

Joy-Filled Witnesses to Christ!

# RENEW YOUR FAITH

Reflections  
for the Year  
of Faith

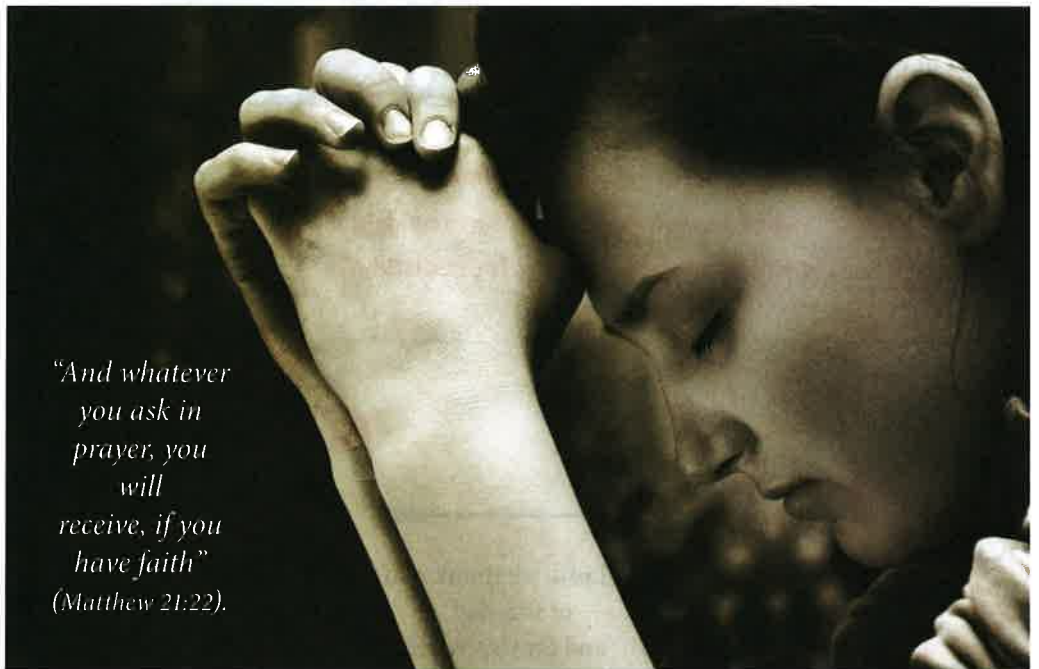
The Mass • Evangelization  
Part One  
**PRAYER**  
• Outreach •

## A Year of Faith Proclaimed

Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed a *Year of Faith* to awaken Catholics around the world to deepen our relationship with God and live as joyful witnesses to the Gospel. From October 11, 2012, to November 24, 2013, we are called to prayer, study, outreach, and evangelization so that the name of Jesus Christ will be known and loved throughout the world.



The beginning of this special year coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, and the twentieth anniversary of the promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.



*"And whatever  
you ask in  
prayer, you  
will  
receive, if you  
have faith"*  
(Matthew 21:22).

Thinkstock

## 3 Ways to Pray (More) Every Day

One of the ways we are called to deepen and renew our faith lives this year is through a more focused approach to prayer. Prayer helps us to form a "vital and personal relationship with the living and true God" (CCC 2558) so that we might live our faith more fully each day.

- 1 Remove the clutter.** It is helpful to identify the barriers to prayer in our lives so that we might deepen our relationship with God. Taking a break from screen time, such as fasting from Facebook, is a great way to make room for prayer.
- 2 Pray always.** Too often we imagine a healthy prayer life means going away for a long retreat to pray undisturbed. We can pray throughout the day while driving, cleaning, working, or running errands. Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God.
- 3 Attend daily Mass.** Pope Paul VI said, "Mass is the most perfect form of prayer." If possible, make daily Mass a habit this year to strengthen your faith and nourish your soul.

# REFLECTIONS

## ON THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth...

When we recite this first section of the Creed, we assent to believing in God who created the whole of the cosmos and everything in existence. The *Catechism* reminds us that "God transcends all creatures" (42), and yet we believe that human persons are created in the very image and likeness of God. God created us out of everlasting love.



The Crosiers

How do you feel when you say these lines of the Creed?

What do you imagine heaven is like if the earth holds such splendor?

Do you thank God for the gift of creation?



Throughout this Year of Faith, make an effort to gather around the table more often and share a meal with friends and family.

Lord, we thank you for the blessings of this day and for this wonderful meal. Help us remember those who have so much less than we do. Bless our family and friends. Help us to grow in love and care for each other. We ask you to comfort and give strength and peace to those who are sick or struggling in any way. And so together we pray, Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from your bounty through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thinkstock

## Faith Matters

What could be more important than faith?

It turns out, not much. Recent studies show that there are benefits to being a believer. A solid religious faith strengthens family ties, helps to build closer couple relationships, even helps to forge stronger community connections. People who pray also have been shown to have lower blood pressure and are better able to cope with stress. Being a believer is good for more than just our souls!

## WE BELIEVE

"Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole [person] who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the *heart* that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain" (CCC 2562).

✘ How can my heart grow closer to God through prayer today?

The Crosiers

ST. AUGUSTINE prayed, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." Faith is God's gift to us, God's invitation to relationship, so that we may be filled with the life and love of the divine.

