

***How Are
We Saved?***

“Salvation is the ultimate reason for our existence: our end, goal, point, purpose, hope, and meaning. The difference between success and failure in life is not the difference between riches and poverty, fame and obscurity, health and sickness, etc., but rather it is the difference between salvation and damnation.”

“For as Jesus said, ‘What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul.’ Nobody ever asked a more practical question than this. In other words, **don’t get all A’s but flunk life.**”

-- Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli

■ *Video: Fr. Larry Richards, is everyone saved?*



Small Group Discussion

- Handout #1
 - Fill-in individually
 - Then discuss
- Handout #2
 - In your small groups, **read aloud** each *group* of scripture passages and **summarize what each group says is needed for our salvation**

What Do These Quotes Say Is Needed For Our Salvation?

- “God proves his love for us: while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us.**” (Romans 5:8)
- “All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the **redemption in Christ Jesus.**” (Romans 3:23-24)

Christ Died for Our Sins

- **However, why was this necessary?**
 - **Why couldn't God be merciful and just forgive our sins?**
 - **Seen *The Passion of the Christ* movie?**



Loving Justice

- God is perfectly loving, but He is also perfectly just
- God's justice demands that our sins be punished
 - Not to punish would be unjust
 - Parents punish children out of love
 - Courts let contrite felon go free?



Loving Justice

- If God was not **just**, there would be no **demand** for His Son to suffer and die.
- If God was not **loving**, there would be no **willingness** for His Son to suffer and die.
- But, God is both just and loving. Therefore, **God's love is willing to meet the demands of His justice.**

Loving Justice

- Jesus, out of perfect love for us, **voluntarily** took upon Himself the punishment we are due
 - “No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will.” (John 10:18)
- Prophet Isaiah (700 years before):
 - “He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed... the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.”

Loving Justice

- Christ **paid the highest price** possible to **give us the greatest gift** possible
 - His passion and death atoned for our sins and redeemed us
 - Debt was paid. His love paid the price.
 - “Natural life came by God’s breath; Eternal life comes by Christ’s death.”
- *Video: Fr. Larry Richards on how much Jesus suffered for us on Calvary*

Christ's Loving Gift to Us

- Christ's love has rescued us
 - How does this realization make us feel?
 - Gratitude, which motivates our response
 - Did we do anything to deserve this?
 - Grace is an unearned blessing to unworthy sinners
 - “The grace of Christ is the **free gift** that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it.” (CCC #1999)

Christ's Loving Gift to Us

- **God the Father is now offering Christ's payment for our sins to us as a pure gift**
 - One that we are free to accept or reject
- **How can we personally accept this gracious gift of God's love?**
 - *Video: Fr. Robert Barron on what is required of us to be saved*

**We are called to a
three-fold response
to accept God's gift
of Grace**

(like a tripod)





What is the First Thing Needed For Our Salvation?

- “The Son of Man [must] be lifted up so that everyone who **believes** in him may have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15)
- “Whoever hears my word and **believes** in the one who sent me has eternal life.” (John 5:24)
- “**Believe** in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31)

FIRST LEG: Faith

- **Faith** in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Creator, Redeemer & Sanctifier
- Faith is more than intellectual belief or acceptance of Church doctrine
 - Repent of our sins, reject selfish ways, and seek a trusting relationship with God
 - Vatican II: “By faith, man **freely commits his entire self** to God, making the **full submission** of his intellect & will to God.”
 - This is conversion

FIRST LEG: Faith

■ Early Church:

- Adult **conversion** came first
- Then **catechesis** (instruction)
- Followed by **baptism**

■ Today, Order Reversed:

- Infant **baptism** is first
- Then **catechesis** (children/youth CCD)
- Finally **conversion?**

FIRST LEG: Faith

- But, when is this conversion?
 - Priest: “Conversion is the **Achilles' heel of Catholicism**”
 - Too often Catholics have presumed conversion has happened or will happen
 - Hope that it will happen is often based on instruction, knowledge, truth and intellect

FIRST LEG: Faith

- Quote from book *Renewal of Faith*
 - Written by 2 Catholic Priests

“Perhaps some of us thought that we could follow Jesus satisfactorily just by believing certain truths and by doing certain good acts.”

“Following Jesus demands that, but it **demands much more**; it calls for a deep change, a radical turning about, a **total commitment** of our lives to Jesus.”

FIRST LEG: Faith

“But this is not easy; it implies a **total surrender to God’s will**. We are not trying any longer to make God fit into our ideas; we are rather making ourselves fit into God’s ideas.”

“Conversion is a free, personal and radical **offering of one’s whole self to God**. Have we ever done this? Have you ever done it? Or have you perhaps **drifted along** since your childhood doing Christian things? **Have you ever given yourself completely to Jesus?**”

■ *Video: Fr. Art Cooney on conversion*

ory
on



FIRST LEG: Faith

- Faith is more than intellectual belief
- Faith includes Conversion:
Commitment, Surrender, Trust
 - Conversion is a lifelong process
 - Moving from self-centeredness and selfishness
 - Towards doing God's work in the world
 - Through loving **service** to others
 - The only conversions that count are those confirmed by a life of discipleship



What is the Second Thing Needed For Our Salvation?

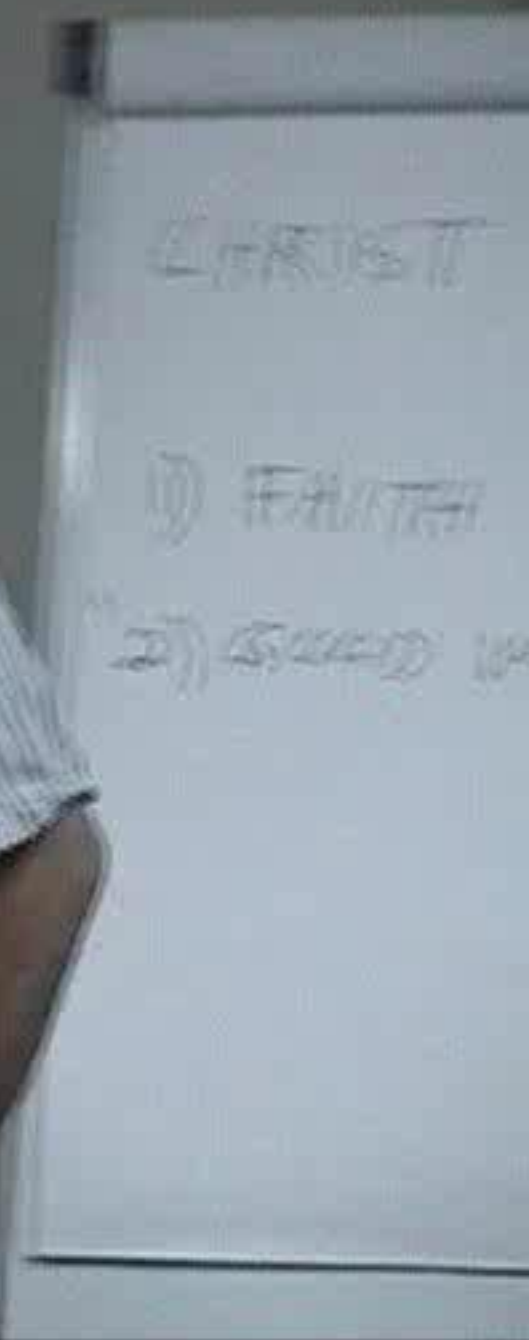
- **“Faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”** (James 2:14,17-18)
- **“Whatever you did** for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me ... [you] will go to eternal life.” (Matthew 25:40,46)
- **“Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? You shall love ... your neighbor as yourself.”** (Luke 10:25,27)

SECOND LEG: Loving Service to God and Others

- **Genuine faith requires active response**
 - Prayer
 - Committed service and acts of charity done out of love of God and others
- **Loving service to God & others**
 - Flows as fruit of our faith
 - In gratitude, we seek to live the kind of life that will bring joy to God
 - **“Faith working through love.”** (Galatians 5:6)

SECOND LEG: Loving Service to God and Others

- Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves
- “Agape” is word used most often in New Testament for Christian Charity
 - Agape is self-giving, sacrificial love that acts only for the good of another
 - Holy Spirit is source of Agape love
 - Agape is God’s divine love made visible in our works of service for others
- *Video: Fr. Art Cooney on charity*



CHRIST

1) FAITH

2) ...



What is the Third Thing Needed For Our Salvation?

- “Whoever believes *and* is **baptized** will be saved.” (Mark 16:16)
- “No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being **born of water and Spirit.**” (John 3:5)
- “Whoever **eats my flesh and drinks my blood** has eternal life.” (John 6:54)

THIRD LEG: Sacraments

■ Baptism

- Necessary but not sufficient for salvation
- Gives indwelling of the Holy Spirit and Sanctifying Grace
 - Heals wounds of sin and gives a share in the divine life of the Holy Trinity
- “Through baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.” (CCC #1213)

THIRD LEG: Sacraments

■ Eucharist

- “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” (John 6:53-58)
 - Jesus literally meant what he said
 - Let disciples walk away
 - Did not say they misunderstood
- **Spiritual Nourishment and Strength**
 - We are what we eat
 - “We become what we receive” – St. Augustine

How Do We Attain Eternal Salvation? (Summary)

By God's Grace thru Christ's Passion

Our **Three-fold Response:**

- 1. Faith: Commitment, Surrender, Trust**
- 2. Loving Service to God and Others**
- 3. Sacraments: Esp. Baptism and Eucharist**

Reflection and Discussion

- **Handout #3**

- **Fill-in individually**

- **Then discuss in small groups**

Are you saved?

- “I hope to be saved & *am being* saved.”
- Salvation more than one moment of a person’s initial conversion to Christ or the reception of any single sacrament
 - We are not the best judge of our own spiritual condition
- We possess our salvation in *confident hope*

As St. Paul says ...

“I have **hope** that I myself will be raised from the dead. I do not claim that I have already succeeded or have already become perfect. I keep striving to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has already won me to himself. Of course, my friends, I really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and **do my best to reach what is ahead**. So I run straight toward the goal in order to win the **prize**, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to **the life above**.”

(Philippians 3:11-15)

Are you saved?

- “I **hope** to be saved & **am being** saved.”
- God, through Jesus Christ, did his part
- However, salvation is a two-way street
 - We need to do our part & accept God’s gift
- We accept God’s gift by living a life of:
 - (1) Faith: commitment, surrender, trust
 - (2) Loving service to God and others
 - (3) Sacraments: especially the Eucharist

Questions?

Comments?

***How Are We
Saved?***