

Ten after Ten: Session 8 ----- Faith, continued

159. Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason...Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God.

160. To be human, man's response to God by faith must be free, and... therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act...Indeed, Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them.

161. Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation.

162. To live, grow, and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be working through charity, abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church.

163. Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision, the goal of our journey here below. Then we shall see God face to face, as he is. So faith is already the beginning of eternal life.

164. Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice, and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it.

165. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

166. Faith is a personal act—the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life...Our love for Jesus and for our neighbor impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith.

167. "I believe" (Apostles' Creed) is the faith of the Church professed personally by each believer, principally during Baptism... "I believe" is also the Church, our mother, responding to God by faith as she teaches us to say both "I believe" and "We believe."

168. It is the Church that believes first, and so bears, nourishes, and sustains my faith... It is through the Church that we receive faith and new life in Christ by Baptism... the minister of Baptism asks the catechumen: "What do you ask of God's Church?" And the answer is: "Faith." "What does faith offer you?" "Eternal life."

169. Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother... Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith.

170. We do not believe in formulas, but in those realities they express, which faith allows us to touch... All the same, we do approach these realities with the help of formulations of the faith which permit us to express the faith and to hand it on, to celebrate it in community, to assimilate and live on it more and more.

171. The Church... faithfully guards the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. She guards the memory of Christ's words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith.

172. Through the centuries, in so many languages, cultures, peoples, and nations, the Church has constantly confessed this one faith, received from the one Lord, transmitted by one Baptism, and grounded in the conviction that all people have only one God and Father.

173. Indeed, the Church... guards [this preaching and faith] with care, as dwelling in but a single house, and similarly believes as if having but one soul and a single heart, and preaches, teaches, and hands on this faith with a unanimous voice, as if possessing only one mouth.

174. The Church's message is true and solid, in which one and the same way of salvation appears throughout the whole world.

175. We guard with care the faith that we have received from the Church, for without ceasing, under the action of God's Spirit, this deposit of great price, as if in an excellent vessel, is constantly being renewed and causes the very vessel that contains it to be renewed.