



## **MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD**

### ***'I Believe' – the assent to God and to his Revelation***

#### **Texts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church***

### **THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH**

#### ***God's invitation***

By his *Revelation*, “the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends, and moves among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company” (Vatican II, Divine Revelation). The adequate response to this invitation is faith. (142)

#### ***Man's response by faith***

By *faith*, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, “the obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:26). (143)

#### ***Faith is to submit freely to God and to his word***

To obey (from the Latin *ob-audire*, to ‘hear or listen to’) in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself. Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture. The Virgin Mary is its most perfect embodiment. (144)

#### ***Abraham - 'father of all who believe'***

The *Letter to the Hebrews*, in its great eulogy of the faith of Israel's ancestors, lays special emphasis on Abraham's faith: “By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go” (Heb 11:8). By faith, he lived as a stranger and pilgrim in the promised land. By faith, Sarah was given to conceive the son of the promise. And by faith Abraham offered his only son in sacrifice. (145)

Abraham thus fulfils the definition of faith in *Hebrews* 11:1: “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”: “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Because he was “strong in his faith”, Abraham became the “father of all who believe”. (Heb 11:1, Rom 4:3; 4:11) (146)

The Old Testament is rich in witnesses to this faith. The *Letter to the Hebrews* proclaims its eulogy of the exemplary faith of the ancestors who “received divine approval”. Yet “God had foreseen something better for us”: the grace of believing in his Son Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”. (Heb 11:2, 39; 11:40, 12:2) (147)

#### ***Mary – 'Blessed is she who believed'***

The Virgin Mary most perfectly embodies the obedience of faith. By faith Mary welcomes the tidings and promise brought by the angel Gabriel, believing that “with God nothing will be impossible” and so giving her assent: “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word”.

Elizabeth greeted her: “Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord”. (Lk 1:37-38, 1:45) It is for this faith that all generations have called Mary blessed. (148)

#### ***Mary's pure faith never wavered***

Throughout her life and until her last ordeal when Jesus her son died on the cross, Mary's faith never wavered. She never ceased to believe in the fulfilment of God's word. And so the Church venerates in Mary the purest realisation of faith. (149)

**“I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED”**  
*(2 Tim 1:12)*

***To believe in God alone***

Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is *a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed*. As personal adherence to God and assent to his truth, Christian faith differs from our faith in any human person. It is right and just to entrust oneself wholly to God and to believe absolutely what he says. It would be futile and false to place such faith in a creature. (150)

***To believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God***

For a Christian, believing in God cannot be separated from believing in the One he sent, his “beloved Son”, in whom the Father is “well pleased”; God tells us to listen to him (Mk 1:11). The Lord himself said to his disciples: “Believe in God, believe also in me” (Jn 14:1). We can believe in Jesus Christ because he is himself God, the Word made flesh: “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (Jn 1:18). Because he “has seen the Father”, Jesus Christ is the only one who knows him and can reveal him. (Jn 6:46) (151)

***To believe in the Holy Spirit***

One cannot believe in Jesus Christ without sharing in his Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to men who Jesus is. For “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’, except by the Holy Spirit”, who “searches everything, even the depths of God... No one comprehends the thoughts of God, except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 12:3, 2:10-11). Only God knows God completely: we believe in the Holy Spirit because he is God.

*The Church never ceases to proclaim her faith in one only God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

**IN BRIEF**

- **Faith is a personal adherence of the whole man to God who reveals himself. It involves an assent of the intellect and will to the self-revelation God has made through his deeds and words. (176)**
- **“To believe” has thus a twofold reference: to the person, and to the truth: to the truth, by trust in the person who bears witness to it. (177)**
- **We must believe in no one but God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (178)**

