

Did you know . . .

Second Sunday of Advent

On the second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit, which symbolizes FAITH. It is the Bethlehem candle, reminding us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and of the Christ Child born in Bethlehem. [Note: This second candle may also be referred to as symbolizing Love].

Faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen." The author of Hebrews gives the most extensive description of faith provided in the New Testament. Through faith, God guarantees the blessings to be hoped for from Him, providing evidence in the gift of faith that what He promises will eventually come to pass.

The Greek word for faith is *pisti*, which means persuasion, conviction of religious truth, conviction of the truthfulness of God.

Faith is hard and does not come easily; it must be exercised to grow, just as our muscles need exercise.

Faith is a choice. One chooses to believe in God. One chooses to believe in Jesus...that he died for our sins and that our sins will be forgiven. The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls the gift of faith essential for our salvation.

St. Thomas Aquinas once noted that "the world tempts us, either by seducing us with its vanities or by terrifying us with its misfortunes." Still, he continued, faith in God and in the promises of Heaven can help us overcome these temptations.

With faith God gives each of us supernatural grace to trust in Him and in His word *completely*.

The Act of Faith is a prayer that includes elements of what is called the mystery of faith that we proclaim at Mass: Christ's death, along with His resurrection, and His certain return. May this prayer help us to live our lives as an act of faith.

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 man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Judy Pearson



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