



TRANSFORMED

BY THE

HOLY SPIRIT

Confirmation Programme

St Joseph's



Programme

1. The Profession of Faith
2. The Celebration of the Christian Mystery
3. Life in Christ
4. Christian Prayer

You will need:

A Bible

Youth Catechism

Notebook

Missal

PART 1: The Profession of Faith

How do we come to know God?

The Catholic Church teaches that our desire for God is written in our hearts.

“For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.”

Romans 2: 14

“They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.”

Romans 2: 15

Who is God?

“Mighty One”,

The true God is not a nameless God. See Deuteronomy 6:4, Psalm 83:18.

He is God by reason of his creatorship (Genesis 1:1, Revelation 4)

The true God is real (John 7:28), a person (Acts 3:19)

Not a natural law operating without a living lawgiver, not blind force working through a series of accidents to develop one thing or another.

Who is God...

The Supreme Being, the First Cause, a spiritual being, self-existent, eternal and absolutely free and all –powerful, distinct from the matter which he has created in many forms, and which he conserves and controls.

There does not seem to have been a period of history where mankind was without belief in a supernatural author and governor of the universe.

Man is a religious as well as rational animal.

Proofs of the existence of “the living God”

- The fact of the existence of God is proved by the order, power and complexity of creation, macroscopic and microscopic, and through his dealings with his people throughout history.
- In looking into what might be called the Book of Divine Creation, scientists learn much. One can learn from a book only if intelligent thought and preparation have been put into the book by its author.
- Professor Albert Einstein acknowledged: “It is enough for me to...reflect upon the marvellous structure of the universe, which we can dimly perceive, and to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the *intelligence manifest in nature.*”



A Communicative God

Scripture – Old
and New
Testament

- Having great love for his creatures, God provides ample opportunity for them to know him and his purposes.
- His own **voice** has been heard on earth on three occasions. (Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:5, John 12:28).
- He has communicated through **angels** (Luke 2:9-12, Acts 7:52, 53).
- He has communicated through **men** to whom he gave directions and revelations, such as Moses and the other prophets, and especially through his Son, Jesus Christ.
- His written **Word** is his communication to his people, enabling them to be completely equipped as his servants and ministers, and directing them on the way to life – 2 Peter 1: `9-21, John 17:3.

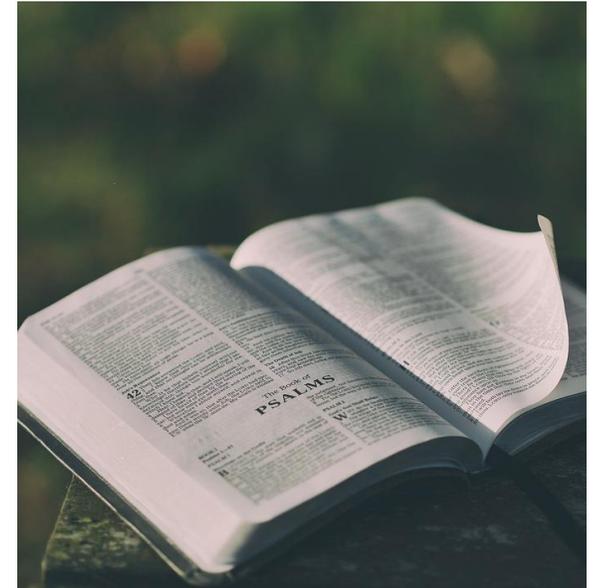


The Bible

- Men have always stood in awe of creative power. We think of it as a gift bestowed on exceptional people. We call their work ‘inspired’ – because it inspires us, and because the artist himself somehow feels his work comes from beyond himself. It is more than just the result of his own conscious activity.
- We when say the Bible is ‘inspired’ this is how many people understand the word. But when we look at what the Bible claims for itself, we find its ‘inspiration’ lies deeper than this. It is inspired in a different sense from other works of art.

The 'inspired message'

- The Biblical use of the word 'inspired' – a term used only once, in Paul's second letter to Timothy – shows that inspiration is grounded not in the response of the hearers, nor in the subjective experience of the writers, but in the fact that **'all Scripture is God breathed'**. This is the literal meaning of the word translated 'inspired'. All scripture is 'breathed out' by God.
- Paul says he is **taught by the Holy Spirit** and supports the gospel he preached by saying that it was **revealed to him by Jesus Christ**.
- In 1 John 1:5 the writer affirms that the message he is writing **came from Christ himself**.
- Elsewhere Paul says he judges a man's spiritual insight by the way he responds to the content of his letters. And he clearly believed that **he and the apostles were empowered to reveal truth** beyond anything previously made known.
- God has chosen to make his message of salvation known by means of the written word – our
- **Old and New Testaments.**



Who was Paul and why was this an important statement?

- Paul of Tarsus was at once Jew (his parents were Pharisees), Greek and Roman (from birth). The Biblical record introduces Saul or Paul as the young man who approved of the murder of Stephen. Christ Jesus revealed himself to Paul near Damascus, which ended his vicious persecution of Christ's followers.
- Paul was singularly fitted to communicate the gospel across racial and cultural barriers. He made full use of the advantages of being a Roman citizen, an unusual privilege at this period for a provincial Jew.
- Rome in Paul's day was the capital of an empire which stretched from Britain to Arabia. Wealthy and cosmopolitan, it was the diplomatic and trade centre of the then-known world. There was constant coming and going. The Roman Peace made travel safe; Roman roads made it relatively easy. Visitors from Rome heard Peter's first sermon in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. So it is not surprising that there was a large and flourishing Christian community there by the time Paul wrote.
- It was the usual mixture of Jews and Gentiles. There was no serious rift between the two sections, but there was a tendency for each other to criticize and look down on the other. Some time earlier, there had been trouble with the authorities. Christians were still suspect. Jesus had after all, faced a charge of treasonable activity against the emperor. And despite their efforts, to live as loyal citizens of Rome, Nero made a scapegoat of the Christians and laid down blame on them when the city went up in flames. Tradition says that Paul and Peter died in the ferocious persecution that followed.

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- **The great theme of Romans is faith in Christ as the only ground of man's acceptance by God, who treats all men alike – Jew and Gentiles.**
- St Paul emphasises that God's good news transforms human relationships, making it possible for Jews and Gentiles to treat one another as equals in the church.
- **Furthermore, Christ sets us free from the struggle to get right with God by keeping the law to the letter.**



How do you
express your
faith?



Religious Expressions

- In many ways throughout time, men have given expressions to their quest for God in their religious beliefs and behaviour.
- People express this through prayer, sacrifices, art, rituals and meditations.

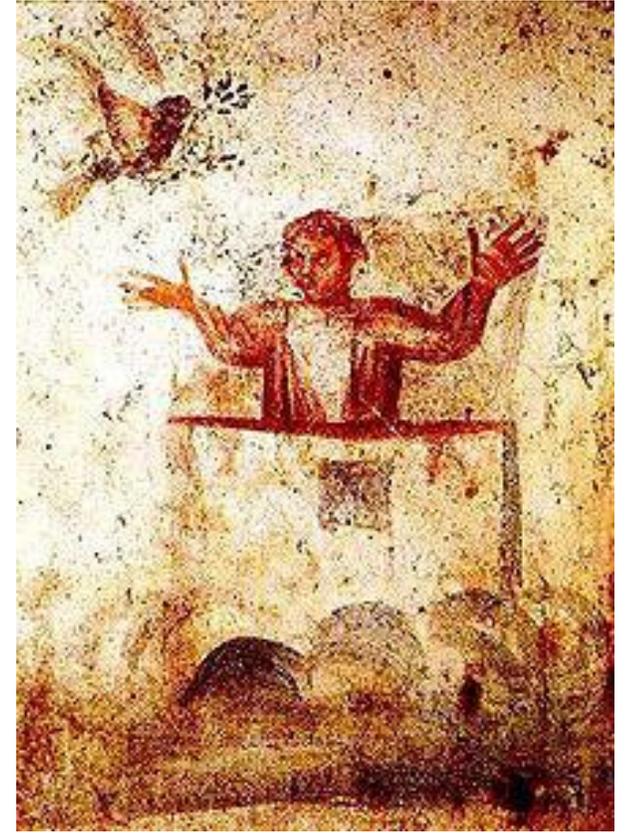




[Jesus healing the bleeding woman](#), Roman catacombs, 300–350



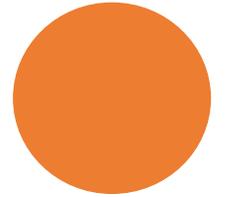
Good Shepherd from the Catacomb of Priscilla, 250–300



Noah praying in the Ark, from a Roman catacomb

We can also come to seek God by looking for proofs of God's existence

- Not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences, but through the sense of converging and convincing arguments, which allows us to attain certainty about the truth.
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- These 'ways' of approaching God from creation have a twofold point of departure: the physical world, and the human person.
- The world: starting from movement, becoming, contingency, and the world's order and beauty, one can come to a knowledge of God as the origin and the end of the universe.



The Human person

With an openness to

- truth and beauty,
- sense of moral goodness,
- freedom and the voice of his conscience,
- longings for the infinite
- for happiness,

Humans question themselves about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul.





Discuss the meaning:

Group 1: “Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God”.

Group 2: “Man is to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness. When I’m completely united with you, there will be no more sorrow or trials, entirely full of you, my life will be complete. *St Augustine.*”

Group 3: “The Church teaches that there is one true God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certainty from his works, by the natural light of human reason.”



What is reason?

Dictionary definitions:

- A cause, explanation, or justification for an action or event
- The power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgements logically: "there is a close connection between reason and emotion"
- **Share: How do we use reason to understand God today?**

... God, prepared a throne for her husband, and he will sit on it, and God himself will be with them as their God.² and God himself will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.³ ⁴ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."



Revelation

Read and explain in a few points..

How did God reveal himself to:

- 1) **Noah** – Genesis 5-9
- 2) **Abraham** - Genesis 11-14
- 3) **Moses** – Exodus 1-18
- 4) **Mary** – Matthew 1-2



What have been the key points for today:

- The Catholic Church teaches that our desire for God is written in our hearts.
- St Paul emphasises that through Jesus we can all come to know God.
- Humans have always searched for God.
- God can be found through reason and revelation.
- Your journey through Confirmation will help you to come to know God through a knowledge of the scripture and understanding what this could mean for you today.





Closing Prayer

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and my thinking;
God be at mine end, and at my departing.

The Sarum Primer Prayer