

# Mary Help of Christians Church

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## A Call to a Stewardship Way of Life



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### Pope Benedict XVI announced that the Church will celebrate a *Year of Faith*

- beginning on October 11, 2012, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- and ending on November 24, 2013, the Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King (Christ the King).

Both of these events (Second Vatican Council and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*) are significant moments in the faith life of Catholics. Likewise, the opening of the *Year of Faith* will coincide with the next General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in October, 2012, with the theme of *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*.



"The 'door of faith' is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church... To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime."

(PORTA FIDEI, 1)



YEAR OF FAITH 2012-2013

### "Why the Year of Faith"?

Pope Benedict XVI suggests this is a time for a renewal of faith, to review the documents of the Second Vatican Council, to reinvigorate the proclamation of faith in the Creed, to strengthen personal prayer and devotional practices and to rediscover how to feed ourselves on the Word of God and the Bread of Life so we can joyfully share the faith.

### Reflection Questions:

- What actions can I take during this Year of Faith?
- How can I strengthen my prayer life?
- Who can help "open the door" of faith for me?
- How can I help others to strengthen their faith?
- What are the areas of my faith I need to work on?

### Family Prayer for the Year of Faith

O God our Father.

In Jesus you call all Christian Families and homes to be a sign of living faith.  
By the light of the Holy Spirit, lead us to be thankful for the gift of faith

And by that gift may we grow in our own relationship with Jesus Your Son, and be confident witnesses to Christian hope and joy to all we meet.

Amen



## US Bishop Offers 'ten ways Catholics can live the 'Year of Faith'

To honour the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the twentieth anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pope Benedict XVI has announced a Year of Faith, starting October 11 and ending November 24, 2013. The goal is to strengthen the faith of Catholics and draw the world to faith by their example.

Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin, chairman of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, offers 'ten ways Catholics can live the Year of Faith. Rooted in guidelines from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, some of these suggestions are already requirements for Catholics; others can be embraced by Catholics at all times and especially during the Year of Faith:

**1. Participate in Mass.** The Year of Faith is meant to promote the personal encounter with Jesus. This occurs most immediately in the Eucharist. Regular Mass attendance strengthens one's faith through the Scriptures, the Creed, other prayers, sacred music, the homily, receiving Communion and being part of a faith community.

**2. Go to Confession.** Like going to Mass, Catholics find strength and grow deeper in their faith through participation in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Confession urges people to turn back to God, express sorrow for falling short and open their lives to the power of God's healing grace. It forgives the injuries of the past and provides strength for the future.

**3. Learn about the lives of the saints.** The saints are timeless examples of how to live a Christian life, and they provide endless hope. Not only were they sinners who kept trying to grow closer to God, but they also exemplify ways a person can serve God: through teaching, missionary work, charity, prayer and simply striving to please God in the ordinary actions and decisions of daily life.

**4. Read the Bible daily.** Scripture offers first-hand access to the Word of God and tells the story of human salvation. Catholics can pray the Scriptures (through lectio divina or other methods) to become more attuned to the Word of God. Either way, the Bible is a must for growth in the Year of Faith.

**5. Read the documents of Vatican II.** The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) ushered in a great renewal of the Church. It impacted how Mass is celebrated, the role of the laity, how the Church understands itself and its relationship with other Christians and non-Christians. To continue this renewal, Catholics must understand what the Council taught and how it enriches the lives of believers.

**6. Study the Catechism.** Published exactly 30 years after the start of the Council, the Catechism of the Catholic Church covers the beliefs, moral teachings, prayer and sacraments of the Catholic Church in one volume. It's a resource for growing in understanding of the faith. Another helpful resource is the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults (USCCA).

**7. Volunteer in the parish.** The Year of Faith can't only be about study and reflection. The solid grounding of the Scriptures, the Council and the Catechism must translate into action. The parish is a great place to start, and each person's gifts help build up the community. People are welcome as ministers of hospitality, liturgical musicians, lectors, catechists and in other roles in parish life.

**8. Help those in need.** The Vatican urges Catholics to donate to charity and volunteer to help the poor during the Year of Faith. This means to personally encounter Christ in the poor, marginalized and vulnerable. Helping others brings Catholics face-to-face with Christ and creates an example for the rest of the world.

**9. Invite a friend to Mass.** The Year of Faith may be global in its scope, focusing on a renewal of faith and evangelization for the whole Church, but real change occurs at the local level. A personal invitation can make all the difference to someone who has drifted from the faith or feels alienated from the Church. Everyone knows people like this, so everyone can extend a loving welcome.

**10. Incorporate the Beatitudes into daily life.** The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) provide a rich blueprint for Christian living. Their wisdom can help all to be more humble, patient, just, transparent, loving, forgiving and free. It's precisely the example of lived faith needed to draw people to the Church in the year ahead