

"In the beginning  
was the Word,  
and the Word was  
with God, and the  
Word was God."  
~John 1:1

The Lord's Flock  
**Growth**  
DIGEST  
PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES



## **"Faith and Evangelization"**

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**Faith is loving, believing, and trusting in God.** It is placing always our complete trust in our Lord Jesus Christ who never fails us. It is a grace from God. It is also a human responsibility.

**On October 11, 2011 Pope Benedict XVI issued an apostolic letter "Porta Fidei" (The Door of Faith) declaring a Year of Faith from October 11, 2012 to November 24, 2013.** It was meant to rekindle our faith in God. It was addressed for all Catholics especially those who are inactive and non-practicing, those who are under-catechized, lacking and seeking more Catholic doctrines, and those who are alienated and hostile to the Church.

**The Holy Pope explained that "the door of faith (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church. It is possible to cross that threshold when the word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace. To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime.**

**"It begins with baptism (Romans 6:4), through which we can address God as Father, and it ends with the passage through death to eternal life, fruit of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, whose will it was, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, to draw those who believe in him into his own glory (John 17:22).**

**"To profess faith in the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is to believe in one God who is love (1John 4:8): the Father, who in the fullness of time send his Son for our salvation; Jesus Christ, who in the mystery of his death and resurrection redeemed the world; the Holy Spirit, who leads the Church across the centuries as we await the Lord's glorious return."**

**We are all commanded to show our faith in the Holy Trinity to others.** Jesus asks us to evangelize, proclaim the Gospel, bring out and spread the word of God.

**We should refer to the Catechism of the Catholic Church as "an integral part of renewal in continuity of traditional catechesis but at the same time expressing it in a new way to respond to questions of our own times.** There should be greater focus on quality of teaching and the use of mass media and art."

## **Stages of Faith:**

1. **Age of belief** – The individual believes in something according to his intellect or mind.
2. **Age of faith** – The individual's belief develops into mature faith with both his mind and his heart. He is ready to defend his faith and trust in God.
3. **Age of the Spirit** – The individual gives full recognition of the presence of the Holy Spirit within himself and receives His fruit, gifts, and power.

During this age, there is commitment to reform the individual and the church. There is also renewal of ecclesial life which consists in belonging entirely, simply, and exclusively to Jesus Christ.

## **New Evangelization**

**Pope Benedict's message for new evangelization is about Christianization of the heart.**

- It is recognition of our heart and struggle of our human spirit.
- It allows the Holy Spirit to lead us to the "desert" to be tested and strengthened in our spiritual journey.
- It also allows Jesus Christ to touch the unconverted areas of our life.

## **The Challenges of New Evangelization**

**The new evangelization is challenging all of us, not only during the Year of Faith but in the years after, to do the following:**

- Appreciate the gift of faith from God;
- Deepen our relationship with God through prayers, Bible study, and serving Him in our ministries;
- Strengthen our commitment to share the Catholic faith to others through witnessing and proclamation of the Gospel; and
- Lead people out of the "desert" they are often in towards the place of life and friendship with God.

**Conclusion: Pope Benedict in his apostolic letter "Door of Faith" has appealed to all Catholics to strengthen their faith through Christianization of their heart. Let us heed his challenge for all of us to deepen our relationship with God and to evangelize by witnessing, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and saving souls! Christianization of our heart will greatly strengthen our faith and produce faithfulness (fidelitas).** Within us, there will be commitment, loyalty, allegiance, steadfastness, and presence of the Holy Spirit. With our heart's Christianization, we will completely banish anxiety, fear and worry.