

- Introduction
 - Year of Faith
 - Last October through this November 24, Solemnity of Christ the King
 - B16's *Porta Fidei*, which talked to us about how faith is an entrance through a door into a new life and a life long journey. He said that the purpose of the year of faith is to recover the joy and wonder of that adventure and thereby to renew the whole Church. It's also explicitly to prepare Catholics for the New Evangelization. We can't share or spread our faith unless we live by faith and live with a joy and a love that will attract others to one whom in faith we follow.
 - Last November here at our parish we had a week-long parish mission on faith, in which we focused on the hunger to grow in faith, both in terms of our trust in God as well as our understanding of all that God has revealed to us.
 - Now we have what in some ways will be a high point of the Year of Faith, an encyclical letter written by "four hands" — the two of Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI, who had written the initial draft before his resignation in February and the two of Pope Francis. It was written to all Catholics, as it says at the beginning of the letter, "to the bishops, priests, and deacons, consecrated person and the lay faithful." Its purpose is to help all of us to see what an incredible treasure faith is, to help us invest that treasure, enjoy that wealth, and generously share that richness with those who are spiritually poor. It says that the Church never takes faith for granted, but wants to nourish and reinforce this gift to guide her pilgrim way, to accompany people on their journey and show how faith enriches all of life.
 - Structure of this talk
 - What I'd like to do in this talk is to try to cover the main points of the encyclical in the context. All of you can read the encyclical — and I hope many of you already have — but as I've learned from 25 years of reading papal documents, sometimes you need some help to understand the meaning of many of the emphases made in it. That's what I hope to do tonight, so that you can grasp the context of the encyclical and learn from it how to appreciate what the encyclical says in greater depth.
 - One of the things I discovered on my third read of the encyclical in preparation for several articles I wrote was that *Lumen Fidei* addresses almost every main challenge of faith in the last 500 years. There were a couple of these challenges that the encyclical addressed head on — like scientific rationalism — but for the most part, he addressed the others subtly, preferring to address what the Christian faith really is rather than addressing directly the errors in the understanding of faith that have popped up in history. But when we begin to see those challenges in the background, we understand far more how helpful this document is for us who seek to live by faith in the midst of a cultural context that still includes so many of those errors.
 - Likewise there's a lot left out of the encyclical, so that it wouldn't be a thousand pages. Regardless, there are some principles given in some of the applications made that we can then immediately adapt to other circumstances.
 - So what I'd like to do in the time we have tonight is:
 - Describe what the encyclical says faith is. It describes more than defines and it's a very rich description.
 - Cover many of the challenges to faith that are in the background to the encyclical and the response the encyclical gives.
 - See how those principles are applied to the contexts the document raises with regard to the contexts it mentions — prayer, the Creed, the sacraments and the ten

commandments, as well as the common good, the family, the environment and suffering.

- Leave plenty of time for your questions.

- What faith is — Eight Descriptions

- Faith is a personal entrustment to God

- By faith Abraham entrusts himself to the God who has spoken to him as a solid rock on which to build, as a highway on which he can travel.
 - Faith comes from the same root as Amen, which means to uphold. It's a trust in the fidelity of God.
 - Abraham trusted, with journey, with fatherhood, with sacrifice of Isaac.
 - Faith involves renouncing an immediate possession with trust that God will unveil himself personally in due time.
 - Faith undermines idolatry that places ourselves in the center and leads to polytheism, to many idols asking for our assent. By faith, we entrust ourselves to merciful love, who liberates us from the dissolution of idols.
 - Jesus — his incarnation, passion, death and resurrection — is the complete manifestation of God's reliability and love. That allows us to entrust ourselves to him.
 - We trust many others, architects, pharmacists, lawyers. Christ's way of knowing the Father and living in complete and constant relationship with him opens us the life of faith with him. We believe that what Jesus tells us he true, we accept what he reveals because he is truthful, and we believe in Jesus, welcoming him, journeying with him, clinging to him and following in his footsteps. It leads to a commitment of great intensity.

- Faith is a light

- Urgent need to see that faith is a light, a light given by God for humanity's path. Faith is this gift of light.
 - The Light of faith can illumine "every aspect of human existence" and "all human relationships, lived in union with gentle love of Christ."
 - Faith is born of an encounter with God who calls and reveals his love, which transforms us and gives us new eyes to see. We encounter light in God that becomes a light for our way.
 - Encyclical wants to consider light of faith so that it can grow and enlighten the present, "becoming a star to brighten the horizon of our journey at a time when mankind is particularly in need of light."
 - Faith doesn't merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as he himself sees them, it participates in his way of seeing.
 - The Christian sees with Christ's eyes, shares his mind, filial disposition and love. We receive Jesus' vision in a certain way.
 - Believers see themselves in the light of the faith they profess: Christ is the mirror in which they find their own image fully realized

- Faith is a new way of hearing

- Faith is a form of hearing, *fides ex auditu* (Rom 10:17).
 - Personal knowledge of the voice, the voice of the Good Shepherd, speaking to which a person freely opens up in the obedience of faith. Words lead to discipleship, in a bond between knowledge and love.
 - Hearing emphasizes personal vocation and obedience.

- Faith is a deep touch

- In faith, our hearts are touched and we open ourselves to the interior presence of Christ.
 - By his taking flesh and coming among us, Jesus has touched us, and through the sacraments he continues to touch us even today, transforming our hearts.
 - In faith, we can touch him, like the woman with the hemorrhages in the Gospel, to touch him with our hearts is what it means to believe (St. Augustine). We can touch Jesus like those in the crowd or we can touch him with faith.

- Ultimately, we're called to say with St. John, "What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life" (1 Jn 1:1).
 - Faith is a form of memory, a memory of the future
 - The Church, like a family, passes on to children the whole store of memories.
 - Faith is a foundational memory of Jesus but also a light come from the future.
 - Faith is a remembrance of a future, a word spoken that also contains a promise of hope.
 - Faith is a journey
 - Faith is a summons to a new life, an exodus toward an unforeseen future. Faith sees to the extent it journey's by God's words.
 - Faith is a lengthy journey leading to worship of Lord on Sinai and to the promised land.
 - The Creed points to new life of a faith as a journey of communion with the living God.
 - Faith is a form of building
 - The OT shows that faith is not only a journey but also a process of building where human beings can dwell with one another. Noah and the ark. Abraham and tents, looking forward to a city with firm foundations.
 - Faith establishes us in a new firmness given by God, a firmness that overflows into a "city" God is preparing, with strong bonds between people. Faith does more than grant the interior firmness of steadfast conviction, but sheds light on every human relationship reflecting God's love
 - Faith is a mother
 - Faith was a mother for the first Christians, bringing them to light and a luminous vision of existence.
 - Israel passed the faith down from one generation to the next
 - Faith leads believers to a new birth, a new creation, a new being. Life of faith is filial.
 - To talk about faith as a mother opens up to the whole discussion in the Encyclical about love.
 - We can have confidence in the reliability of the chain of witnesses because the memory of witnesses is kept alive in the one remembering subject that is the Church, a Mother who teaches us to speak the language of faith.
- Challenges to the Faith in Background of Encyclical
 - Challenges coming from the premise of unbelief
 - Faith harms the world
 - "Religion causes wars" is often posed by secularists
 - Faith is good for everyone, a common good, helping us build our societies to journey toward a future of hope.
 - Faith improves the world and serves the common good through a love that keeps men and women united. Utility can never do that, not to mention help people experience joy.
 - Faith is outdated, a refuge for the fainthearted
 - Some say that the light of faith is illusory. Might have been sufficient for old societies, but not today with rationality and novelty.
 - Faith isn't a refuge for the fainthearted, but enhances our lives. It makes us aware of the vocation of love and assures us that love is trustworthy and worth it, based on God's faithfulness that is stronger than every weakness.
 - Faith distracts people from this world and gets them focused just on heaven, leaving world worse off
 - Hands of faith are raised to heaven as the build in charity a city based on relationships founded on love of God.
 - Faith doesn't matter because even if God exists and created, he's not involved in the
 - These are critiques from Deism and secularism

- Our culture has lost its sense of God's tangible presence and activity in our world, as if he is far removed. If God is distant, faith doesn't matter. This is what happens with secularism, which is living as if God doesn't exist.
- We encounter God's action in risen Christ.
- Faith is opposed to seeking
 - Seekers who are sincerely open to love and set out with the light they have are already on the path leading to faith, striving to act as if God exists, seeking him as a sure compass, as a light in the darkness, or within the beauty where they intuit his presence.
 - Anyone who sets off on the path of doing good to others is already drawing near to God and sustained by his help.
- Faith opposes search to truth, science and reason.
 - Faith is not a light, but a darkness, some charge. Dark ages. Leap in dark beyond light of reason
 - Some say it limits search for truth.
 - Some say faith is just a projection of a deep yearning, a lofty sentiment.
 - We need to be reminded of this bond between faith and truth. We tend to reduce truth to technological and scientific know-how. This seems to be the only truth that can be certain, shared, and the basis of discussion and common understanding. We allow for subjective truths of the individual, but say they're only valid for him. Truth itself is regarded with suspicion because of its connection to totalitarianism.
 - But this just leads to relativism, which makes truth and God irrelevant. Truth and religion are severed because religion can be linked to fanaticism, oppressive for someone who doesn't share those beliefs.
 - Massive amnesia of the modern world happens through forgetting this link between the present and something prior to ourselves that can unite us. This is why the memory of faith is so important.
 - The love proper to faith can address contemporary questions about truth, which in some modern minds is linked to the intransigent demands of totalitarianism. But because faith/truth is tied to love, is cannot be imposed by force or intransigent, but grows in respectful coexistence with others. Far from making us inflexible, security of faith leads us on a journey of witness and dialogue.
 - Science benefits from faith, opening scientist to reality in all its richness, that nature is more than *formulae*, the creation fills us with wonder. Faith broadens horizon of reason to shed greater light on the world than can be discovered in scientific investigation.
- Challenges coming from the premise of Christian belief
 - Faith is about my personal relationship with God (religious individualism that doesn't need a Church or *the* Church)
 - Israel learns to journey together in faith, the "we" of faith.
 - The life of a believer is a life lived in the Church. To see with the light of Christ means to see oneself as a member of Christ's body in essential relationship with other believers. A vital union with Christ and others.
 - Faith is necessarily ecclesial, professed as a concrete communion within Christ's body.
 - Faith isn't private. We can't baptize ourselves; baptism enters us into an ecclesial communion that transmits God's gift.
 - Faith is part of a common we, and children are supported by the faith of parents and godparents, the faith of the Church.

- We receive faith by hearing, which means hearing it through the voice of others, and we in turn are called to announce it.
- The great pilgrimage of faith is the Church's.
- Impossible to believe on one's own; faith is communal and open to the "we" of the Church. Dialogical form of the Creed in baptism, a response to an invitation, to a word that's heard and not my own. The single "Credo" is in response to a greater communion, "We believe." God is a communion, a We, into whom we enter.
- Those who believe try to expand the communion. Those who receive faith are open to new relationships, to a family of brothers and sisters praying to the Father.
- Faith is ahistorical
 - Encyclical focuses on Abraham's and Israel's journey of faith.
 - Memory of our origins.
- Faith doesn't need a definitive interpreter
 - Apostolic succession is gift of the Lord for the unity of faith and its integral transmission. Through it, the continuity of the Church's memory is ensured as an accessible wellspring by living persons professing the living faith the Church is called to transmit. C
 - Church depends on the fidelity of witnesses chose for this task. Magisterium always speaks in obedience to the prior word on which faith is based. Thanks to the magisterium, God's whole counsel can come to us in its integrity so that joyfully we can follow it fully.
- Faith alone is sufficient for salvation (*Sola Fide* doctrine of Luther)
 - None of us is the source of our own righteousness or justification. To speak about salvation by faith means recognizing the primacy of God's gift.
 - Faith opens us to Christ's transforming light and love, which changes us, acts in us and through us. Faith changes us to such a degree that Christ begins to live in us and we become capable of living in him.
 - When there's faith, in other words, it works out through love (Gal 5:13).
- Premises coming from within the Church
 - Faith is dry and boring
 - "One believes with the heart" shows that the heart connects truth with love and deeply transforms us. Because faith is tied to love, especially to the transforming love of God, it brings enlightenment and joy. Love engages our emotions and opens us up toward the other and aims at communion.
 - Most people don't connect love and truth and for this reason can find faith dry, because truth without love can be cold, impersonal and oppressive.
 - Faith is opposed to academic freedom
 - It's hard to conceive a unity in one truth, because it seems incompatible with freedom of thought and personal autonomy
 - Some say that they need to prescind from faith to do theological work, or Biblical studies, etc.
 - Encyclical says that theology is impossible without faith because it's part of faith, seeking deeper understanding of God's self-disclosure culminating in Christ. Theology is more than a scientific analysis of human reason, because God is a subject who can be known and perceived in relationship.
 - Theology participates in God's self-knowledge, not just our discourse about God but a pursuit to understand what God says to us about himself as an eternal dialogue of communion into which we enter.
 - Theology is illumined by faith of the Church and must be at the service of the faith of Christians, to protect and deep faith of everyone, especially ordinary believers.

Magisterium is not a limitation of freedom, but a constitutive dimension of theology, ensuring contact with primordial source of theology (Christ).

- One can have faith without agreeing with everything the Church proposes to be held by faith
 - St. Leo the Great: If faith is not one, then it is not faith.
 - Faith must be professed in purity and integrity. To deny one article of faith disturbs the whole, because they're all interconnected. We need vigilance to ensure the deposit of faith is passed on in its entirety.
 - To subtract something from the faith is to subtract something from the truth of veracity of communion. Harming the faith means harming communion with the Lord
- Application of the Principles to the Life of Faith
 - Faith and the Sacraments.
 - Sacraments are the place to live and transmit the faith
 - Faith is more than doctrine, which could be transmitted in a book, but an encounter with the true God that engages our minds, wills and emotions, opening us up to communion, which is what the sacraments do.
 - Faith possesses a sacramental structure, awakening a sacramental sense in our lives in which visible realities point beyond themselves to God.
 - Baptism is more than a pedagogical tool for those needing images and signs, but the means by which we become a new creation and God's adopted children, dying to receive new life. Baptism gives us a teaching to be professed and a way of life demanding our total engagement.
 - Baptism begins with name of the Trinity, who bestows upon us a new filial identity.
 - Water symbolizes both our death (a Passover of conversion) and a symbol of life, a womb in which we are reborn. Christ penetrates our being and transforms us radically, making us adopted children and sharers in divine nature, something that modifies all our relationships, our place in the universe, opens us to God's communion, and gives us a firm and reliable foundation. Baptism gives us a new name and a new life.
 - Sacramental character of faith finds highest expression in the Eucharist, whereby we encounter Christ truly present in the supreme act of his life. Two dimensions of faith intersection: history and mystery, the act of remembrance that makes present the mystery, and the passage from the visible to the invisible world, with Christ's drawing us and all creation toward fulfillment in God.
 - Faith and the Profession of Faith
 - Church hands down her memory through the profession of faith, which is not an assent to a body of abstract truths, but draws the whole of life toward full communion with God. Believers enter the mystery of the Trinitarian communion and the mystery of Christ's life we profess and are transformed by it.
 - The believer cannot profess the Creed without being changed, without becoming part of that history of love that embraces us and expands our being, making us part of the communion of the Church.
 - The Creed points to new life of a faith as a journey of communion with the living God.
 - Faith and Prayer
 - Prayer is essential in the faithful transmission of the Church's memory.
 - In the Our Father, Christians share in Christ's spiritual experience and see thing in his eyes.
 - B16 used to say that prayer is faith in action.
 - Faith and the Decalogue (moral life)
 - Likewise the Ten Commandments are essential to the Church's memory, to the journey taken in encounter with the living God who rescued us and gave concrete direction for emerging from the selfish ego to enter into dialogue with God, receive his mercy and share it to others.

- The Decalogue is a path of gratitude, a response of love, because we've received God's transforming love.
- (Summary) So there are four elements comprising the storehouse of memory transmitted by the Church: profession of faith, celebration of the sacraments, path of the ten commandments and prayer. This is the structure of the Church's catechesis.
- Faith and the Common Good
 - Christ faith serves the common good by helping us to understand the truth rightly.
 - Because faith works through love, light of faith is placed at service of justice, law and peace.
 - Life of faith develops into a praxis leading to the fullness of life.
 - Light of faith enhances human relationships, their endurance and trustworthiness.
 - Faith illumines architecture of human relationships because it sees the ultimate foundation and destiny in God, and sheds light on the art of building.
 - Faith is a light illuminating all relationships in society, as a path to brotherhood based on God's mercy. Can't build a universal brotherhood based on equality without common Father as ultimate foundation. Need to return to true basis of brotherhood.
 - Faith teaches us to see everyone as a blessing on me, as a mirror of the light of God. Thanks to faith, we have understood the dignity of every person, based on God's love, his concrete concern for every person, his plan of salvation embracing all of humanity in Christ. Without these insights, there is no criterion for discerning what makes human life precious and unique. Man loses his place in the cosmos, either renouncing personal moral responsibility or becoming a judge manipulating the world around him.
 - Faith helps us to seek development based not simply on utility and profit but respect the gift of creation. Faith teaches us to create just forms of government recognizing God's authority and call to service of the common good.
 - Faith makes forgiveness possible, because we open to a prior goodness stronger than evil.
 - When faith is weakened, foundations of humanity are weakened; trust is weakened, only fear motivates.
 - Faith illumines life and society because it relates it to the origin and destiny of all things in God.
- Faith and the Family
 - The first setting in which faith enlightens the human city is in family, the stable union of man and woman in marriage. Their union is a sign and presence of God's own love (sacrament) and the acknowledgement and acceptance of the goodness of sexual differentiation whereby the spouses can become one flesh and enabled to give birth to a new life, who manifests the Creator's goodness, wisdom and loving plan. In this love, a man and woman can promise mutual love engaging their entire lives and mirroring many features of faith. We can promise love forever when we perceive a plan bigger than ourselves. Faith also helps us to grasp the meaning of children as a sign of the love of the Creator entrusting us with the mystery of a new person
 - Faith accompanies every age of life in the family. Shared expressions of faith at home can help children gradually mature in faith.
 - WYDs show young people desire a more solid and generous life of faith, to live life to the full, to encounter Christ and let themselves be caught up and guided by his love.
- Faith and the care for others and the environment
 - Faith helps us to respect nature by discerning within it God's grammar as a place entrusted to our protection and care.
- Faith and Suffering
 - Faith often involves painful testing, but through such testing is the most convincing proclamation of the Gospel, for it reveals God's power triumphing over weakness.
 - Faith brings light to hour of trial, and suffering proclaims we do not proclaim ourselves but Christ.

- Christians know suffering cannot be eliminated but can become an act of loving entrustment to hands of God who doesn't abandon us.
 - We can share Christ's gaze from the Cross.
 - Death becomes the ultimate call of faith, trusting in God even in our final passage.
- Conclusion
 - Our faith, if real, must be passed on.
 - Those who have opened hearts to God's love, heard his voice and received his light cannot keep this gift to themselves but must be handed on as word and light. The word, once accepted, becomes a confession of faith inviting others to believe.
 - Light of Christ reflected in life of Christians and spreads like at the Easter vigil, from one-on-one contact, to men and women everywhere, and from one generation to the next.
 - We see face of Christ through an unbroken chain of witnesses.
 - Question the Encyclical asks: Are we ashamed to call God our God, to confess him in our public life?
 - Mary as the icon of faith
 - Began with Abraham, our father in faith and finish with Mary.
 - Mary summarizes in her life so many of the points of faith in this encyclical
 - Mary is the image of the good soil of faith that hears the word, holds it fast and bears fruit with patient endurance.
 - The memory of her heart treasured all she had seen and heard so that the word could bear fruit. She is the perfect icon of faith, who received the word into her heart, her entire being, her womb, so that it could take flesh and be given as light for all humanity.
 - She shows us the connection between faith and the fruit of joy, the clearest sign of faith's grandeur.
 - She completed the pilgrimage of faith in the footsteps of her son, transformed by him and entering into his gaze.
 - In Mary, we see how the believer becomes a confessor of faith.
 - She assures the Son of God an authentic human history, conceiving him, accompanying him to the Cross, mothering each of his disciples, imploring the gift of the Spirit. At the center of our faith is the confession of the Son of God born of a woman. Mary is the Mother of our Faith.
 - We ask her to help our faith, to help us hear God's word and recognize his voice in call, to desire to follow in his footsteps like Abraham, to be touched by his love so that we may touch him in faith, to entrust ourselves fully to him and believe in his love especially in times of trial, to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, and to have the light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of the undying day who is Christ himself