministry. <sup>18\*</sup> † He bought a parcel of land with the wages of his iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle, and all his insides spilled out. <sup>19</sup> This became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem, so that the parcel of land was called in their language 'Akeldama,' that is, Field of Blood. <sup>20\*</sup> For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

'Let his encampment become desolate,  
and may no one dwell in it.'

And:

'May another take his office.'

† **1:18** Luke records a popular tradition about the death of Judas that differs from the one in Mt 27:5, according to which Judas hanged himself. Here, although the text is not certain, Judas is depicted as purchasing a piece of property with the betrayal money and being killed on it in a fall.

**1:26** The need to replace Judas was probably dictated by the symbolism of the number twelve, recalling the twelve tribes of Israel. This symbolism also indicates that for Luke (see Lk 22:30) the

## Pray It!

### Send Us Your Spirit

**A**fter Jesus was taken up to heaven, the Apostles, Mary, and other women and men gathered to pray together. They knew they needed the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, to begin the difficult task of giving witness to the Reign of God. Today, we continue to pray:

*Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our strengths and weaknesses. Transform us into messengers of your Gospel for those who yearn for you.*

*Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our history, with its beautiful and painful experiences. Help us to be untiring promoters of a society based on love, justice, and peace.*

*Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our longing for love and community. Make us instruments of unity and service, especially for those who are weak and those who are lonely. Amen.*

▶ Acts 1:1-14



<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us, <sup>22\*</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which he was taken up from us, become with us a witness to his resurrection." <sup>23</sup> So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place." <sup>26\*</sup> † Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven apostles.

Christian church is a reconstituted Israel.

**1:10** Jn 20:17.  
**1:11** Lk 24:51; Eph 4:8-10;  
1 Pt 3:22; Rv 1:7.  
**1:12-14** Lk 6:14-16.  
**1:14** Lk 23:49.  
**1:16** Ps 41:10; Lk 22:47.

**1:18** Mt 27:3-10.  
**1:20** Ps 69:26; 109:8; Jn 17:12.  
**1:22** Acts 1:8-9; 10:39.  
**1:26** Prv 16:33.

### The Coming of the Spirit

**2** <sup>1\*</sup>† When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. <sup>2\*</sup>† And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. <sup>3\*</sup>† Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. <sup>4\*</sup>† And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7\*</sup> They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, <sup>11\*</sup> both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.” <sup>12</sup> They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13\*</sup> But others said, scoffing, “They have had too much new wine.”

## II: The Mission in Jerusalem

### Peter’s Speech at Pentecost

<sup>14</sup>† Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, “You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

† **2:1–41** Luke’s pentecostal narrative consists of an introduction (1–13), a speech ascribed to Peter declaring the resurrection of Jesus and its messianic significance (14–36), and a favorable response from the audience (37–41). It is likely that the narrative telescopes events that took place over a period of time and on a less dramatic scale. The Twelve were not originally in a position to proclaim publicly the messianic office of Jesus without incurring immediate reprisal from those religious authorities in Jerusalem who had brought about Jesus’ death precisely to stem the rising tide in his favor.

**2:2** *There came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind:* wind and spirit are associated in Jn 3:8. The sound of a great rush of wind would herald a new action of God in the history of salvation.

**2:3** *Tongues as of fire:* see Ex 19:18 where fire symbolizes the presence of God to initiate the covenant on Sinai. Here the holy Spirit acts upon the apostles, preparing them to proclaim the new covenant with its unique gift of the Spirit (38).

**2:4** *To speak in different tongues:* ecstatic prayer in praise of God,

<sup>17\*</sup> ‘It will come to pass in the last days,’ God says,  
‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh.  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your young men shall see visions,  
your old men shall dream dreams.  
<sup>18</sup> Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids  
I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days,  
and they shall prophesy.  
<sup>19</sup> And I will work wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below:  
blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke.  
<sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness,  
and the moon to blood,  
before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord,  
<sup>21\*</sup> and it shall be that everyone shall be saved  
who calls on the name of the Lord.’

<sup>22\*</sup> You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. <sup>23\*</sup> This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. <sup>24\*</sup> But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. <sup>25\*</sup> For David says of him:

‘I saw the Lord ever before me,  
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.  
<sup>26</sup> Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted;  
my flesh, too, will dwell in hope,  
<sup>27\*</sup> because you will not abandon my soul to the nether world,  
nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.

interpreted in vv 6 and 11 as speaking in foreign languages, symbolizing the worldwide mission of the church.

**2:14–36** The first of six discourses in Acts (along with 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32; 10:34–43; 13:16–41) dealing with the resurrection of Jesus and its messianic import. Five of these are attributed to Peter, the final one to Paul. Modern scholars term these discourses in Acts the “kerygma,” the Greek word for proclamation (cf 1 Cor 15:11).

\* **2:1** Lv 23:15–21; Dt 16:9–11.

**2:2–3** Jn 3:8.

**2:3** Lk 3:16.

**2:4** Acts 1:5; 4:31; 8:15; 17; 10:44; 11:15–16; 15:8; 19:6; Ps 104:30; Jn 20:33.

**2:7** Acts 1:11.

**2:11** Acts 10:46.

**2:13** 1 Cor 14:23.

**2:17** Is 2:2; 44:3; Jl 3:1–5.

**2:21** Rom 10:13.

**2:22** Acts 10:38; Lk 24:19.

**2:23** 1 Thes 2:15.

**2:24** Acts 13:34.

**2:25–28** Ps 16:8–11.

**2:27** Acts 13:35.



## Confirmation

**A**fter Jesus' Ascension, the Apostles eagerly awaited the promised arrival of the Holy Spirit. What an arrival it was! The loud noise and tongues of fire were only the beginning of the amazing work the Holy Spirit initiated that day. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles suddenly had abilities and courage they never had before. The Holy Spirit began to guide and empower each of them, leading the Apostles to proclaim Christ's Resurrection to all who had ears to hear.

Following Pentecost, the Apostles began to baptize and lay hands on each new convert so that they too could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands and the prayer for the Holy Spirit was a part of one's initiation into the Church and continues to be celebrated in the sacrament of Confirmation today. The Church teaches that through the sacrament of Confirmation, one is given a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and is thereby given special strength (see "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit," near Is 11:1-2) to spread the Gospel.

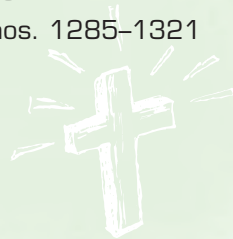
Confirmation is ordinarily administered by a bishop as a sign of the

connection between the Apostles' experience of receiving the Holy Spirit and the recipient's initiation into the Church. During the rite, the bishop extends his hands over the candidates and prays for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then each candidate is presented to the bishop by her or his sponsor, who is a representative from the Catholic community. The bishop uses chrism (sacred oil) and traces the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead with the words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." The candidate responds "Amen" (*Rite of Confirmation*, no. 27). Then the bishop and candidate exchange an offering of Christ's peace to each other. The rite ends with a final blessing, asking God to keep the Spirit active in the hearts of all believers so they will never be ashamed to proclaim Christ to the world.

Together the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are a person's initiation into the Church.

### ▶ Acts 2:1-13

*Catechism*, nos. 1285-1321





### Pentecost

**A**nother promise kept. On Pentecost, fifty days after his Resurrection, Jesus fulfilled his promise to his disciples by sending the Holy Spirit, or the Advocate (see Jn 14:26). Before returning to his father, Jesus told his followers that the Holy Spirit would guide them in truth and give them power from heaven. The dramatic descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost brought about more than the disciples could have ever imagined. The Spirit enabled them to speak in languages that everyone could understand and transformed their fears so they were able to proclaim God's salvation in Jesus Christ with courage, confidence, and zeal. And that was just on day one!

The descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost also brought about several interesting events in the history of the world. First, Pentecost marks the day the Trinity was made fully known. Second, it marks the day the Reign of God was first made available to all who believed in Jesus Christ. And finally, in a sense, the world entered into what is called the time of the Church or final days when God's Reign is, in part, here on earth.

By ushering in the time of the Church, Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Christian Church. The Catholic Church traditionally celebrates the feast of Pentecost on the second Sun-

day after Ascension Thursday, which is approximately fifty days after Easter (the term *pente* means "fifty"). It continues to be an important feast to celebrate the unity of all Christians.

Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been guiding the Church in carrying out its mission to lead people to salvation through Jesus Christ for over two thousand years. At Mass it is the Holy Spirit who prepares those gathered to receive Christ, transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and transforms the community in the process. It is through the prompting of the Holy Spirit that the Church and its members are formed in a life of prayer. The Holy Spirit also guides the Church so that it can teach about faith and morals without error.

The Holy Spirit that worked wonders through the disciples and continues to guide the Church today can also work wonders through each of us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we too can find the courage, confidence, and zeal to boldly share our faith and follow God's will. All we need to do is ask, knowing that Jesus always keeps his promises, often in ways we never could have dreamed!

#### ▶ Acts 2:1-13

*Catechism*, nos. 731-741, 1108-1112





## Catholic Social Teaching

### Christian Community

**I**n the famous passage of Acts of the Apostles 2:42–47, the ideal Christian community is portrayed as open to the Holy Spirit. The people shared everything in common, including prayer, meals, and possessions. No one went in need. Sound impossible?

One of the principles of Catholic social teaching, *Call to Family, Community, and Participation*, invites us to be mindful of the fact that families are at the heart of the community. Programs and policies of our society should demonstrate support and respect for the family. The U.S. bishops call us to be concerned for those who are at risk and vulnerable, not

only in our own country but also in the global community. They speak about the importance of supporting policies that address the needs of families, specifically the rights of children, who often are the most vulnerable, to adequate food, shelter, healthcare, quality education, and a safe environment in which to flourish.

Our faith teaches us to respect the dignity of the human person. This passage from Acts of the Apostles reminds us that the early Christian community tried very hard to live as a community that cared for one another and made sure that everyone felt respected and had their basic needs met.

We are also called to be participants in helping to promote this reality in the world today. It is not always easy, but we can find ways to do what we can to share in that vision.

● What do you think society would be like today if everyone lived as the early Christian community tried to live?

#### ▶ Acts 2:42–47

*Call to Family, Community, and Participation*

28 You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

29 My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day.

30\* But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne,

31\* he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption.

32 God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. 33\* † Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth, as you [both] see and hear.

34\* For David did not go up into heaven, but he himself said:

'The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies your footstool."'

36\* Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37\* Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?"

38\* † Peter [said] to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit. 39\* For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call."

40\* He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

41\* Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

† 2:33 *At the right hand of God:* or "by the right hand of God."

2:38 *Repent and be baptized:* repentance is a positive concept, a change of mind and heart toward God reflected in the actual goodness of one's life. It is in accord with the apostolic teaching derived from Jesus (42) and ultimately recorded in the four gospels. Luke presents baptism in Acts as the expected response to the apostolic preaching about Jesus and associates it with the conferring of the Spirit (1:5; 10:44–48; 11:16).

\* 2:30 2Sm 7:12; Ps 132:11.

2:31 Acts 13:35; Ps 16:10.

2:33 Acts 1:4–5.

2:34–35 Ps 110:1.

2:36 Acts 9:22; Rom 10:9;

Phil 2:11.

2:37 Lk 3:10.

2:38 Acts 3:19; 16:31;

Lk 3:3.

2:39 Is 57:19; Jl 3:5; Eph

2:17.

2:40 Dt 32:5; Ps 78:8; Lk

9:41; Phil 2:15.

2:41 Acts 2:47; 4:4; 5:14;

6:7; 11:21, 24; 21:20.

# Live It!

## Share Christ

As is true in our own cities today, it was not uncommon to encounter beggars on the streets in Jerusalem during the first century. And probably, like today, some people averted their eyes and walked by while others stopped to offer a few coins.

When Peter and John encounter a beggar in Acts of the Apostles 3:3, they don't have a whole lot of money to share with him, but they stop just the same. Looking him in the eye, Peter offers the lame man the one thing of value he does have: the powerful gift of healing found in the name of Jesus Christ.

You may not have the gift of healing or lots of extra money to give to those in need. But Peter and John remind us that knowing Jesus is the greatest treasure one can acquire in life, and that this treasure has been given to us freely. Don't forget to share it with others!

▶ Acts 3:1–10



## Communal Life

<sup>42</sup>\*† They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.\*

<sup>43</sup>\* Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>\* All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their property and

possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

## Cure of a Crippled Beggar

**3**<sup>1</sup>† Now Peter and John were going up to the temple area for the three o'clock hour of prayer.† <sup>2</sup>\* And a man crippled from birth was carried and placed at the gate of the temple called "the Beautiful Gate" every day to beg for alms from the people who entered the temple. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. <sup>4</sup> But Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup> He paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup>\*† Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, [rise and] walk." <sup>7</sup> Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong. <sup>8</sup>\* He leaped up, stood, and walked around, and went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. <sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the one who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with amazement and astonishment at what had happened to him.

## Peter's Speech

<sup>11</sup>\* As he clung to Peter and John, all the people hurried in amazement toward them in the portico called "Solomon's Portico." <sup>12</sup>\* When Peter saw this, he addressed the people, "You Israelites, why are you amazed at this, and why do

<sup>+</sup> **2:42–47** The first of three summary passages (along with 4:32–37 and 5:12–16) that outline, somewhat idyllically, the chief characteristics of the Jerusalem community: adherence to the teachings of the Twelve and the centering of its religious life in the eucharistic liturgy (42); a system of distribution of goods that led wealthier Christians to sell their possessions when the needs of the community's poor required it (44 and the note on 4:32–37); and continued attendance at the temple, since in this initial stage there was little or no thought of any dividing line between Christianity and Judaism (46).

**3:1–4:31** This section presents a series of related events: the dramatic cure of a lame beggar (3:1–10) produces a large audience for the kerygmatic discourse of Peter (3:11–26). The Sadducees, taking exception to the doctrine of resurrection, have Peter, John, and apparently the beggar as well, arrested (4:1–4) and brought to trial before the Sanhedrin. The issue concerns the authority by which Peter and John publicly teach religious doctrine in the temple (4:5–7). Peter replies with a brief summary of the kerygma, implying that his authority is prophetic (4:8–12). The court warns the apostles to abandon their practice of invoking prophetic authority in the name

of Jesus (4:13–18). When Peter and John reply that the prophetic role cannot be abandoned to satisfy human objections, the court nevertheless releases them, afraid to do otherwise since the beggar, lame from birth and over forty years old, is a well-known figure in Jerusalem and the facts of his cure are common property (4:19–22).

The narrative concludes with a prayer of the Christian community imploring divine aid against threats of persecution (4:23–31).

**3:1** For the three o'clock hour of prayer: literally, "at the ninth hour of prayer." With the day beginning at 6 a.m., the ninth hour would be 3 p.m.

**3:6–10** The miracle has a dramatic cast; it symbolizes the saving power of Christ and leads the beggar to enter the temple, where he hears Peter's proclamation of salvation through Jesus.

**2:42–47** Acts 4:32–35.

**2:42** Acts 1:14; 6:4.

**2:43** Acts 5:12–16.

**2:44** Acts 4:32, 34–35.

**3:2–8** Acts 14:8–10.

**3:6** Acts 4:10.

**3:8** Lk 35:6; Lk 7:22.

**3:11** Acts 5:12; Jn 10:23.

**3:12** Acts 14:15.

you look so intently at us as if we had made him walk by our own power or piety? <sup>13\*</sup>† The God of Abraham, [the God] of Isaac, and [the God] of Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his servant Jesus whom you handed over and denied in Pilate's presence, when he had decided to release him. <sup>14\*</sup>† You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. <sup>15\*</sup>† The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup> And by faith in his name, this man, whom you see and know, his name has made strong, and the faith that comes through it has given him this perfect health, in the presence of all of you. <sup>17\*</sup>† Now I know, brothers, that you acted out of ignorance, just as your leaders did; <sup>18\*</sup>† but God has thus brought to fulfillment what he had announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19\*</sup> Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away, <sup>20</sup>† and that the Lord may grant you times of refreshment and send you the Messiah already appointed for you, Jesus, <sup>21</sup>† whom heaven must receive until the times of universal restoration of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. <sup>22\*</sup>† For Moses said:

‘A prophet like me will the Lord, your God,  
raise up for you  
from among your own kinsmen;  
to him you shall listen in all that he may say  
to you.

† **3:13** *Has glorified*: through the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, God reversed the judgment against him on the occasion of his trial. *Servant*: the Greek word can also be rendered as “son” or even “child” here and also in 3:26; 4:25 (applied to David); 4:27; and 4:30. Scholars are of the opinion, however, that the original concept reflected in the words identified Jesus with the suffering Servant of the Lord of Is 52:13—53:12.

† **3:14** *The Holy and Righteous One*: so designating Jesus emphasizes his special relationship to the Father (see Lk 1:35; 4:34) and emphasizes his sinlessness and religious dignity that are placed in sharp contrast with the guilt of those who rejected him in favor of Barabbas.

† **3:15** *The author of life*: other possible translations of the Greek title are “leader of life” or “pioneer of life.” The title clearly points to Jesus as the source and originator of salvation.

† **3:17** *Ignorance*: a Lucan motif, explaining away the actions not only of the people but also of their leaders in crucifying Jesus. On this basis the presbyters in Acts could continue to appeal to the Jews in Jerusalem to believe in Jesus, even while affirming their involvement in his death because they were unaware of his messianic dignity. See also 13:27 and Lk 23:34.

† **3:18** *Through the mouth of all the prophets*: Christian prophetic insight into the Old Testament saw the crucifixion and death of Jesus as the main import of messianic prophecy. The Jews themselves did not anticipate a suffering Messiah; they usually understood the Servant Song in Is 52:13—53:12 to signify their own suffering as a people. In his typical fashion (cf Lk 18:31; 24:25, 27, 44), Luke does not specify the particular Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus. See also the note on Lk 24:26.

† **3:20** *The Lord . . . and send you the Messiah already appointed for you, Jesus*: an allusion to the parousia or second coming of Christ, judged to be imminent in the apostolic age. This reference to its near-

<sup>23\*</sup> Everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be cut off from the people.’

<sup>24</sup> Moreover, all the prophets who spoke, from Samuel and those afterwards, also announced these days. <sup>25\*</sup> You are the children of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors when he said to Abraham, ‘In your offspring all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ <sup>26\*</sup> For you first, God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways.”

**4**<sup>1</sup>† While they were still speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees confronted them, <sup>2\*</sup> disturbed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They laid hands on them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was already evening. <sup>4</sup> But many of those who heard the word came to believe and [the] number of men grew to [about] five thousand.

#### Before the Sanhedrin

<sup>5</sup> On the next day, their leaders, elders, and scribes were assembled in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup> with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly class. <sup>7</sup> They brought them into their presence and questioned them, “By what power or by what name have you done this?” <sup>8\*</sup> Then Peter, filled with the holy Spirit, answered them, “Leaders of the people

ness is the only explicit one in Acts. Some scholars believe that this verse preserves a very early christology, in which the title “Messiah” (Greek “Christ”) is applied to him as of his parousia, his second coming (contrast 2:36). This view of a future messiahship of Jesus is not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

† **3:21** *The times of universal restoration*: like “the times of refreshment” (20), an apocalyptic designation of the messianic age, fitting in with the christology of v 20 that associates the messiahship of Jesus with his future coming.

† **3:22** A loose citation of Dt 18:15, which teaches that the Israelites are to learn the will of Yahweh from no one but their prophets. At the time of Jesus, some Jews expected a unique prophet to come in fulfillment of this text. Early Christianity applied this tradition and text to Jesus and used them especially in defense of the divergence of Christian teaching from traditional Judaism.

† **4:1** *The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees*: the priests performed the temple liturgy; the temple guard was composed of Levites, whose captain ranked next after the high priest. The Sadducees, a party within Judaism at this time, rejected those doctrines, including bodily resurrection, which they believed alien to the ancient Mosaic religion. The Sadducees were drawn from priestly families and from the lay aristocracy.

† **3:13** Ex 3:6, 15; Is 52:13; Lk 23:14–25.

† **3:14** Mt 27:20–21; Mk 15:11; Lk 23:18; Jn 18:40.

† **3:15** Acts 4:10; 5:31 / Acts 1:8; 2:32.

† **3:17** Acts 13:27; Lk 23:34; 1 Cor 2:8; 1 Tm 1:13.

† **3:18** Lk 18:31.

† **3:19** Acts 2:38.

† **3:22** Acts 7:37; Dt 18:15, 18.

† **3:23** Lv 23:29; Dt 18:19.

† **3:25** Gn 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; Sir 44:19–21; Gal 3:8–9.

† **3:26** Acts 13:46; Rom 1:16.

† **4:2** Acts 23:6–8; 24:21.

† **4:8** Mt 10:20.

and elders: <sup>9</sup>If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, <sup>10</sup>then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup>\*† He is 'the stone rejected by you, the builders,

which has become the cornerstone.'<sup>12</sup>\*† There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved."

<sup>13</sup>Observing the boldness of Peter and John and perceiving them to be uneducated, ordinary men, they were amazed, and they recognized them as the companions of Jesus. <sup>14</sup>Then when they saw the man who had been cured standing there with them, they could say nothing in reply. <sup>15</sup>So they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, and conferred with one another, saying, <sup>16</sup>"What are we to do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that a remarkable sign was done through them, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup>\* But so that it may not be spread any further among the people, let us give them a stern warning never again to speak to anyone in this name."

<sup>18</sup>So they called them back and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup>\* Peter and John, however, said to them in reply, "Whether it is right in the sight of God for us to obey you rather than God, you be the judges. <sup>20</sup>It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard." <sup>21</sup>After threatening them further, they released them, finding no way to punish them, on account of the people who were all praising God for what had happened. <sup>22</sup>For the man on whom this sign of healing had been done was over forty years old.

### Prayer of the Community

<sup>23</sup>After their release they went back to their own people and reported what the chief priests and elders had told them. <sup>24</sup>And when they heard it, they raised their voices to God with one accord and said, "Sovereign Lord, maker of heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, <sup>25</sup>\* you said by the holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, your servant:

'Why did the Gentiles rage  
and the peoples entertain folly?

<sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth took their stand  
and the princes gathered together  
against the Lord and against his  
anointed.'

† **4:11** Early Christianity applied this citation from Ps 118:22 to Jesus; cf Mk 12:10; 1 Pt 2:7.

**4:12** In the Roman world of Luke's day, salvation was often attributed to the emperor who was hailed as "savior" and "god." Luke, in the words of Peter, denies that deliverance comes through anyone other than Jesus.

**4:11** Ps 118:22; Is 28:16; Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Rom 9:33; 1 Pt 2:7.

**4:12** Mt 1:21; 1 Cor 3:11.  
**4:17** Acts 5:28.  
**4:19** Acts 5:29–32.  
**4:25–26** Ps 2:1–2.

## Pray It!

### I Believe! The Apostles' Creed

In Acts of the Apostles 4:5–12, Peter stands up before the Jewish rulers and elders of the Temple and boldly proclaims his faith in Jesus as healer and Messiah. Every Sunday at Mass, Catholic Christians also profess their faith when they pray the Nicene Creed. (A creed is a type of prayer that expresses faith beliefs.) Did you know there is also a shorter creed called the Apostles' Creed? The Apostles' Creed is based on the teachings and beliefs of the earliest Christians.

Take a moment to pray the Apostles' Creed:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Then reflect or journal on the following questions:

- Which statements of the creed do you have questions about?
- How hard would it be for you to express your faith beliefs to people who don't believe in Jesus?
- To what actions does a faith like this call us?



### ▶ Acts 4:5–12



# Where Do I Find It?

- ▶ Events, People, and Teachings 1744
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# Events, People, and Teachings

## Old Testament Stories

*These stories are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.*

Creation, *Gn, chs 1–2*  
original sin and its punishment, *Gn, ch 3*  
Cain and Abel, *Gn 4:1–16*  
Noah and the Great Flood, *Gn, chs 6–9*  
God’s covenant with Abraham, *Gn 17:1–18:15*  
God’s command to sacrifice Isaac, *Gn 22:1–19*  
Isaac’s blessing of Jacob, *Gn 27:1–29*  
Jacob’s dream, *Gn 28:10–22*  
Joseph and his brothers, *Gn, chs 37–46*  
birth and youth of Moses, *Ex 2:1–10*  
Moses at the burning bush, *Ex 3:1–12*  
plagues on Egypt, *Ex, chs 7–12*  
Passover and the Exodus, *Ex, chs 12–14*  
Ten Commandments, *Ex 20:1–17*  
destruction of Jericho, *Jos 5:13–6:27*  
Gideon and the sign of the fleece, *Jgs 6:36–40*  
Samson, *Jgs, chs 13–16*  
Samuel’s birth and calling, *1 Sm, chs 1–3*  
David and Goliath, *1 Sm, ch 17*  
David and Bathsheba, *2 Sm, ch 11*  
Solomon’s wisdom, *1 Kgs, ch 3*  
Elijah’s triumph over the priests of Baal, *1 Kgs 18:20–40*  
miracles of Elisha, *2 Kgs 4:1–6:23*  
end of the Babylonian captivity, *Ezra, ch 1*  
battles of Judas Maccabeus, *1 Mc, chs 3–5*  
Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones, *Ez 37:1–14*  
Daniel, *Dn, chs 1–6*  
Jonah and the Ninevites, *Jon, chs 1–3*

## New Testament Stories

*These stories are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.*

birth of Jesus, *Mt 1:18–2:12; Lk, chs 1–2*  
baptism of Jesus, *Mt 3:13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22*  
temptation of Jesus, *Mt 4:1–11; Mk 1:12–13; Lk 4:1–13*  
Peter’s declaration about Jesus, *Mt 16:13–20; Mk 8:27–30; Lk 9:18–20*  
Transfiguration of Jesus, *Mt 17:1–13; Mk 9:2–13; Lk 9:28–36*  
Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, *Mt 21:1–11; Mk 11:1–11; Lk 19:28–40; Jn 12:12–19*  
Jesus in the Temple, *Mt 21:12–17; Mk 11:15–19; Lk 19:45–48; Jn 2:13–16*  
Judas’s betrayal of Jesus, *Mt 26:14–16, 47–56; Mk 14:10–11, 43–52; Lk 22:1–53; Jn 13:21–30; 18:1–5*  
Last Supper, *Mt 26:17–30; Mk 14:12–25; Lk 22:7–38; 1 Cor 11:23–26*  
Jesus at Gethsemane, *Mt 26:36–56; Mk 14:32–52; Lk 22:39–53*  
Peter’s denial of Christ, *Mt 26:69–75; Mk 14:66–72; Lk 22:54–62; Jn 18:15–18, 25–27*  
Crucifixion, *Mt 27:32–56; Mk 15:21–41; Lk 23:26–49; Jn 19:16–37*  
Resurrection and appearances, *Mt, ch 28; Mk, ch 16; Lk, ch 24; Jn, chs 20–21; Acts 1:1–11*  
Jesus washing his disciples’ feet, *Jn 13:1–17*  
Holy Spirit at Pentecost, *Acts 2:1–42*  
stoning of Stephen, *Acts, chs 6–7*  
conversion of Saul, *Acts 9:1–31*  
Peter’s escape from prison, *Acts 12:1–19*  
Paul and Silas’s escape from prison, *Acts 16:16–40*  
Paul’s journey to Rome for his trial, *Acts, chs 27–28*

# Catholic Connections

## **Creed**

Bible, Tradition, and Magisterium, Lk 4:1–13, *Catechism*, nos. 74–141, p. 1352

Church, Mt 16:13–20, *Catechism*, nos. 871–945, p. 1264

Communion of Saints, Rv 7:2–14, *Catechism*, nos. 946–962, p. 1725

Eucharist, Lk 22:14–20, *Catechism*, nos. 787–796, pp. 1329, 1396, 1394

Faith and Reason, Mk 16:20, *Catechism*, nos. 156–159, p. 1338

Final Judgment, 2 Mc 12:38–45, *Catechism*, nos. 1020–1060, p. 616

God the Father, Ex 3:13–15, *Catechism*, nos. 232–243, p. 76

Holy Spirit, Rom 8:1–17, *Catechism*, nos. 683–747, p. 1519

Incarnation, 1 Tm 3:14–16, *Catechism*, nos. 456–483, p. 1639

Mary, Is 7:14, *Catechism*, nos. 484–511, 721–726, 963–975, p. 916

Messiah, Lk 9:18–20, *Catechism*, nos. 436–440, 711–716, p. 1366

Ministry in the Church, Acts 14:21–28, *Catechism*, nos. 871–945, p. 1482

New Covenant, Mt 26:26–29, *Catechism*, nos. 68–73, pp. 610, 613, 1365, 1405, 1292

Old Testament and the New Testament, Mt 17:1–13, *Catechism*, nos. 120–137, p. 1268

Original Sin, Gn 3:1–24, *Catechism*, nos. 369–421, p. 10

Pentecost, Acts 2:1–13, *Catechism*, nos. 731–741, 1108–1112, p. 1458

Revelation and the Apostolic Tradition, 2 Thes 2:13–17, *Catechism*, nos. 74–83, p. 1631

Trinity, Jn 17:20–26, *Catechism*, nos. 232–267, p. 1442

## **Morality**

Beatitudes, Mt 5:1–12, *Catechism*, nos. 1716–1729, p. 1238

Cardinal Virtues, Wis 8:7, *Catechism*, nos. 1803–1811, p. 832

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, Is 58:1–9, *Catechism*, nos. 2443–2449, p. 970

Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Is 11:1–2, *Catechism*, nos. 1830–1832, p. 921

Sin and Moral Decision Making, Sir 22:27–23:6, *Catechism*, nos. 1749–1761, 1846–1864, p. 872

Sources of Moral Truth, Prv 2:1–22, *Catechism*, nos. 1949–1986, p. 766

Ten Commandments, Dt 5:1–21, *Catechism*, nos. 2052–2082, p. 209

Theological Virtues, 1 Cor 13:13, *Catechism*, nos. 1812–1841, p. 1556

## **Prayer**

Lord's Prayer, Lk 11:1–4, *Catechism*, nos. 2759–2776, p. 1372

Prayer, Ps 130:1–8, *Catechism*, nos. 2558–2567, 2650–2662, p. 750

Types of Prayer, 1 Chr 16:37–42, *Catechism*, nos. 2623–2649, 2697–2758, p. 443

## **Sacraments**

Anointing of the Sick, Jas 5:13–15, *Catechism*, nos. 1499–1532, p. 1682

Baptism, Mt 3:13–17, *Catechism*, nos. 1213–1284, p. 1236

Confirmation, Acts 2:1–13, *Catechism*, nos. 1285–1321, p. 1457

Easter Triduum, Jn 13:1–20:18, *Catechism*, nos. 1168–1171, p. 1434

Eucharist, Lk 22:14–20, *Catechism*, nos. 787–796, pp. 1329, 1396, 1394

Holy Orders, Mk 3:13–19, *Catechism*, nos. 1533–1600, p. 1309

Liturgical Year, Is 35:1–10, *Catechism*, nos. 1163–1173, p. 944

Marriage, Mk 10:1–12, *Catechism*, nos. 1601–1666, p. 1324

New Covenant, Mt 26:26–29, *Catechism*, nos. 68–73, pp. 610, 613, 1365, 1405, 1292

Parts of the Mass, Jos 8:30–35, *Catechism*, nos. 1345–1355, p. 254

Pentecost, Acts 2:1–13, *Catechism*, nos. 731–741, 1108–1112, p. 1458

Real Presence, 1 Cor 11:23–26, *Catechism*, nos. 1373–1377, p. 1551

Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, Jn 20:19–23, *Catechism*, nos. 1420–1470, p. 1449

Sacramental Symbols, Gn 14:17–20, *Catechism*, nos. 1145–1152, p. 24

# Sacrament Connections

*These are some passages that can help us understand God's action in the sacraments. It is not meant to be a complete list of all the biblical connections for all seven sacraments.*

## **Baptism**

Is 43:1  
Mt 3:13–17; 28:19–20  
Mk 1:9–11  
Lk 3:21–22  
Jn 1:29–34; 3:5  
Acts 2:37–41  
Rom 6:3–4

## **Confirmation**

Is 11:2; 61:1  
Mt 3:13–17  
Jn 1:33–34; 14:15–31; 16:5–15  
Acts 2:1–4; 8:14–17  
2 Cor 1:21–22  
Gal 5:22–23

## **Eucharist**

Gn 14:17–20  
Ex 12:1–28; 24:1–8  
Mt 14:13–21; 26:17–29  
Mk 6:30–44; 14:12–25  
Lk 9:10–17; 22:14–20; 24:13–35  
Jn 6:1–13, 25–59  
1 Cor 11:17–34

## **Reconciliation (penance)**

Gn 45:1–15  
Jl 2:12–13  
Mt 5:21–26, 38–48; 18:23–35  
Mk 2:1–12  
Lk 15:11–32  
Jn 20:19–23  
Rom, ch 6

## **Anointing**

Ps 23  
Mk 6:7–13  
Lk 13:10–13  
2 Tm 2:11–12  
Jas 5:14–16

## **Holy Orders**

Dt 18:1–5  
Ps 110:1–4  
Mt 10:1–4  
Mk 3:14–19  
Lk 6:12–16  
Jn 13:1–14  
Rom 12:1–8  
1 Tm 3:1–13  
Ti 1:5–9  
Heb 4:14–5:10

## **Marriage**

Gn 2:18–25  
Song 8:6–7  
Mt 19:1–12  
Mk 10:2–12  
Jn 2:1–11  
1 Cor, ch 13  
Eph 5:21–33  
1 Jn 4:4–16

# Life and Faith Issues

*Here are some passages that can give you comfort or direction. There are many other passages in the Bible that also address these and other topics.*

## **Anger**

Mt 5:21–24  
Jn 2:13–17  
Eph 4:25–27,31–32  
Jas 1:19–21

## **Call**

Gn 12:1–9  
1 Sm, chs 1–3  
Is 6:1–8  
Jer 1:4–10  
Mt 4:18–22; 28:16–20  
Mk 1:16–20  
Lk 5:1–11

## **Commitment**

Nm 30:2–4  
Dt 6:1–9; 11:8–9  
Jos 24:14–15  
Mk 8:34–38

## **Courage**

Jos 1:9  
1 Sm, ch 17  
Ps 31

## **Discipleship**

Mk 8:34–38  
Lk 9:1–6  
Jn 4:1–42

## **Family**

Gn 4:9; 12:10–20  
Sir 3:1–16  
Eph 5:21–6:4

## **Fear**

Ps 27, 91  
Zep 3:14–20  
Mt 14:22–33

Mk 4:35–41  
Lk 22:54–62

## **Forgiveness**

Gn 33:1–17  
Ps 51  
Mt 18:21–35  
Lk 6:27–36; 23:34  
Jn 8:2–11

## **Friendship**

Ruth 1:1–19  
1 Sm, ch 20  
Sir 6:5–17  
Jn 15:12–17

## **Friendship with God**

Gn 28:10–22  
Mi 6:8  
Jn 15:12–17

## **Giving**

2 Chr 31:2–10  
Ezr 1:6–11  
Mk 12:41–44  
Lk 21:1–4

## **Happiness**

Sir 25:1–11  
Lk 12:22–34  
Phil 4:4–9

## **Honesty with God**

Gn 18:22–33  
Jer 12:1–16  
Mk 14:32–42

## **Hope**

Ecl 3:1–8  
Lam 3:22–26  
Rom 8:18–30

## **Hypocrisy**

Mt 6:1–6; 23:1–36  
Lk 18:9–14  
Jas 1:22–2:4

## **Images of God**

Gn 1:26–27; 32:22–32  
Ps 23  
Jer 18:1–11

## **Judgment of Others**

Mt 7:1–5  
Rom 14:1–12  
Gal 3:26–28

## **Loneliness and Abandonment**

Ps 22:1–12  
Mk 15:33–34  
2 Tm 4:9–18

## **Love**

Song 8:6–7  
Mt 5:43–48  
Mk 12:28–34  
1 Cor, ch 13

## **Peace**

Is 11:1–9  
Mi 4:1–5  
Jn 14:25–31

## **Persistence**

Lk 11:5–8; 18:1–8

## **Popularity**

Mk 9:33–37  
1 Cor 3:1–9  
Phil 2:1–11

## **Presence of God**

Gn 15:7  
Ex 3:1–6; 33:17–23  
Mt 18:20

## **Promises of God**

Ex 6:1–9  
Jer 29:11  
Lk 4:14–30

## **Repentance**

1 Chr 21:1–17  
Jl 2:12–18  
Lk 15:11–32

## **Responsibility**

Sir 15:11–20  
Ez, ch 18

## **Service**

Is 42:1–6  
Mt 20:20–28; 25:31–46  
Mk 10:35–45  
Jn 13:1–17

## **Sexuality**

Gn 1:26–31  
Tb 8:4–9  
Song of Songs  
Eph 5:1–14  
1 Thes 4:3–8

## **Suffering**

Jb 1:13–21  
Ps 22  
Mt 5:1–12  
1 Pt 3:13–18

## **Temptation**

Gn, ch 3  
Mt 4:1–11  
Mk 1:12–13; 7:14–23  
Lk 4:1–13

## **Trust in God**

Ps 62  
Is 43:1–5  
Mt 11:28–30  
Mk 10:46–52

## **Vocation (See call; discipleship)**

## **Wisdom**

2 Chr 1:7–13  
Prv 8:1–21  
Wis, ch 7

# Study Aids

- ▶ The Church Year and Sunday Readings 1766
- ▶ Glossary 1773
- ▶ Maps 1787
- ▶ Old and New Testament Figures and Events and Encounters with Jesus 1795
- ▶ Biblical History Timeline 1798
- ▶ Alphabetical List of Bible Books and Abbreviations 1802

# Sunday Readings

## Reading the Bible with the Church

This reading plan lists the Sunday readings for the liturgical year. The Scripture passages listed in the following table reflect those found in the official Catholic Lectionary for Mass, which uses the New American Bible translation.

### Advent and Christmas

	Year A 2010, 2013, 2016	Year B 2011, 2014, 2017	Year C 2009, 2012, 2015
<b>The First Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 2:1–5 Rom 13:11–14 Mt 24:37–44	Is 63:16–17; 64:1–8 1 Cor 1:3–9 Mk 13:33–37	Jer 33:14–16 1 Thes 3:12–4:2 Lk 21:25–28,34–36
<b>The Second Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 11:1–10 Rom 15:4–9 Mt 3:1–12	Is 40:1–5,9–11 2 Pt 3:8–14 Mk 1:1–8	Bar 5:1–9 Phil 1:4–6,8–11 Lk 3:1–6
<b>The Third Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 35:1–6,10 Jas 5:7–10 Mt 11:2–11	Is 61:1–2,10–11 1 Thes 5:16–24 Jn 1:6–8,19–28	Zep 3:14–18 Phil 4:4–7 Lk 3:10–18
<b>The Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	Is 7:10–14 Rom 1:1–7 Mt 1:18–24	2 Sm 7:1–5,8–11,14,16 Rom 16:25–27 Lk 1:26–38	Mi 5:2–4 Heb 10:5–10 Lk 1:39–45
<b>Midnight Mass</b> (25 December, every year, readings are the same for all cycles)	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14
<b>Feast of the Holy Family</b>	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Mt 2:13–15,19–23	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Lk 2:22–40	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Lk 2:41–52
<b>Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God</b> (1 January, every year, readings are the same for all cycles)	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21
<b>Epiphany</b> (readings are the same for all cycles)	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12
<b>Baptism of the Lord</b>	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mt 3:13–17	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mk 1:7–11	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Lk 3:15–16,21–22

### Lent and Easter

	Year A 2011, 2014, 2017	Year B 2012, 2015, 2018	Year C 2010, 2013, 2016
<b>Ash Wednesday</b> (readings are the same for all cycles)	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18

**Lent and Easter** *(continued)*

	Year A 2011, 2014, 2017	Year B 2012, 2015, 2018	Year C 2010, 2013, 2016
<b>The First Sunday of Lent</b>	Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7 Rom 5:12-19 Mt 4:1-11	Gn 9:8-15 1 Pt 3:18-22 Mk 1:12-15	Dt 26:4-10 Rom 10:8-13 Lk 4:1-13
<b>The Second Sunday of Lent</b>	Gn 12:1-4 2 Tm 1:8-10 Mt 17:1-9	Gn 22:1-2,9,10-13,15-18 Rom 8:31-34 Mk 9:2-10	Gn 15:5-12,17-18 Phil 3:17-4:1 Lk 9:28-36
<b>The Third Sunday of Lent</b>	Ex 17:3-7 Rom 5:1-2,5-8 Jn 4:5-42	Ex 20:1-17 1 Cor 1:22-25 Jn 2:13-25	Ex 3:1-8,13-15 1 Cor 10:1-6,10-12 Lk 13:1-9
<b>The Fourth Sunday of Lent</b>	1 Sm 16:1,6-7,10-13 Eph 5:8-14 Jn 9:1-41	2 Chr 36:14-17,19-23 Eph 2:4-10 Jn 3:14-21	Jos 5:9,10-12 2 Cor 5:17-21 Lk 15:1-3,11-32
<b>The Fifth Sunday of Lent</b>	Ez 37:12-14 Rom 8:8-11 Jn 11:1-45	Jer 31:31-34 Heb 5:7-9 Jn 12:20-33	Is 43:16-21 Phil 3:8-14 Jn 8:1-11
<b>Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)</b>	Is 50:4-7 Phil 2:6-11 Mt 26:14-27:66	Is 50:4-7 Phil 2:6-11 Mk 14:1-15:47	Is 50:4-7 Phil 2:6-11 Lk 22:14-23:56
<b>Holy Thursday</b> <i>(readings are the same for all cycles)</i>	Ex 12:1-8,11-14 1 Cor 11:23-26 Jn 13:1-15	Ex 12:1-8,11-14 1 Cor 11:23-26 Jn 13:1-15	Ex 12:1-8,11-14 1 Cor 11:23-26 Jn 13:1-15
<b>Good Friday</b> <i>(readings are the same for all cycles)</i>	Is 52:13-53:12 Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9 Jn 18:1-19:42	Is 52:13-53:12 Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9 Jn 18:1-19:42	Is 52:13-53:12 Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9 Jn 18:1-19:42
<b>Easter Sunday</b> <i>(readings are the same for all cycles)</i>	Acts 10:34,37-43 Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6-8 Jn 20:1-9	Acts 10:34,37-43 Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6-8 Jn 20:1-9	Acts 10:34,37-43 Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6-8 Jn 20:1-9
<b>Second Sunday of Easter</b>	Acts 2:42-47 1 Pt 1:3-9 Jn 20:19-31	Acts 4:32-35 1 Jn 5:1-6 Jn 20:19-31	Acts 5:12-16 Rv 1:9-19 Jn 20:19-31
<b>Third Sunday of Easter</b>	Acts 2:14,22-28 1 Pt 1:17-21 Lk 24:13-35	Acts 3:13-19 1 Jn 2:1-5 Lk 24:35-48	Acts 5:27-32,40-41 Rv 5:11-14 Jn 21:1-19
<b>Fourth Sunday of Easter</b>	Acts 2:14,36-41 1 Pt 2:20-25 Jn 10:1-10	Acts 4:8-12 1 Jn 3:1-2 Jn 10:11-18	Acts 13:14,43-52 Rv 7:9,14-17 Jn 10:27-30
<b>Fifth Sunday of Easter</b>	Acts 6:1-7 1 Pt 2:4-9 Jn 14:1-12	Acts 9:26-31 1 Jn 3:18-24 Jn 15:1-8	Acts 14:21-27 Rv 21:1-5 Jn 13:31-35
<b>Sixth Sunday of Easter</b>	Acts 8:5-8,14-17 1 Pt 3:15-18 Jn 14:15-21	Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48 1 Jn 4:7-10 Jn 15:9-17	Acts 15:1-2,22-29 Rv 21:10-14,22-23 Jn 14:23-29



**Lent and Easter** *(continued)***Year A**

2011, 2014, 2017

**Year B**

2012, 2015, 2018

**Year C**

2010, 2013, 2016

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**Acts 1:12–14  
1 Pt 4:13–16  
Jn 17:1–11Acts 1:15–17,20–26  
1 Jn 4:11–16  
Jn 17:11–19Acts 7:55–60  
Rv 22:12–14,16–17,20  
Jn 17:20–26**Pentecost Sunday** *(readings are the same for all cycles)*Acts 2:1–11  
1 Cor 12:3–7,12–13  
Jn 20:19–23Acts 2:1–11  
1 Cor 12:3–7,12–13  
Jn 20:19–23Acts 2:1–11  
1 Cor 12:3–7,12–13  
Jn 20:19–23**Ordinary Time****Year A**

2011, 2014, 2017

**Year B**

2012, 2015, 2018

**Year C**

2010, 2013, 2016

**The First Sunday in Ordinary Time***(see the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord under "Advent and Christmas")***The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**Is 49:3,5–6  
1 Cor 1:1–3  
Jn 1:29–341 Sm 3:3b–10,19  
1 Cor 6:13c–15a,17–20  
Jn 1:35–42Is 62:1–5  
1 Cor 12:4–11  
Jn 2:1–11**The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**Is 8:23–9:3  
1 Cor 1:10–13,17  
Mt 4:12–23Jon 3:1–5,10  
1 Cor 7:29–31  
Mk 1:14–20Neh 8:2–4a,5–6,8–10  
1 Cor 12:12–30  
Lk 1:1–4; 4:14–21**The Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Zep 2:3; 3:12–13  
1 Cor 1:26–31  
Mt 5:1–12aDt 18:15–20  
1 Cor 7:32–35  
Mk 1:21–28Jer 1:4–5,17–19  
1 Cor 12:31–13:13  
Lk 4:21–30**The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Is 58:7–10  
1 Cor 2:1–5  
Mt 5:13–16Jb 7:1–4,6–7  
1 Cor 9:16–19,22–23  
Mk 1:29–39Is 6:1–2a,3–8  
1 Cor 15:1–11  
Lk 5:1–11**The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Sir 15:15–20  
1 Cor 2:6–10  
Mt 5:17–37Lv 13:1–2,45–46  
1 Cor 10:31–11:1  
Mk 1:40–45Jer 17:5–8  
1 Cor 15:12,16–20  
Lk 6:17,20–26**The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**Lv 19:1–2,17–18  
1 Cor 3:16–23  
Mt 5:38–48Is 43:18–19,21–22,24b–25  
2 Cor 1:18–22  
Mk 2:1–121 Sm 26:2,7–9,12–13,22–23  
1 Cor 15:45–49  
Lk 6:27–38**The Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Is 49:14–15  
1 Cor 4:1–5  
Mt 6:24–34Hos 2:16b,17b,21–22  
2 Cor 3:1b–6  
Mk 2:18–22Sir 27:4–7  
1 Cor 15:54–58  
Lk 6:39–45**The Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Dt 11:18,26–28,32  
Rom 3:21–25a,28  
Mt 7:21–27Dt 5:12–15  
2 Cor 4:6–11  
Mk 2:23–3:61 Kgs 8:41–43  
Gal 1:1–2,6–10  
Lk 7:1–10**The Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Hos 6:3–6  
Rom 4:18–25  
Mt 9:9–13Gn 3:9–15  
2 Cor 4:13–5:1  
Mk 3:20–351 Kgs 17:17–24  
Gal 1:11–19  
Lk 7:11–17**The Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**Ex 19:2–6a  
Rom 5:6–11  
Mt 9:36–10:8Ez 17:22–24  
2 Cor 5:6–10  
Mk 4:26–342 Sm 12:7–10,13  
Gal 2:16,19–21  
Lk 7:36–8:3

**Ordinary Time** *(continued)***Year A**

2011, 2014, 2017

**Year B**

2012, 2015, 2018

**Year C**

2010, 2013, 2016

**The Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Jer 20:10-13

Rom 5:12-15

Mt 10:26-33

Jb 38:1,8-11

2 Cor 5:14-17

Mk 4:35-41

Zec 12:10-11; 13:1

Gal 3:26-29

Lk 9:18-24

**The Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

2 Kgs 4:8-11,14-16a

Rom 6:3-4,8-11

Mt 10:37-42

Wis 1:13-15; 2:23-24

2 Cor 8:7,9,13-15

Mk 5:21-43

1 Kgs 19:16b,19-21

Gal 5:1,13-18

Lk 9:51-62

**The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Zec 9:9-10

Rom 8:9,11-13

Mt 11:25-30

Ez 2:2-5

2 Cor 12:7-10

Mk 6:1-6

Is 66:10-14c

Gal 6:14-18

Lk 10:1-12,17-20

**The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Is 55:10-11

Rom 8:18-23

Mt 13:1-23

Am 7:12-15

Eph 1:3-14

Mk 6:7-13

Dt 30:10-14

Col 1:15-20

Lk 10:25-37

**The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Wis 12:13,16-19

Rom 8:26-27

Mt 13:24-43

Jer 23:1-6

Eph 2:13-18

Mk 6:30-34

Gn 18:1-10a

Col 1:24-28

Lk 10:38-42

**The Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

1 Kgs 3:5,7-12

Rom 8:28-30

Mt 13:44-52

2 Kgs 4:42-44

Eph 4:1-6

Jn 6:1-15

Gn 18:20-32

Col 2:12-14

Lk 11:1-13

**The Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Is 55:1-3

Rom 8:35,37-39

Mt 14:13-21

Ex 16:2-4,12-15

Eph 4:17,20-24

Jn 6:24-35

Eccl 1:2; 2:21-23

Col 3:1-5,9-11

Lk 12:13-21

**The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

1 Kgs 19:9a,11-13a

Rom 9:1-5

Mt 14:22-33

1 Kgs 19:4-8

Eph 4:30-5:2

Jn 6:41-51

Wis 18:6-9

Heb 11:1-2,8-19

Lk 12:32-48

**The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Is 56:1,6-7

Rom 11:13-15,29-32

Mt 15:21-28

Prv 9:1-6

Eph 5:15-20

Jn 6:51-58

Jer 38:4-6,8-10

Heb 12:1-4

Lk 12:49-53

**The Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Is 22:19-23

Rom 11:33-36

Mt 16:13-20

Jos 24:1-2a,15-17,18b

Eph 5:21-32

Jn 6:60-69

Is 66:18-21

Heb 12:5-7,11-13

Lk 13:22-30

**The Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Jer 20:7-9

Rom 12:1-2

Mt 16:21-27

Dt 4:1-2,6-8

Jas 1:17-18,21b-22,27

Mk 7:1-8,14-15,21-23

Sir 3:17-18,20,28-29

Heb 12:18-19,22-24a

Lk 14:1,7-14

**The Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Ez 33:7-9

Rom 13:8-10

Mt 18:15-20

Is 35:4-7a

Jas 2:1-5

Mk 7:31-37

Wis 9:13-18b

Phlm 9-10,12-17

Lk 14:25-33

**The Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Is 55:6-9

Rom 14:7-9

Mt 18:21-35

Is 50:5-9a

Jas 2:14-18

Mk 8:27-35

Ex 32:7-11,13-14

1 Tm 1:12-17

Lk 15:1-32

**The Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Acts 2:14,22-28

Phil 1:20c-24,27a

Mt 20:1-16a

Wis 2:12,17-20

Jas 3:16-4:3

Mk 9:30-37

Am 8:4-7

1 Tm 2:1-8

Lk 16:1-13

**Ordinary Time** (continued)

	<b>Year A</b> 2011, 2014, 2017	<b>Year B</b> 2012, 2015, 2018	<b>Year C</b> 2010, 2013, 2016
<b>The Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Ez 18:25-28 Phil 2:1-11 Mt 21:28-32	Nm 11:25-29 Jas 5:1-6 Mk 9:38-43,45,47-48	Am 6:1a,4-7 1 Tm 6:11-16 Lk 16:19-31
<b>The Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Is 5:1-7 Phil 4:6-9 Mt 21:33-43	Gn 2:18-24 Heb 2:9-11 Mk 10:2-16	Hb 1:2-3; 2:2-4 2 Tm 1:6-8,13-14 Lk 17:5-10
<b>The Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Is 25:6-10a Phil 4:12-14,19-20 Mt 22:1-14	Wis 7:7-11 Heb 4:12-13 Mk 10:17-30	2 Kgs 5:14-17 2 Tm 2:8-13 Lk 17:11-19
<b>The Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Is 45:1,4-6 1 Thes 1:1-5b Mt 22:15-21	Is 52:10-11 Heb 4:14-16 Mk 10:35-45	Ex 17:8-13 2 Tm 3:14-4:2 Lk 18:1-8
<b>The Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Ex 22:20-26 1 Thes 1:5c-10 Mt 22:34-40	Jer 31:7-9 Heb 5:1-6 Mk 10:46-52	Sir 35:12-14,16-18 2 Tm 4:6-8,16-18 Lk 18:9-14
<b>The Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Mal 1:14b-2:2b,8-10 1 Thes 2:7b-9,13 Mt 23:1-12	Dt 6:2-6 Heb 7:23-28 Mk 12:28b-34	Wis 11:22-12:2 2 Thes 1:11-2:2 Lk 19:1-10
<b>The Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Wis 6:12-16 1 Thes 5:1-6 Mt 25:14-30	1 Kgs 17:10-16 Heb 9:24-28 Mk 12:38-44	2 Mc 7:1-2,9-14 2 Thes 2:16-3:5 Lk 20:27-38
<b>The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Prv 31:10-13,19-20,30-31 Rom 8:35,37-39 Mt 14:13-21	Dn 12:1-3 Heb 10:11-14,18 Mk 13:24-32	Mal 3:19-20a 2 Thes 3:7-12 Lk 21:5-19
<b>The Thirty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b> ( <i>The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King</i> )	Ez 34:11-12,15-17 1 Cor 15:20-26,28 Mt 25:31-46	Dn 7:13-14 Rv 1:5-8 Jn 18:33b-37	2 Sm 5:1-3 Col 1:12-20 Lk 23:35-43

# Glossary

## A

### abba

From Aramaic—a language spoken in Palestine at the time of Jesus—*abba*, meaning “father,” was used by children in addressing their fathers. Jesus used the word *abba* to express his relationship with God (see Mk 14:36) and taught his disciples to pray to God as a loving and loveable parent.

### Adam

Related to the Hebrew *adamah*, meaning “ground,” this name signifies “one formed from the earth.” According to the Book of Genesis, Adam was the first man to be formed; he was the husband of Eve and the father of Cain and Abel. Christ is sometimes called the “new Adam” or the “second Adam,” as Christ initiated the new or second creation by restoring the divine friendship that had been lost by original sin.

### allegory

This is a literary form in which something is said to be like something else. Allegories are often used to communicate a hidden or symbolic meaning commonly understood by the people it is addressed to. The Bible often uses allegories to explain spiritual reality. For example, Jesus is called the Lamb of God (see Jn 1:29), an allegory symbolizing that Jesus was the sacrifice for our sins.

### alleluia

From the Hebrew meaning “praise to Yahweh” or “praise to God,” *alleluia* is an exclamation

that is used in the Christian liturgy as a way of praising God, especially during the Easter season.

### amen

This Hebrew word means “let it be so” or “let it be done.” As a conclusion to prayer, it represents the agreement by the person praying to what has been said in the prayer.

### angel

This word is based on a word meaning “messenger,” a personal and immortal creature, with intelligence and free will, who constantly glorifies God and serves as a messenger of God to humans in order to carry out God’s saving plan.

### anointing

This word (from the Latin *inungere*, meaning “to smear” or “rub on” oil or ointment for medicinal purposes) refers to an act of applying oil in a religious ceremony or as part of a blessing. In the Old Testament, kings, priests, and prophets were anointed as sign of their divine mission. Today, anointing is part of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick.

### Antichrist

This word from the Greek literally means “against Christ,” thus an adversary of Christ. In the New Testament, the Antichrist is a deceitful figure associated with the mystery of iniquity that is to precede the Second Coming of Christ. In modern usage, the term Antichrist describes both those who falsely claim to speak

in the name of Christ and those who are enemies of Christ.

### apocalypse

This word (from the Greek *apocalypses*, meaning “revelation” or “unveiling” or “uncovering”), in a general sense, refers to the end of the world when God will destroy the forces of evil. In the Scriptures, the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation, which is the last book of the New Testament, describes the conflict between good and evil, the end of the world and heaven.

### apocalyptic literature

Having roots in both Jewish and Christian tradition, this genre of literature appears in the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. It is associated with the end-times or the last things and anticipates the time of Last Judgment when Jesus returns and the world as we know it disappears. Frequently referred to as “crisis literature,” it generally appears in the context of historical, political, or religious turmoil and is characterized by symbols and images used to communicate a message to the intended audience while preventing the enemies of faith from understanding its true meaning.

### Apocryphal Books

In the first centuries of Christianity, a great number of books and letters written by Christians did not become part of the Bible. These writings were not included in the New Testament because they were not in complete agreement theologically with the Apostolic Tradition. They are called apocryphal writings, and they