


Confirmed in

faith



Think about different groups to which you belong. They may be clubs, sports teams, or your group of friends. What helps you feel like a part of the group? What do these groups have in common?

"This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord." —*Rite of Confirmation*

Words to Take to Heart

"This then is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances, which the LORD, your God, has commanded that you be taught to observe in the land you are about to cross into to possess . . . Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe them, that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly; for the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you a land flowing with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up."

Deuteronomy 6:1,3-7

Understanding Scripture

The first five books of the Old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—form the Pentateuch. In Hebrew they are referred to as the **Torah**, meaning "instruction" or "law." In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses gives a number of speeches to remind the Israelites that they belong to God.

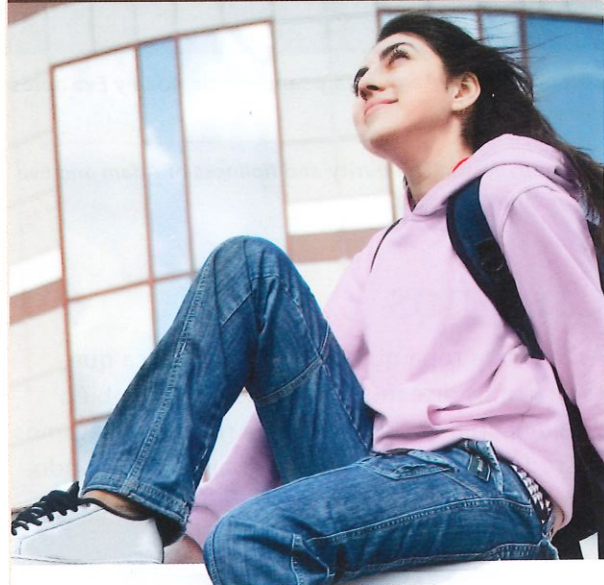
In Chapter 5 of Deuteronomy, Moses restates the Ten Commandments and reminds the Israelites of all the other laws they have agreed to follow.

In the Scripture passage above, Moses explains that the true way to follow God's instruction is to love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. Moses stresses that the Israelites should not only know the words of this instruction but that they should also take the instruction to heart, teach it to their children, and use it to guide all their actions.

Scripture and You

During this time of preparation for Confirmation, you will review important aspects of the instruction you have received. The reading from Deuteronomy reminds you to take this instruction to heart.

REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD



Relax and prepare to spend some quiet time with God. Imagine that you are with the Israelites, listening to Moses's words. God is asking you to love him with all your heart, soul, and strength. Let his words sink in. Ask God to help you make this Confirmation preparation a time to learn more fully what it means to love him above all things.

We Believe

Just as we make a statement with the clothes we wear and the music we listen to, we make a statement by praying and living the Creed. We are stepping out into the world, telling everyone that we are Catholic and identifying ourselves as believers.

Our faith is our personal commitment to God. It involves the assent of our mind and will to God, who has revealed himself in words and action throughout history. We all need the support of our community to help us grow in our faith, a faith that has been handed down to us. During our years of instruction, we've relied on others to help us understand what the Creed means to us. In fact, the words we say in the **Nicene Creed** go all the way back to the fourth and fifth centuries. The word *creed* comes from the Latin word *credo*, which means "I believe."

The Holy Trinity

The **Holy Trinity** is at the center of what we believe. We believe in one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We follow Jesus, God the Son, because God the Father calls us and God the Holy Spirit moves us.

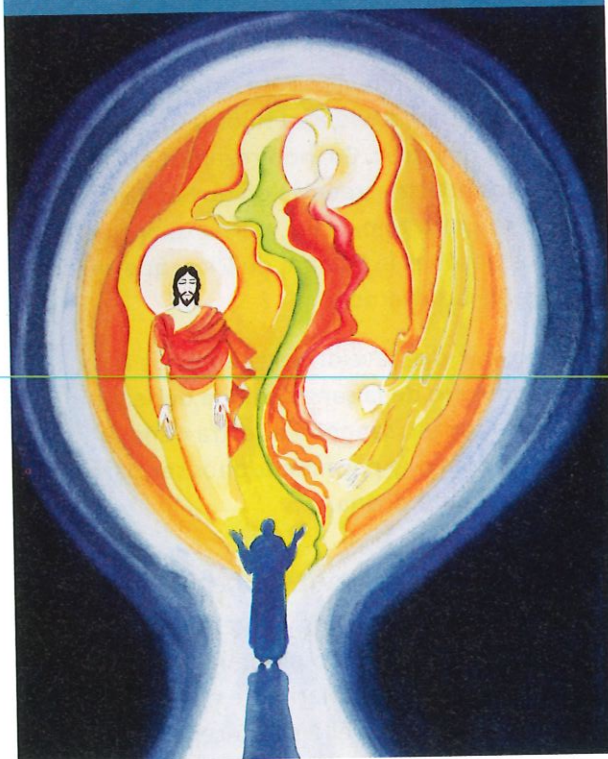
A Loving Father

Just as the Persons of the Trinity are one in what they are, they are one in what they do. God the Father is credited in a special way with the work of creation. We believe that he is the Creator of everything that exists. People often wonder "Where do we come from?" and "Where are we going?" There is one answer: God the Father.

God the Father created us out of love and to share in his goodness. He created the entire universe by his own wisdom. But he is not an impersonal force; he is present and active in our lives. It is Jesus who teaches us to call God "Abba"—Father.

God walks with us to help us achieve the goals he intended for us: eternal happiness with him, sharing his truth, goodness, and beauty.

ART LINK



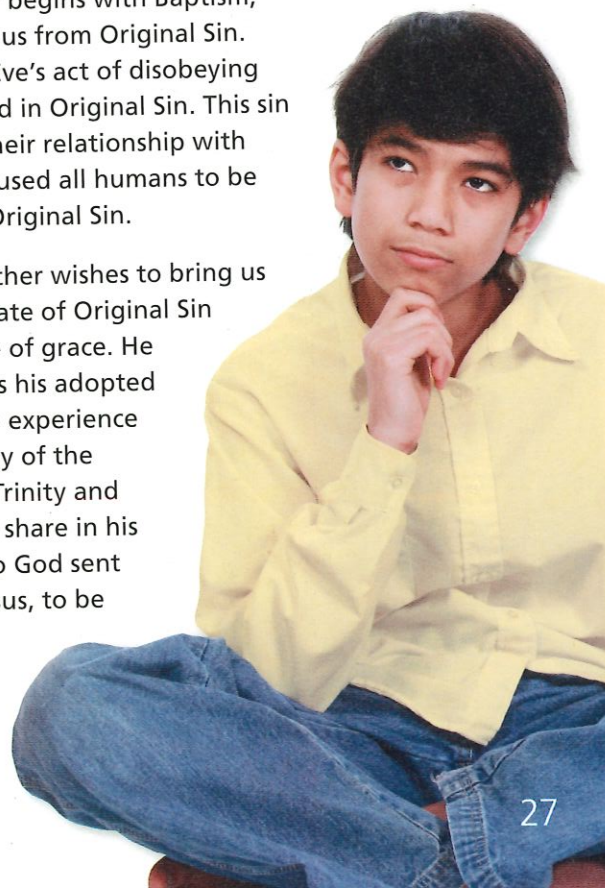
Elizabeth Wang, *Jesus our High Priest, through the Holy Spirit, draws us into the Father's love*, 2010.

Elizabeth Wang, *Jesús nuestro Sumo Sacerdote, por medio del Espíritu Santo, nos conduce hacia el amor del Padre*, 2010.

Our journey begins with Baptism, which frees us from Original Sin. Adam and Eve's act of disobeying God resulted in Original Sin. This sin damaged their relationship with God and caused all humans to be born with Original Sin.

God our Father wishes to bring us from the state of Original Sin to the state of grace. He wants us, as his adopted children, to experience the intimacy of the life of the Trinity and once again share in his holiness. So God sent his Son, Jesus, to be our Savior.

faith



God the Son: Closer to Us

Talking to someone by phone or e-mail is nice, but visiting them in person is even better. To be closer to us, God sent his Son, Jesus, to live among us. When we pray the Creed, we state our belief that the Father sent his only Son, Jesus, to atone for our sins. Jesus is the Word of God, who became human to save us.

Jesus saved us by revealing God's love to us, exemplifying the holiness we should try to achieve, healing our damaged relationship with God, and allowing us to share in his divine nature.

Fully God, Fully Human

Jesus is fully God and fully human. He became human while remaining truly God. Mary was chosen to be the Mother of God; therefore, her conception was without sin. We celebrate this truth on the Feast of the **Immaculate Conception**. Jesus was miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We are all familiar with the beautiful story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

Jesus lived in Nazareth with Mary, his mother, and Joseph, his foster father, until he was about 30 years old. He then began his life of ministry. Jesus

preached about God his Father and the kingdom we are all called to share. For three years Jesus taught people how to live the way God wants us to live. He worked miracles to show the power of the **Kingdom of God**. Jesus invited sinners into this kingdom.

Envious religious leaders handed Jesus over to Roman officials, claiming that he incited the crowds against Rome. The Romans crucified Jesus. He died and was buried. The Creed states, "For our sake he was crucified . . ." And for our sake, God raised him to new life on the third day.

MY TURN Encountering the Trinity

What are three examples of how you encounter each Person of the Trinity in your life?

1. I encounter God the Father when

2. I encounter Jesus Christ, his Son when

3. I encounter the Holy Spirit when



Jesus then appeared to his disciples and later ascended to Heaven to be with God the Father. Our faith assures us that Jesus will come again at the end of time to judge all who have died and those still alive. He will establish God's kingdom of peace and justice forever.

On the night before he died, Jesus shared a meal with his friends. He took bread and wine and transformed them into his Body and Blood. We call this meal the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, Jesus is not only present with us, but the saving events of his life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension are present as well.

A Sanctifying Spirit

Sometimes we can feel frustrated or lonely. Jesus made sure that we will never be alone. We know that Jesus is with us in the Eucharist. He also sent the Holy Spirit to be with us, help us, and defend us. God the Holy Spirit allows us to experience Jesus' saving presence. In Baptism, we receive through the Holy Spirit the life that God the Father gives us in Jesus, his Son. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the Trinity.

The Catholic Church

Another way Jesus made sure we would not be alone was by establishing his Church. The life of the Trinity is lived out in the Church. The Church is a community of pilgrim people on the way to the Father. They are the people whom God gathers in the entire world. They draw their lives from the Word and the Body of Christ and so become Christ's Body, the Church.

The Church is a visible society, governed by the pope and all the bishops, who are the successors of the Apostles. They are called the **Magisterium**, or teaching authority, of the Church. Guided by God the Holy Spirit, they have the authority to preach the gospel and lead the Church. The bishops have the responsibility to proclaim God's message to the people.

MY TURN United in the Lord

Make a list of Christian beliefs. Use it as a reminder of what all Christians have in common as you pray for unity among all believers in Christ.



When the pope, in union with the bishops, solemnly teaches on a matter of faith and morals, the teaching is called an **infallible** teaching. This means the teaching is free of error.

The Church has four distinguishing marks; the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

One

The Church is **one** because it has been made one body in Jesus. Unity is the essence of the Church. All who have been baptized are members of the Church of Christ, whose fullness is found in the Roman Catholic Church. Over time there have been wounds to the Church's unity. The baptized followers of Jesus are no longer united in one Church. As Catholics we are united with Jesus in the desire to see the unity of the Church restored, and we should pray for and work toward that end. This work toward the unity of all Christians is called **ecumenism**.

Holy

The Church is **holy** because Jesus, the Church's founder, is holy. All of the Church's activities are done with the goal of making the entire world a better, holier place. The Church is always in need of purification because all its members are sinners. We are not yet the holy people God calls us to be; we are still on our way to becoming holy.

Catholic

The Church is **catholic**, or open to all, because it has been sent by Christ to the entire human race. Even those who don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God are related to the Church. The Jewish people have already given a positive response to God's call in the Old Testament.

rite



Rite

After the Gospel, you and the other confirmands are called by name to stand before the bishop, to whom you are presented.

Meaning

To stand before the bishop and the community of faith is a sign of your readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Daily Life

You are supported in life by the people in your community. God speaks and acts through them.

Life of Faith

When the Church gathers in Jesus' name, he is present. Our community of faith is the Church. The bishop guides, teaches, and shepherds the local Church. He is the successor of the Apostles.

faith

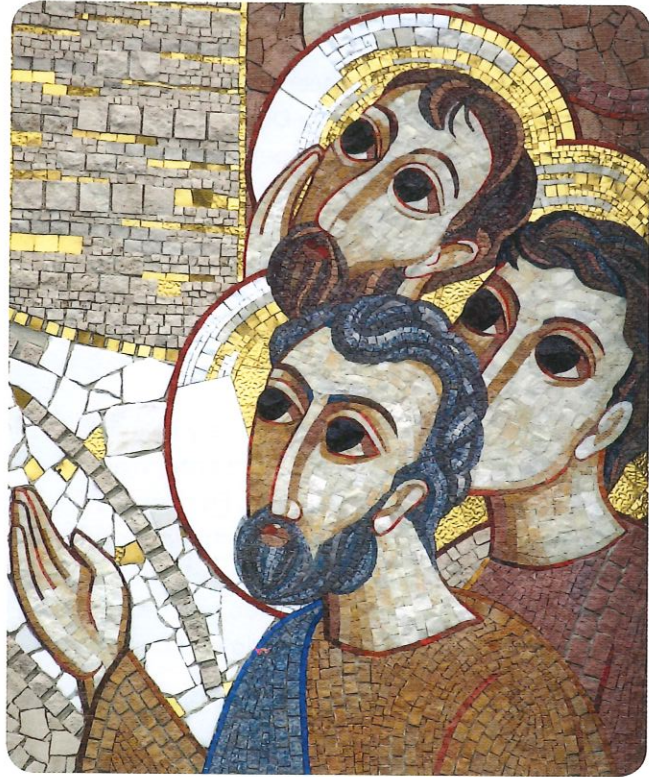
marks

Muslims are included in God's plan of salvation because with us they adore the one, merciful God. Because it is catholic, the Church has a bond with all people through God, who is present in every human heart.

Apostolic

The Church is **apostolic** because the Apostles carried out Jesus' plan of establishing the Church. Today the Apostles' teaching is carried out by their successors, the bishops, in union with the pope.

The mission of the Church and each of its members is Christ's mission—to call all creation into the Kingdom of God. To achieve this goal, the Church teaches the Christian message by word, example, and service to others.



Mosaic of Apostles, Lourdes, France.

Mosaico de los Apóstoles, Lourdes, Francia.

MY TURN In Other Words

1. Choose one of the four Marks of the Church, and describe how it is important to the Church.

2. What are some other words that describe the Church? Explain.



Life Everlasting

In Chapter 1 we discussed how a covenant is a promise between God and us. We can choose either to keep or break this promise. In other words, we either accept or reject the grace of God while we're alive. When we die, our time for choosing is over. We will then be judged by God on the good we have done or have failed to do. This is called the **particular judgment**.

People who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified will live forever with Christ in Heaven. In our families we never forget loved ones who have died. In the same way, the Church includes everyone who has died while believing in Christ and who lived by his example of goodness.

The Communion of Saints is the Church on earth united with all those who have died and are in Heaven or in **Purgatory**. The most esteemed member of the Communion of Saints is Mary, the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church. At the end of her life, Mary's body and soul were taken to Heaven in the **Assumption**. Mary is our example of how the Church will be perfected in Heaven. Those who die in friendship with God, but who still need to be purified of their attachment to sin, experience Purgatory. People who choose to separate themselves completely from God choose a state of exclusion called Hell.

The **Last Judgment** will come when Christ returns in glory and proclaims the end of time as we know it. When Christ comes again, we will know the meaning of God's plan and see how his goodness triumphs over evil. In the end God's love is stronger than death.

1

WITNESS



Life in Community: Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica

There are many ways to serve the Church and make the world a better place. Saints (and siblings) Benedict and Scholastica were born in the 5th century in Norcia, Italy. They founded monasteries and convents where people of faith could dedicate their lives in community to serve God and others. Their motto was *Ora et Labora*, which is Latin for "pray and work." Saint Benedict wrote the *Rule*, a set of guidelines to help his community live as a witness of the Gospel. One of its principles is to be hospitable and welcome others as brothers and sisters, no matter who they are.

There are still many active Benedictine communities throughout the world. They continue to serve others, praying and working in community and giving witness to their faith. Saint Benedict's feast day is July 11, and Saint Scholastica's feast day is February 10.

faith

2 ACT



Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Participation in community—whether in our family, parish, city, or country—is central to our faith and to a healthy society. Families must be supported so that people can participate in society, build a community spirit, and promote the well-being of all, especially those who are poor. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. People have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all. Our shared faith guides us and gives us principles, values, and counsel on how to promote the family and our participation in the community. The Holy Spirit accompanies and strengthens us so that we might live in the community, the Gospel, and the faith we profess in the Creed.

3 PRAY

Our Creed

The Nicene Creed is based on the creed developed at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. At this council the Church bishops defined how Jesus Christ, God the Son, is of the same substance as God the Father and is also fully man. The Creed was given its final form 56 years later in A.D. 381 by the bishops at the Council of Constantinople. At that council the bishops expanded the language about the Holy Spirit. This is the creed held by most Christians. The creed proclaims the perfect unity that exists between the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. In response to God's invitation to share in his life, we desire to reflect the unity of the Trinity by striving to be united with one another.

Call to Prayer

Pray the Creed reverently. Be conscious of how your local faith community and all Christians share the beliefs you profess, making us all brothers and sisters in Christ, children of God, who are guided by the Spirit.



pray

Praying the Creed

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

Leader: Gathered as a community of believers, let us listen to God's Word.

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up."

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Leader: We love God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Let us pray our Creed, our profession of faith.

All: I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

Reader 1: God our Father, you are all-powerful and also my loving Father.

All: I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God . . .

Reader 2: How great you are, Lord Jesus. You are God, and you are also man. You are light, and you still know what it is like to be me. You saved me from my sins.

All: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son . . .

Reader 3: Holy Spirit, you are always with me. You bring new life through the Sacraments of Initiation, and you reveal Christ to me.

All: I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Reader 4: May all members of the Church be united in Jesus. Grant that all I do will bring people together.

All: I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Reader 5: May I one day live forever with you and with those who have died.

All: Amen.

Leader: This is our faith. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us ask God for his continued assistance and care as we prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

All: Loving God, take us under your tender care, as we prepare for Confirmation. Make us worthy to receive the grace of Confirmation. Help us prepare well for this sacrament which calls us to love, live, and spread the faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



summary

FAITH SUMMARY

God the Holy Spirit helps us believe the Creed, the fundamental truths of our faith, taught by Jesus and his Church.

REMEMBER

What is the statement of our faith?

We profess the Nicene Creed at Mass. It contains the main truths of the Catholic faith.

What is at the center of our faith?

The Trinity is at the center of our faith. We believe in one God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

How did God move us from the state of sin to the state of grace?

God sent his Son, Jesus, to be our Savior, to save us from our sins. Jesus repairs our damaged relationship with God, reveals God's love to us, and allows us to share in his divine nature.

What are the four distinguishing Marks of the Church?

The Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

What is the Communion of Saints?

The Communion of Saints is the Church on earth united with all those who have died and are in Heaven or Purgatory. Mary, the Mother of God and the Church, is the most esteemed member of the Communion of Saints.

Words to Know

apostolic	Kingdom of God
Assumption	Last Judgment
catholic	Magisterium
ecumenism	Nicene Creed
holy	one
Holy Trinity	particular
Immaculate	judgment
Conception	Purgatory
infallible	Torah

When will we fully understand God's plan?

We will understand God's plan at the Last Judgment, when Christ returns in glory and pronounces the end of time as we know it.

MY CONFIRMATION JOURNAL

Use your journal to enter more deeply into this chapter. Quietly spend time reflecting and recording on journal pages 21–30.

REACH OUT

1. Design a bumper sticker depicting a name for God, such as Abba, Father, Creator, Good Shepherd, or another name.
2. Write, produce, and star in a 30-second commercial that teaches a truth of the faith or persuades others to follow Christ. Work on your own or in a small group. Use costumes and props to help get your point across. Videotape your final product.

WITH MY SPONSOR

Arrange with your sponsor to share your insights, questions, and ideas from this chapter and how they relate to your conversations from the *Faith to Faith* magazine.



Loving God, help me prepare well for the Sacrament of Confirmation, which calls me to love, live, and spread the faith in my community and the world. Amen.

review

MAKE IT TRUE

Cross out the word(s) or letter(s) that makes each sentence false. Then make each sentence true by writing the correct word(s).

1. Catholics believe in three Gods.
2. Creed comes from the Latin word *credo*, which means "I am with you."
3. Jesus worked miracles to show the power of God's creation.
4. The Catholic Church is a community of people from all over the United States.
5. The goal of unity for all Christians is called ecclesiasticism.
6. The Church is holy because Peter, the Church's founder, is holy.
7. The Church teaches the Christian message by word only.
8. The Church is catholic, or open only to those who are born into the faith.
9. Mary is equal to all the other members of the Communion of Saints.
10. People who die in God's grace and friendship will live forever with Christ in Purgatory.

TRIOS OF TRUTH

Complete each list of three.

1. Three Persons of the Trinity

2. Three states of being that humans can reach after dying

3. Three distinguishing Marks of the Church

CATHOLIC OR NOT?

Write a C before the beliefs that are held by Catholics.

- _____ 1. Jesus is true God and similar to true human.
- _____ 2. God the Father is credited in a special way with the work of creation.
- _____ 3. Adam and Eve's offense resulted in Original Sin.
- _____ 4. Mary was conceived without sin.
- _____ 5. Jesus preached God's Word, but he did not do good works.
- _____ 6. After his Resurrection, Jesus never appeared to his disciples.
- _____ 7. For about three years, Jesus preached about God his Father and the kingdom we are called to share.
- _____ 8. The Church is called the Body of Christ.