

What Keeps us Catholic

A “greater good” like Faith:

In God the Creator: Ultimate Mystery, yet "among us" to effect God's reign
Of justice and compassion, peace and mercy, in partnership *with us*
God is Love; a Triune Loving Community - calling us to so live

In Jesus Christ: God incarnate - as one of ourselves
"The way, truth, and life" (Jn 14:6) - models path to fullness of life
As Risen Savior, empowers us to follow "the way" as disciples

In Holy Spirit: Ever present as God's effective love - grace
Moving in our hearts and lives - in ordinary and everyday
Inspiring to holiness as "right relationship" with God, self, others, creation

Yet, might find and live such faith among other Christian communities
“Many homes” within God’s family (Jn 14:2)
Lots of scandals, brokenness, disappointments. Why stay here?

Jesus promised “ever fresh waters” (Jn 4); must return to the well
Delve into the deep structures of Catholicism
Plumb the memories to enliven imaginations

For Reflection and Conversation

* Name some of what keeps you a Catholic Christian

* How does your faith color your outlook on life and the everyday

To imagine the person: As God’s image, alive by divine breath
Affirmed by Incarnation - innate dignity, worth, and equality
Capable of sin but essentially good and graced, partners with God

To imagine life: As good gift; embrace and celebrate, cherish and defend
Life in world as sacramental; we encounter God through the everyday
Seven celebrate sacramentality of life; Eucharist as “real presence”

To imagine community: "made for each other" - essentially relational
To work as "Body of Christ" for God’s reign “on earth as . . .”
Bond of baptism unbroken; Mary, communion of saints and souls

To imagine Christian faith as whole: "to know, love, and serve"
Engage *hands* with ethic of love & compassion, truth & integrity
Engage *hearts* in community, in prayer & shared worship
Engage *heads* with wisdom of Christian faith, conviction of its truths

For Reflection and Conversation

- * How might you renew your “Catholic” outlook on life and people?
- * What does a “whole” faith ask of your daily life?

To imagine revelation: through scripture *and* tradition
 “Word of God in human language” –interpreted within Church
 Mystery remains and unfolds, yet Jesus as “way, truth, and life” (Jn 14:6)

To imagine justice: right relationship with God, self, others, & creation
 “Good news to poor, liberty to captives, freedom to oppressed” (Lk 4:18)
 Like God as compassionate mother, with special favor for “the poor”

To imagine spirituality: “God shaped hollow in human heart nothing else can fill”
 Catholic spirituality as putting faith to work; “life to faith, faith to life”
 “Call of the Whole Church to Holiness” (LG 5); after “the way” of Jesus

To imagine “Catholic”: to include all in welcome and outreach
 Catholic as open to the truth, wherever it can be found (Augustine)
 Both/and; scripture & trad, nature & grace, Good Friday and Easter Sunday

For Reflection and Conversation

- * Imagine the next steps in your own journey as a Catholic Christian?
- * The graces to pray for? The decisions to be made?

Re-imagining Mary

Mary as “pride of place” in communion of saints
 Unwed teenage mother and political refugee
 Why did Jesus make Isaiah 61:1-2 his platform (Luke 4: 16-21)
 Note the Magnificat, Mary’s God and her values

Finding in the temple – obedient and “he grew” (Lk 2:52)
 See Cana, Last Supper, Foot of Cross, and Pentecost
 With memory and imagination, to pray again Hail Mary
 First to place Jesus in the tabernacle of the world

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What Makes Us Catholic: (Harper, 800 242 7737). Available from Recorded Books (by author) at 800 638 1304. And a video and audio series from RCL/Benziger 877 275 4725