



LUMEN FIDEI THE LIGHT OF FAITH

BY POPE FRANCIS

Prepared by Fr. James Swanson, LC
RCSpirituality.org

Produced by Coronation
coronationmedia.com

OVERVIEW

LUMEN FIDEI: THE LIGHT OF FAITH

SUMMARY

This Study Circle Guide is designed to accompany Pope Francis' first encyclical letter, *Lumen Fidei*—*The Light of Faith*. This encyclical focuses on the nature of faith and its relevance for personal and social life in the post-modern world.

CATEGORIES OF INTEREST

Catholic Doctrine; Moral and Social Issues; Prayer and Spiritual Growth

RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF SESSIONS

The encyclical has an introduction and four chapters. The Study Circle Guide divides that material into five sessions.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Each participant should have a copy of this Study Circle Guide.
- Each participant should have a copy of the encyclical.
- For groups made up of Regnum Christi members, a copy of the Regnum Christi Member's Handbook (RCMH).

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The encyclical assumes a fairly solid knowledge of the Catholic faith. It might be a hard study for those who are just beginning to expand their Catholic knowledge.

The "Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion" sections have various questions dealing with relevant parts of the Regnum Christi Member's Handbook. These may not be of much interest to non-RC members.

HOW MUCH HOMEWORK?

This will depend on how the Study Circle Guide is used. There are a couple possibilities.

1. Individually, it can be used for a profound study of the document in which it is hoped the different parts will help with understanding the document. A dedicated group that is willing to do intensive reading of the document before the Study Circle begins can use it in the same way.
2. It can also be used for a group Study Circle in this way:
 - Read the introductory material.
 - Choose the study questions you would like to use. Propose one to the group. The paragraph numbers correspond to the paragraphs of the document (some 'paragraphs' are more than a paragraph long) where the answers can be found. Give the group time to read the paragraph and look for the answer, then members can offer their answer and discuss it.
 - Move on to another question when you are ready. Members of the group can choose questions that interest them the most.
 - Cover as many questions as you would like to use or that you have time for.

This second method requires little preparation except on the part of the moderator. It will not achieve the same depth of understanding of the encyclical, but sadly, in our busy society we cannot always expect people to have time to prepare in advance, in spite of good intentions.





SESSION I

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED

The encyclical *Lumen Fidei*—*The Light of Faith* is the first encyclical of Pope Francis, dated June 29, 2013. It was presented on July 5th in the Vatican by Cardinal Marc Ouellet, P.S.S., Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and Archbishops Gerhard Ludwig Muller and Rino Fisichella, respectively prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and president of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization. The encyclical was based on a draft written by Francis' predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

PURPOSE OF THE EXHORTATION

1. To complement Benedict's encyclicals on Charity and Hope with one on Faith, the third theological virtue.
2. To explain the value of faith in a world that finds it useless and even dangerous.

UNDERSTANDING THE EXHORTATION

The encyclical touches on several areas where people are experiencing problems with faith.

CHAPTER ONE gives an explanation of what faith means for a Christian. Unfortunately, for many Christians this explanation is necessary.

CHAPTER TWO defends faith against the attacks of relativism. There is a kind of double standard that accepts truth related to science and technology as true in all situations, but the kind of truth that might benefit the common good cannot be acceptable for all people. The Holy Father also reminds us that faith and reason are never in conflict.

CHAPTER THREE explains how faith is transmitted through the Church and how we need to be firmly rooted in the Church in order for our faith to be healthy.

CHAPTER FOUR underlines the benefits of faith for a healthy society.

LINKS

You can find the text of the encyclical here:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei_en.html

You can find a summary of the encyclical here:

http://visnews-en.blogspot.com/2013/07/summary-of-encyclical-lumen-fidei_5.html

SUMMARY OF THE INTRODUCTION

We live in a world that thinks the scientific and technological pursuit of the truth gives a deeper meaning to life than the faith that comes from knowing and loving Jesus Christ, but Catholics believe that Jesus is the only light that gives meaning to our entire existence. Reason by itself cannot sufficiently illuminate our lives. The result is confusion. By writing this encyclical the Holy Father wants to help us return to a faith like the faith that inspired the first Christians. He wants the encyclical to help us see the origin of this powerful light of faith that points our way toward a successful and fruitful life.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is faith in Christ expressed so often with the image of light? (Paragraph 1)
2. Why is faith seen by modern people as an obstacle to seeking the truth? Why is this way of seeing things mistaken? (Paragraph 2)
3. What are the results of attempting to rely on reason alone to guide our lives? (Paragraph 3)
4. What is unique about the light of faith? What is the source of this faith? How is it that faith enlightens our future (something reason cannot do)? (Paragraph 4)
5. How is faith the mother of Christians? (Paragraph 5)





SESSION 2

CHAPTER 1: WE HAVE BELIEVED IN LOVE

SUMMARY

From the Old Testament, the Holy Father concludes that faith is a call that we listen to. It contains a promise that was made in the past and will be fulfilled in the future and so is a lighted path we can follow from the past into the future. It is a promise that is made by a God of Goodness who is Father and Creator—therefore a promise that can be trusted. Rejecting this call, we fall into idolatry, which is self-worship, because an idol is a god we can control. However, idolatry leads to the fracturing of self because our selfishness drives us in so many different, self-destructive directions.

The fullness of faith is faith in the love of Jesus Christ for me. He gives his life for us as a proof of his love. He takes it up again as a proof that he can fulfill his promises. Faith in Christ allows us to see and know what he sees and knows, just as faith in any expert allows us to access the knowledge of that expert. Believers are transformed by the love they have accepted. This transformation enlarges and expands their lives. Their awareness now expands to include Another, someone who is close to them, someone they can now accept as Lord.

The acceptance of Christ (which is what Christian faith is) makes us part of the group of those who have accepted him—the Church.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the key element of God's call to Abraham? *(Paragraph 8)*
2. How does faith shed light on the past and the present? *(Paragraph 9)*
3. Why is faith absolutely certain and unshakable? What does being faithful mean for man? What does being faithful mean for God? *(Paragraph 10)*
4. How is faith linked to God who is Father and Creator? What three things does Abraham's faith in God give him? *(Paragraph 11)*
5. What is the main support of the faith of the Israelites? *(Paragraph 12)*
6. What is the opposite of faith? Why would someone be tempted to worship idols—particularly the idol of selfishness? What is the danger of idolatry/selfishness? *(Paragraph 13)*
7. What is the benefit of mediation? What is the individualist's difficulty with mediation/community? *(Paragraph 14)*
8. What is the center of Christian faith as opposed to the Jewish faith that went before? What is its foundation and destiny? *(Paragraph 15)*
9. How does Christ prove his love is deep enough to deserve our faith? How can we strengthen our faith in his love? *(Paragraph 16)*
10. How does Christ prove his love is reliable? How does God prove his closeness to us, his ability to make a real difference in our daily life? *(Paragraph 17)*
11. What does faith allow us to see that we could not see without it? Give an example of a kind of faith we live everyday that does not involve God. *(Paragraph 18)*
12. If I am open to faith and acknowledge it as a gift, what three things begin to happen to me? If I turn away from this gift instead, what will begin to happen to me? *(Paragraph 19)*
13. Our faith is not in a God that is far away, but close to us. What does this illuminate for us? *(Paragraph 20)*
14. Summing up, then, what two differences does faith make in our lives? What pitfall does it avoid? *(Paragraph 21)*
15. What is the final necessary element of faith that the Holy Father underlines in this paragraph? What does hearing and proclaiming the faith exclude? *(Paragraph 22)*



NOTES





SESSION 3

CHAPTER 2: UNLESS YOU BELIEVE, YOU WILL NOT UNDERSTAND

SUMMARY

The knowledge of truth is central to all faith. Our faith in God allows us to be firmly grounded in the truth. Because it is linked to the truth, faith gives us light to see deeper into the plan of a trustworthy God. Nowadays, however, the only truth accepted is technological and scientific truth, while moral truth, the kind of truth that could help us live better lives, is said not to apply to everyone. Rejection of a truth that applies to everyone is a kind of rejection of God and this rejection leads to a rejection of our origins and goal—leaving us in darkness.

What kind of knowledge is involved in faith? Faith comes from our center, our heart, where our openness to truth and love comes from. Faith transforms us, making us more open to love and truth. Believing is like falling in love and only a love that is grounded in truth can last. Love unifies us as persons and points us toward fulfillment. Love, truth, and faith are inseparable.

In the Bible, faith-knowledge (the knowledge that comes from faith) is linked to hearing (the word of God) and seeing (the desire to see his face). They come together in an encounter with Christ—contemplating his life and being aware of his presence. In this encounter, our love comes to full fruition as Christ touches our hearts. When we touch him with our hearts, we can be said to truly believe.

Christian faith proclaims the truth of God's total love. The first Christians, wanting to share this with the world, found the ideal partner in the Greek love of truth. Faith and reason strengthen each other. The Greek philosophy of light helped Christian faith grasp the limitless goodness of God. Yet faith itself comes through hearing. St. Augustine integrated seeing and hearing into the light of a word that enlightens and calls us at the same time. Our response is to see and to love.

Many fear accepting a universal truth because they identify it with totalitarianism. However, a truth that is a truth of love can become a part of the common good. The Christian knows he does not possess the truth—it is the Truth (Christ) who possesses us!

Since his love is lived out in the real world, faith in this love illuminates the world and calls us to a deeper understanding of it. This is the firmest basis for science.

Faith also lights the way to God since God is light and can be found by all those who seek him with a sincere heart. The more Christians immerse themselves in this light, the more they are able to understand and accompany the path of every man and woman towards God. Anyone who sets off on the path of doing good to others is already drawing near to God and already sustained by his help.

Faith is a light that draws us to explore its object (God) more and more. This is the start of Christian theology. However, God is not an object, but a person who reveals himself in a relationship. So, true theology is not our speaking about God among ourselves, but our trying to understand the word that God speaks to us. Since theology shares the ecclesial nature of faith, it cannot consider the Magisterium as something extrinsic to theology.

THEOLOGICAL NOTE

Chapter Two contains some deep theological arguments. The Pope is proving the relationship between faith, love, and truth. He does not explain everything completely, but instead references other writings, like those of the philosopher Wittgenstein or Pope John Paul II. Rather than repeat their arguments, he expects the reader to be familiar with them or to go to the referenced documents to follow the argument there. Therefore, this argument may be hard to follow, but try to at least see the relationship between faith, love, and truth that he is describing for us.

VOCABULARY NOTES:

'Truth', 'reason', 'knowledge' and 'understanding' signify different aspects of the same thing. The Holy Father uses them freely with the understanding that we will see that these different terms are closely related, while at the same time grasping their subtle differences.



He does the same with 'faith', 'belief', 'believing' and 'fidelity' ('faithfulness'). Try not to be confused by the shifting terminology. If you need to, look each one up so you understand what the Holy Father is trying to express with each one.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it reasonable to have faith in God?
(Paragraph 23)
2. How is faith able to offer new light? (Paragraph 24)
3. What is the only real truth considered by contemporary culture? How is the question about truth related to the question about God's existence? What is the objection of contemporary culture to a Truth valid for everyone? Why is the question about truth a question about memory?
(Paragraph 25)
4. What is the effect of faith on the heart? What does the blending of faith and love allow us to see?
(Paragraph 27)
5. What can we compare believing to? How does love require truth? What does love without truth fail to do? What does someone who loves realize about truth? (Paragraph 27)
6. Why do truth and fidelity go together in the Bible?
(Paragraph 28)
7. Why does the Bible link faith-knowledge with hearing? What does knowledge linked to hearing give us? Why is hearing thought to be opposed to seeing? How does the Old Testament combine seeing and hearing? What does hearing emphasize? What does sight provide? (Paragraph 29)
8. How does St. John join hearing to seeing in the Fourth Gospel? What is the truth of faith centered on? (Paragraph 30)
9. How could the incarnation of Christ bring the knowledge proper to love to full fruition? What do our hearts receive when they touch Christ in faith?
(Paragraph 31)
10. What truth does Christian faith proclaim? What did the first Christians desire to do? What does John Paul II's encyclical *Fides and Ratio*—*Faith and Reason* show? (Paragraph 32)

11. What did St. Augustine discover about God and light from Greek philosophy? What was the decisive moment in Augustine's journey of faith? What guided his understanding of the integration of seeing and hearing? What is the synthesis of seeing and hearing that he achieved? (Paragraph 33)
12. Why is a truth of love not limited to single individuals, but part of the common good? Why is it that believers cannot be presumptuous? What is the benefit that faith provides to science?
(Paragraph 34)
13. What does the light of faith do for anyone who seeks God? (Paragraph 35)
14. Why is the study of God in theology different from the way experimental sciences study the material world? How does theology go beyond being merely our discourse about God? If theology draws itself from a faith that is ecclesial (in the Church) what must it contain? (Paragraph 36)

QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How would I describe in my own words the relationship between truth and love? Have I ever experienced love that wasn't based solidly on truth? What was that experience like, and why?
2. The relationship between faith, love, and truth as lived in Regnum Christi is described in the handbook in the section on Knowing Christ's Love (RCMH 28-32). It also speaks about the need to personally experience Christ and focuses on the aspects of seeing and contemplating Christ. How would I describe my experience of that up to this point of my life?

QUESTIONS ON LIVING THE DOCTRINE

1. Is faith my way of living truths that are absolutely certain, but which I would never have known unless someone else revealed them to me?
2. Do I have faith in the worldly experts in my life, accepting without proof their pronouncements about science and technology because I assume they know what they are talking about, but refuse to accept some of the teachings of the Church?





SESSION 4

CHAPTER 3: I DELIVERED TO YOU WHAT I ALSO RECEIVED

SUMMARY

Once received, hearing the voice of Christ and seeing his light is a gift that the Christian wants to share with others. This gift comes to us through the witness of the Church so that my openness to Christ's call finds its fulfillment in the community of the Church.

The Church's Apostolic Tradition is its living memory of the act of love of Christ that founded the Church. This living memory communicates itself first of all in the sacraments, which use visible realities to allow Christ's light to touch the core of our being, engaging the entire person. This happens first and foremost in Baptism where we become a new creation and children of God. We also receive a 'standard of teaching' or creed in which we are turned away from 'self' towards a greater 'Self' who is Father. Through Christ's work we are transformed. We become children of God. Our relationships are altered. Our place in the world is changed and we are opened to God's own life in communion. Since baptism is a rebirth in which we receive a new name and a new life, we can appreciate the importance of infant baptism as lived in the community of the Church where children, supported by their parents and godparents, are welcomed into their faith – the faith of the whole Church. Baptism demonstrates the close link between Church and family in passing on the faith.

The highest expression of the sacramental character of faith is in the Eucharist. There we find the intersection of faith's two dimensions: the dimension of history in which Christ's sacrifice in the past opens up to a future fulfillment; and a transcendent dimension which leads from the visible world to the invisible.

The Apostolic Tradition is also communicated in the Creed in which the believer states that the core of all being is the divine communion (the union of Father and Son in the Holy Spirit). We cannot truthfully recite the Creed without being changed, becoming part of the history of love which embraces us and expands our being, making it part of the great fellowship of the Church.

In the Our Father, the Christian learns to share in Christ's spiritual experience and to see all things through his eyes.

In the Ten Commandments, we find directions for emerging from the desert of selfishness in order to enter into dialogue with God, be embraced by his mercy and bring that mercy to others. Rather than a set of negative commands, they are a loving guide on our journey to God.

These four things: Sacraments, Creed, Prayer, and the Ten Commandments are the storehouse of the Church's memory of Christ's saving action.

The unity of the faith helps give unity to the Church. We have a hard time accepting unity in one faith as being a good thing, but rather than robbing us of freedom of thought and personal autonomy it enriches our vision. First of all, faith is one because of the oneness of the God we believe in. It is also one because it is directed to the one Lord, Jesus Christ and the concrete event of his incarnation and can never go beyond the flesh and history of Christ. Faith is one because it is shared by the whole Church. To subtract from the unity of faith subtracts from the unity of the Church. The Church's Apostolic Succession makes us one with the first Christians.

THEOLOGICAL NOTE

In paragraphs 41 and 42 of the encyclical we encounter the term 'standards of teaching' as a translation for the Greek term 'typos didaches'. While this is a direct translation and perhaps will be understood correctly by theologians, the usual translation for the term (and easier to understand) is 'creed'. In the early Church when someone was being prepared for baptism, they were taught a creed. The Apostles' Creed was the one used by the Jerusalem Church in its early centuries, which is why it is usually thought to have come from the apostles themselves. The creed we recite in Mass now is the one prepared by the Councils of Nicea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD) as a compilation of the teachings to be held by the whole Church.



VOCABULARY NOTES

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION: refers to the unbroken line of succession from the apostles and first bishops to today's bishops.

APOSTOLIC TRADITION: refers to the teaching of Christ and the Apostles. To speak of the apostolic tradition means that we follow the same teachings today.

'One', 'oneness', 'unity' and 'union' are related concepts. The Holy Father uses them with the understanding that you will grasp this. If necessary, use a dictionary to understand the nuances of each word while remembering their relationship with each other.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the second step of faith, that occurs after opening ourselves to God's love? What analogy does the encyclical use to describe the transmission of the faith? *(Paragraph 37)*
2. Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, believed that the only sure knowledge had to come from our own minds. He expressed this with the phrase, "I think, therefore, I am." How does the Holy Father show the futility of this approach in his encyclical? How does faith shed light on the past and the present? What guides us and makes us contemporaries of Jesus? *(Paragraph 38)*
3. Where is the only place faith can take place? What is our openness to the 'we' of the Church a reflection of? What do those who receive faith discover? *(Paragraph 39)*
4. What allows us to have contact with the foundational memory of the Church? What is handed down in the living tradition of the Church? What opens us to relationships lived in communion? What do the sacraments communicate? *(Paragraph 40)*
5. What does baptism make us see? *(Paragraph 41)*
6. What is the effect of Christ's work (of salvation) on us in baptism? *(Paragraph 42)*
7. What is the rationale for baptizing children even though they are not capable of accepting the faith by a free act or profess that faith on their own? *(Paragraph 43)*

8. What are the two dimensions of faith found in the Eucharist? *(Paragraph 44)*
9. What happens to the believer who professes his or her faith? *(Paragraph 45)*
10. Rather than as a set of negative commands, how should the believer see the Decalogue (Ten Commandments)? What are the four elements that make up the storehouse of memory that the Church hands down? *(Paragraph 46)*
11. How is unity of truth possible without taking away our freedom of thought and personal autonomy? Name three ways that faith is one. *(Paragraph 47)*
12. What does subtracting something from faith take away from the Church? How did Blessed John Henry Newman bring out the unity of faith? *(Paragraph 48)*
13. How does the Apostolic Succession support the unity of the Faith? *(Paragraph 49)*

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The main theme of this chapter is the transmission of the faith. Where and how did I receive the faith? What factors have helped the faith grow and take on greater importance in my life? How have I helped transmit the faith to others?
2. The emphasis this chapter makes of baptism as a transmitter of the faith has points in common with our emphasis of baptism as what makes us apostles. How important is the sacrament of baptism to me personally? What evidence of its importance is there in my life and behavior? There are a few numbers in the Regnum Christi handbook that deal with this. Number 121 especially asks us to meditate on the richness and depth of the gift of baptism. Paragraphs 41–43 of the encyclical are very good for this. A list of some numbers in the RC handbook that pertain to baptism are: RCMH 120, 121, 272, and 358.
3. The main theme of this chapter — the transmission of the faith, especially through the Church — is dealt with in a similar way in number 152 of the RC handbook *(RCMH 152)*. Number 31 also touches on a few of the same topics *(RCMH 31)*. How important is this theme to me personally? Why?



- ## NOTES

1. Do I place myself squarely within the Church as the place where the transmission of faith occurs?
2. Do I live my baptismal commitments as I should?
3. Do I receive the Eucharist frequently and, more importantly, do I receive it well — having prepared myself in the best way possible to receive my Lord with the maximum love through the frequent reception of the sacrament of Confession?
4. When I pray, do I allow my prayer to transform me as the encyclical describes — or is my prayer so routine that any transformation is purely accidental?
5. Do I see my living of the Commandments as a way to grow closer to Christ in love — or as a disliked duty?
6. Do I live according to the Commandments because I prefer to live that way, which is the attitude of a Christian?
7. Do I continue to respect the Pope and the bishops as the successors of Peter and the apostles — even when they say things that are difficult for me to accept?





SESSION 5

CHAPTER 4: GOD PREPARES A CITY FOR THEM

SUMMARY

Faith is not just a journey, but a process of building, the preparing of a place in which human beings can dwell together with one another. It gives strength to convictions and sheds light on every human relationship because it is born of love and reflects God's own love. Encountering God's love enlightens our life so that it can enter into the fullness of love. Without the experience of the fullness of love, men and women could not stay united. Faith also helps us to build societies that can journey towards hope.

Faith enlightens the family because promising love forever is possible when we perceive a plan bigger than our own ideas and undertakings, a plan which sustains us and enables us to surrender our future entirely to the one we love. It also helps us grasp the depth and richness in the begetting of children. Children growing up in a climate of faith feel the support of their families and the Church in their faith. Guided by Christ's love they experience the expansion of the horizons of their lives giving them a hope that will not disappoint. All of it is based on the strength of God's faithfulness.

The experience of God's fatherhood sets us on the path of brotherhood. God wants everyone to share in the blessing that finds its fullness in Jesus — unity. We also grasp the dignity of each person, since the heart of faith is God's love, his concern for every person and his plan for the salvation of all of humanity.

Faith also helps us develop societies based on the idea of the common good. Forgiveness of others becomes possible because we see that goodness is stronger than evil. If faith were removed from our cities trust would be weakened, stability would be threatened and only fear would unite us.

Faith gives strength and meaning in the face of suffering and even death. Faith does not remove suffering and death from us, but assures us of the closeness of Christ who can guide us because he too has endured suffering and death. In the end, suffering reminds us that faith always gives us hope — that only from the future that comes from the risen Christ can we find lasting foundations. In the end, faith, hope, and charity propel us toward a sure future and let us go forward in hope.

Mary is the honest and good heart that hears and keeps God's word. She heard the word with her whole being and conceived Christ, but at the same time she conceived faith and joy. In her, faith demonstrates its fruitfulness. She is completely taken up in her faith. It allows her to become Mother of God and because of this, God is able to adopt us as sons and daughters.

Theological Note: Paragraph 52 contains a very clear exposition defending the Christian concept of marriage that doesn't seem necessary to the argument of the encyclical. Apparently the Holy Father wanted to make sure that it was there even though it was not necessary.

THEOLOGICAL NOTE

Paragraph 52 contains a very clear exposition defending the Christian concept of marriage that doesn't seem necessary to the argument of the encyclical. Apparently the Holy Father wanted to make sure that it was there even though it was not necessary.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the characteristics of the firmness of the bonds between people when God is in their midst. *(Paragraph 50)*
2. Describe the faith that is born of the encounter with God's primordial love. *(Paragraph 51)*
3. How does faith make possible a love that is forever? *(Paragraph 52)*
4. How can parents help their children grow in their own faith? What does the encounter with Christ's love do for children and for us as well? *(Paragraph 53)*
5. What is the basis of the brotherhood of man? What becomes evident in the progress of salvation history? What does faith teach me to find in my brothers and sisters? What has Christian faith taught humanity that only faith can understand? *(Paragraph 54)*



6. What attitude towards creation does faith teach us? What is the consequence of believing that authority comes from God for government? What is the relationship between faith and forgiveness? What would be the consequence if we removed faith from our cities? *(Paragraph 55)*
7. What does faith allow us to discover in weakness and suffering? What does faith teach Christians about suffering? *(Paragraph 56)*
8. In our difficulties, God does not provide explanations. What does he provide? What is faith's main service to the common good? *(Paragraph 57)*
9. How does the encyclical portray Mary's faith as found in Luke's Gospel? When Mary hears God's word, how is her fruitfulness expressed? *(Paragraph 58)*
10. What is Mary as a believer an example of? *(Paragraph 59)*

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. I. We often hear critics of Christianity say that all the troubles of human history are due to religion. Having read and reflected on this chapter, how would you counter that argument? How might the Pope counter it?
2. How would I describe the relationship between a Christian's desire to be a positive influence in society and the Christian duty to defend and spread our faith?
3. In this chapter, the Holy Father is attempting to show the results of having faith for society. This is something the *Regnum Christi* handbook doesn't deal with much but is useful to think about as an encouragement and motivation for our faith. However, the RC handbook does have some points of contact with the last part of the chapter, on the Blessed Mother and how her faith is an example for us. We can find similar things in the section on *A Spirituality with Mary, our Mother* (*RCMH 124–132*). There is more in the section on *Mary, my Mother, Accompanies, Inspires and Upholds Me* (*RCMH 168–172*) but it seems less connected to what the encyclical is talking about.

QUESTIONS ON LIVING THE DOCTRINE

1. Do I see my faith as something that supports not just my spiritual life, but the common good of the society I live in?
2. Do I see faith as something that is personal, not to be shared with others — or something that is meant to be public, that uplifts society?
3. Do I think that people are just naturally good and that a society without Christ will be pretty much like a society with him?
4. Is my faith something I share with my family?
5. Does my faith support and give hope to me alone, or do I live it in such a way that it is a support and a source of hope for the entire family?
6. Is my faith something that helps my children encounter Christ — or just a handy excuse I can use to make them do what I want?
7. Do I see that our brotherhood as Christians and as members of the human family is based on faith in all of us being children of a loving God?
8. Do I live this relationship of brotherhood — or are there some that I exclude from it because of their nationality or politics?
9. Is God my consolation in suffering and loss?
10. In spite of difficulties, am I able to place my trust in him?
11. Do I see even my sufferings and difficulties as being his gifts?

NOTES



Please visit our website, www.RCSpirituality.org for more Study Guides and other spiritual resources.

If you liked this Study Guide on *Lumen Fidei: The Light of Faith*, please help sponsor future Study Circle Guides by making a donation at www.RCSpirituality.org.

Follow us on Facebook.
www.facebook.com/retreatguide



Study Circle Guides are a service of Regnum Christi and the Legionaries of Christ. www.RegnumChristi.org & www.LegionofChrist.org

Produced by Coronation. www.CoronationMedia.com

