

# YEAR OF FAITH

October 11, 2012-November 24, 2013

## Scripture Study Program—SESSION 1 of 6

(reflections on the 4 Constitutions of Vatican II included in sessions 2-6)

*The Year of Faith: A Bible Study Guide for Catholics* by Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington IN: 2012, \$9.95, 95 pp., ISBN 978-1-61278-623-0 (Father Pacwa is seen on EWTN and is the founder and president of Ignatius Productions, a Catholic media production apostolate. He is a biblical scholar and his web site can be found at [www.fathermitchpacwa.org](http://www.fathermitchpacwa.org).)

“This book is a handbook for mission, a tool for deepening our relationship to Christ and for introducing others to him. It can be used alone or for group Bible study.” (p. 8, from the Foreword by Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., Archdiocese of Chicago)

Two Vatican II documents are advised for our reading: *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations—The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church] and *Dei Verbum* [Word of God—The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation]. (p. 17)

New Evangelization means calling everyone to have faith in God as God is revealed by Jesus Christ. It is a re-commitment to a personal love of Christ in union with the Church. It is a discovery of life and grace in the sacraments and a recovery of receiving the Bible as the Word of God. (p. 18)

### SESSION ONE: “BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST” (pp. 21-29)

Having read everything up to page 29, let us begin with a prayer:

#### *An Act of Faith*

*O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became flesh and died for our sins, and that he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths that the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.*

In this Year of Faith, in what (or whom) do we have faith? (Read *Hebrews 12:2*)  
*Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which lay ahead of him, he endured the cross, disregarding the shame of it, and has taken his seat at the right of God’s throne.*

The summons to faith is the result of repentance. Turning away from sin prepares the heart to be open to faith.

Matthew's gospel was written to show the fulfillment of Jewish prophecies.

Look at Matthew 2:15 [*This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: I called my son out of Egypt—cf. Nb 23:22, the poem of Balaam, a seer of Pethor in N. Syria summoned by King Balak of Moab to curse the Israelites but who refuses and praises Israel in 4 oracles, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of which we find the above poem*] and 8:17 [*This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: He himself bore our sicknesses away and carried our diseases.—cf. Is 53:4, the 4<sup>th</sup> Suffering Servant Song*] to see which Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled.

CONSIDER (pp. 23f)—Jesus shows that the Kingdom is at hand

--by casting out demons

--in Jesus' healings and raising individuals from the dead (read 2<sup>nd</sup> ¶)

--through the authority of his teachings (cf. Mk 1:22—*And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.*)

INVESTIGATE (p. 24—share responses at table)

CONSIDER (pp. 25f)—Jesus repeatedly demands that an act of faith be made in Himself

--this draws us into a relationship *with* Jesus (read 2<sup>nd</sup> ¶)

--faith in Jesus Christ also requires faith in his resurrection

INVESTIGATE (p. 26—share responses at table)

STUDY (pp. 26f)—Faith in Jesus Christ's resurrection is essential to being a Christian

--read I Corinthians 15:12-28

--many martyrs have given their lives trusting in the promise of the resurrection

--on your own time, read the passages given on The Centrality of the Cross (pp. 27-28)

INVESTIGATE (pp. 28-29)

--The Passion narratives in all four gospels show fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

--Read the given passages on your own time to see the prophecies fulfilled.

DISCUSS (p. 29)

1. Who do you think Jesus is?
2. What difference does belief in Jesus make in your life?
3. What new insights have you gained from the Scripture passages you read in this chapter?

PRACTICE—This week make a conscious act of faith in Jesus and in his saving work in your life. Ask him to help increase your faith where it is weak.

**READ THE SECTION FOR SESSION 2 (pp. 31-42) FOR NEXT WEEK.**