

# YEAR OF FAITH

October 11, 2012-November 24, 2013

## Scripture Study Program—SESSION 5 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

### SESSION FIVE: “CELEBRATING FAITH” (pp. 69-83)

Having read everything up to page 83, 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.*

“...we make it our prayer that believers’ witness of life may grow in credibility.”—from Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI’s *Porta Fidei*, n. 9 (see page 69)

We are told on page 69 that “Faith that is not expressed and celebrated cannot grow” and then on page 70 that worship and faith have been linked through our Biblical and spiritual history. Faith leads to an expression of worship as in the examples given under “CONSIDER” on page 70 (Abram, Jacob, Moses). In looking at the parts of Mass outlined on pages 70-73, which part is your favorite or the part when you feel closest to God?

Abraham is the ancestor in faith of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. What opportunities have each of us had to find out more about our religious cousins? (p. 75)

This chapter invited us to stop and read in our Bibles the Bread of Life Discourse given by Jesus in Capernaum and recorded in John 6:22-71. For those who had the opportunity to read this section, what insights did you bring away with you? (p. 79)

Discuss the three questions found on page 82.

Apply the Practice suggested on p. 83 when you attend Mass this weekend.

#### **From the homily by Pope Francis I to the Cardinals on March 14, 2013**

“To walk, to build, to witness. But this is not so easy because when we walk, when we build, when we witness, at times there are upsets, there are movements that aren't proper to the journey. They are movements that pull us back.”

“In the Gospel,” the Pope continued, “even Peter who confessed Jesus as Christ, says to Him: 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. I will follow you but let's not talk about the Cross. That doesn't have anything to do with it. ... I'll follow you, without the Cross.'” But, “when we walk without the Cross, when we build without the Cross, when we profess a Christ without the Cross ... we aren't disciples of the Lord. We are worldly, we are bishops, priests, cardinals, popes, but not disciples of the Lord.”

**READ THE SECTION FOR SESSION 6 (pp. 85-94) FOR NEXT WEEK.**

*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of the 2nd Vatican Council*  
(*Gaudium et Spes*—from the opening line: “The joys and the hopes....”—12/7/65)  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)

### **PREFACE**

The Preface (articles 1-10) begins: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (article 1). The document also states that this Council addresses itself to the whole of humanity (article 2) and that “Today’s spiritual agitation and the changing conditions of life are part of a broader and deeper revolution” (article 5). Further it says that “A change in attitudes and in human structures frequently calls accepted values into question” (article 7).

**What sense does the above convey to you about the nature of this document?**

### **PART I—The Church and Man’s Calling**

This first part deals with “pastoral” concerns (articles 11-45). Part II deals with more “doctrinal” matters (articles 46-90), with a Conclusion consisting of articles 91-93.

Chapter 1 of Part I is on “The Dignity of the Human Person.” A section of it [as *taken from the 1966 translation*] reads: “Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths” (article 16).

**How do you apply this to your own beliefs and understanding of the Church?**

Chapter 2 of Part I is on “The Community of Mankind.” Here we find written: “Respect and love ought to be extended also to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political, and religious matters, too. In fact, the more deeply we come to understand their ways of thinking through courtesy and love, the more easily will we be able to enter into dialogue with them” (article 28)

**Where do you see this most needing to be applied in our day and age?**

Chapter 3 of Part I is on “Man’s Activity Throughout the World.” Here, with reference to Matthew 24:13; 13:24-30 and 36-43, it recalls that “a monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man. The battle was joined from the very origins of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested” (article 37).

**What are the forces of evil with which we must live? How might we affect them?**

Chapter 4 of Part I is on “The Role of the Church in the Modern World.” Some statements from this section are the following:

--“The gospel has a sacred reverence for the dignity of conscience and its freedom of choice...” (article 41);

--“...we are tempted to think that our personal rights are fully ensured only when we are exempt from every requirement of divine law. But this way lies not the maintenance of the dignity of the human person, but its annihilation” (article 41); and

--In the present age, too, it does not escape the church how great a distance lies between the message she offers and the human failings of those to whom the gospel is entrusted” (article 43).

**How do we best form our conscience so as to make wise and correct decisions in life?**

*(Part II of this Constitution will be addressed next week in our final Session #6)*