



# Invitation

## The Search for God, Self and Church

*A Catholic Learning Guide  
for Adults*

**Rev. Alfred McBride, O. Praem.**  
Revised Edition

Paulist Evangelization Ministries  
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# Preface to the Revised Edition



## Preface

We begin our revised edition of *Invitation* with excerpts from, “The Joy of the Gospel,” an Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Francis. His words to all the catechists in the world begin with attention to the basic Gospel message for all of them as follows: “On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.’” The pope adds that this is the principal message, the one in which our students “must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis” (“The Joy of the Gospel,” n. 164).

With those powerful words in our minds, we would like to inform our readers about the origins of *Invitation* that has always had a tone of evangelization as Pope Francis desires. On a perfect autumn day in 1979, the late Paulist Father Alvin Illig and I were in St. Matthew’s Cathedral, Washington, D.C., awaiting the arrival of Pope John Paul II. Alvin turned to me and said, “When are you going to write an adult question and answer religion text for us? We need something like that for our evangelizing ministry.” “Whenever you wish,” I replied.

In that moment, *Invitation* was conceived. America’s chief priest evangelizer gave me the call and I responded. The material was originally published in *Share the Word* magazine as a catechetical addition to the excellent reflections on the Sunday readings. The text was then revised and enlarged for book publication in 1984 by the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association (PNCEA), now Paulist Evangelization Ministries. Thus was born the first edition of *Invitation* which helped countless people for ten years.

### Second Edition

The second edition of *Invitation* in 1994 coincided with the historic publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This comprehensive and systematic presentation of the beliefs of Catholic is the second universal catechism in the Church’s history, the first one being published in 1566.

Pope Francis fully supports this new Catechism for communicating the richness of its teachings about the Creed, the Sacraments, Catholic morality and the role of prayer. Pope

Francis wants all catechists to adopt the attitudes that will help them teach them more effectively: Present the message that responds to the desire for the infinite which abides in every human heart. He also links catechesis with the beautiful. “Every expression of true beauty can thus be acknowledged as a path leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus....Each particular church should encourage the use of the arts in evangelization,” for as St. Augustine writes, we should love only that which is truly beautiful (“The Joy of the Gospel,” n. 167).

Father Kenneth Boyack, successor to Father Illig, asked me to revise *Invitation* in light of the new Catechism (CCC). I gladly agreed to his request and produced a text that is faithful to the letter and spirit of the CCC. After an introduction, every chapter contains three questions with answers taken from the CCC. These 78 citations from the CCC are meant to set the tone for each chapter and invite the readers to explore the Catechism more deeply.

It is useful to recall the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*’s emphasis on:

- 1) The history of salvation;
- 2) The generous use of Scripture;
- 3) Citations from the lives and writings of the saints;
- 4) Extensive quotations from the documents of Vatican II;
- 5) A personal and pastoral approach to the learning of religion;
- 6) An emphasis on the accepted faith and tradition of the Church;

All of these elements are also found in *Invitation*—to the spirit of the Catechism, as well as its letter.

### Third Edition

The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, published in June 2006, inspired the third edition of *Invitation*. In that edition, the introductions to each chapter have brief stories of figures from scripture, the lives of the saints or from the history of the Church. This follows the path of the *Catechism for Adults* that uses this format in their book.



While Pope Francis loves teaching young people, he also understands the faith needs of adults. He encourages catechists to notice attractive, new ways of expression, “so as to transmit the faith in a new ‘language of parables.’ We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word” (“The Joy of the Gospel,” n. 167).

Following the lead of the *Catechism for Adults*, PNCEA decided that each chapter should be followed by a short application of the message to today’s culture, contained under the title, “Living the Message”. This would be followed by a general question for discussion and a reference to the relevant chapter in the *Catechism for Adults*. Occasionally, there have been some revisions of questions and answers in the text.

In other words, the third edition sought to advance the direction of the *Catechism for Adults* as well as retaining its goal of adapting and making accessible the universal *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to the needs of the faithful.

### Revised Edition

In his comments on teaching morality, Pope Francis advises catechists to learn how to be joyful in teaching the moral life. “As for the moral component of catechesis, which promotes the growth in the Gospel way of life, it is helpful to stress again and again the attractiveness and the ideal of a life of wisdom, self-fulfillment, and enrichment. In the light of that positive message, our rejection of the evils which endanger that life, can be better understood. Rather than experts in dire predictions, dour judges bent on rooting out every threat and deviation, we should appear as joyful messengers of challenging proposals, guardians of the goodness and beauty which shine forth in the life of fidelity to the Gospel” (“The Joy of the Gospel,” n. 168).

### Inspiring Living faith in Jesus Christ

Father Illig had envisioned *Invitation* as a service to all those involved in the ministry of evangelization, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the lifelong development of adult faith. The call to faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to the Church, sacraments and the Christian moral witness always includes a learning moment in the process.

In any love process there is a 1) falling in love; 2) a “getting to know you” phase; and 3) a commitment to staying in love. *Invitation* addresses these three elements in the believer’s

involvement with Jesus Christ, his person, message, church, sacraments and moral challenge. Of course, *Invitation’s* chief contribution to this process is phase two, “getting to know you—Jesus.”

This is an adult learning guide both for newcomers to the Church and for cradle Catholics as well. For those who are joining us, *Invitation* provides a substantial introduction to the teachings and tradition of the Church. For all Catholics, it is a refresher course, a review of our beliefs in a context of faith, hope and love.

I prayerfully hope that *Invitation* achieves the goal of all catechesis, which is to inspire a living, conscious and active faith in Jesus Christ. I envision it as a text that opens the adult faith learner to an ever deeper participation in the sacraments of salvation and stronger commitment to witness to the moral teachings of Christ and the Church in a culture hungry precisely for these virtues and life enhancing goals.

We are all born with a capacity for nothing less than God. Our development of that ability with God’s help and the graces of the Holy Spirit is the best known way to be happy and personally fulfilled. *Invitation* is one of the paths to that goal.

### Life grows by being given away

Pope Francis approaches the ideals we have cited in the following way. “The Gospel offers a chance to live on a higher plane. ‘Life grows by being given away and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed those who enjoy life the most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others’” (“The Joy of the Gospel,” n. 10). This is certainly what mission means.

Consequently, an evangelizer (and a catechist) must never look like someone who just came from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that delightful and comforting joy in evangelizing (and catechizing) even when it is in tears we must sow.

And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers (catechists) who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but rather from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ.

Rev. Alfred McBride, O.Praem.

August 28, 2014

# How to Use *Invitation*



## How to

Adults have learning needs and a learning style quite different from that of children. *Invitation* is designed with the adult learner in mind.

To begin with, **adult learners are self-directed**. They are used to taking active roles in their jobs and families, and are quite capable of doing this in a learning situation as well. *The easy-to-read and logically organized format helps adult learners read the text at a pace and with a focus that suits their needs.*

Secondly, **adults already possess a wealth of knowledge and experience**. They must integrate new information with what they already know. *The question and answer format helps readers quickly review what they already know and concentrate on what is new to them.*

Finally, **adults are practical**. They are most interested in learning that is directly relevant to their own lives. *Adults will find the contents of the 26 chapters very relevant and practical in supporting their desire to live the Catholic way of life in a vital way.*

- A person with a particular question about the Catholic faith or the Catholic Church will find at least a partial answer in *Invitation*. Many useful excerpts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and references to additional reading in the new *Catechism for Adults* give more detailed information to interested readers.
- A person interested in learning more about the Catholic faith in general will receive in *Invitation* a comprehensive overview of Catholic teaching and tradition.
- People can come **together** in groups to discuss the issues raised by *Invitation* and can explore their applications to daily life. The question at the end of each chapter under “Discuss this Message” is a good starting point for group discussion.

Pastors and those involved with adult faith formation will find *Invitation* helpful in a number of parish settings. We suggest below five possibilities for using *Invitation* that will help adults in your parish grow in understanding and living the Catholic faith.

### 1. Use *Invitation* as part of your parish adult education program:

- Hold a course called “Review Our Catholic Faith” for interested people. Use *Invitation* as your curriculum.
- Hold a series of forums on specific topics such as “What Does the Church Say about Marriage?” or “A Look at the Liturgical Year” or “Good Samaritans and Prophets: Social Justice and You.” Use *Invitation* as the basis of the sessions and to provide further reading on the topic.
- Parish organizations or scheduled adult education classes can use selected chapters of *Invitation* to supplement their programs.

### 2. Use *Invitation* to help inactive Catholics return to the Church:

- Invite inactive Catholics to come to your parish for a “listening night,” where they can ask questions and express their concerns about the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith. Then hold a series of sharing sessions with returning Catholics, based on their input. Refer to the table of contents in *Invitation* to help you design the sessions. The following chapters have often proven useful:

Chapter 1	The Human Longing for God
Chapter 3	The Church as Community
Chapter 5	The Unique Word of Holy Scripture
Chapter 11	I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church
Chapter 12	The Celebration of the Christian Mysteries
Chapter 15	Forgive Me, Father
Chapter 20	Social Justice
Chapter 25	I Believe...We Believe in God
Chapter 26	Praise the Lord

- Design a formal reentry program based on the sacrament of reconciliation. Use the following chapters:

Chapter 15	Forgive Me, Father
Chapter 2	The Creation
Chapter 10	Come, Holy Spirit
Chapter 12	The Celebration of the Christian Mysteries
Chapter 20	Social Justice
Chapter 25	I Believe...We Believe in God
Chapter 26	Praise the Lord





- Design a formal reentry program based on the renewal of baptismal promises and a commitment to the church family. Use these chapters:

Chapter 3	The Church as Community
Chapter 10	Come, Holy Spirit
Chapter 11	I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church
Chapter 14	The Bread of Life
Chapter 21	May They All Be One
Chapter 25	I Believe...We Believe in God
Chapter 26	Praise the Lord

### 3. Use *Invitation* as the foundation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in your parish. Here are two possibilities:

- Use all the chapters, in order, as a curriculum guide for the catechumenate period of RCIA. The chapters provide a comprehensive overview of what Catholics believe.
- Use selected chapters for the various periods of the RCIA:

#### In the pre-catechumenate:

Chapter 1	The Human Longing for God
Chapter 3	The Church as Community
Chapter 5	The Unique Word of Holy Scripture
Chapter 25	I Believe...We Believe in God
Chapter 26	Praise the Lord

#### In the catechumenate:

Chapter 1	The Human Longing for God
Chapter 3	The Church as Community
Chapter 5	The Unique Word of Holy Scripture
Chapter 8	Mysteries of Christ's Public Life
Chapter 11	I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church
Chapter 12	The Celebration of the Christian Mysteries
Chapter 20	Social Justice
Chapter 25	I Believe...We Believe in God

#### In the enlightenment/purification period:

Chapter 9	The Paschal Mystery
Chapter 20	Social Justice
Chapter 22	Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for Us
Chapter 23	A Faith Journey Through the Liturgical Year
Chapter 24	Death Shall Have No Dominion
Chapter 25	I Believe...We Believe in God
Chapter 26	Praise the Lord

#### In the mystagogia period:

Chapter 1	The Human Longing for God
Chapter 10	Come, Holy Spirit
Chapter 15	Forgive Me, Father
Chapter 19	The Vocation of the Laity
Chapter 20	Social Justice
Chapter 21	May They All Be One
Chapter 25	I Believe...We Believe in God

### 4. Use *Invitation* as a resource for Directors of Religious Education to help them with sacramental preparation:

- They can give *Invitation* to parents to help them answer their children's questions.
- They can give *Invitation* to couples and catechists who assist in sacramental preparation. Use the following chapters:

Baptism:	3, 10, 11, 14, 21, 25, 26
Reconciliation:	15, 2, 10, 12, 25, 26, 8
Confirmation:	13, 19, 20
Eucharist:	14, 1, 3, 4, 9, 12, 13
Marriage:	17, 19, 20

### 5. Parish staffs can use *Invitation* to orient people who assist in the parish liturgies:

General:	23, 9
Lectors:	5, 6, 7
Eucharistic Ministers:	7, 9, 13

- *Invitation* can be a pastoral resource for people who visit the sick or help with the grieving ministry—chapters 24, 9, 10, 16, 25.
- *Invitation* can be a tool to help orient members of parish councils—chapters 26, 19, 20, 21.
- *Invitation* can be a general reference work (or even a gift) for new catechists, to help them answer their students' questions.
- Use *Invitation* as a resource for concise answers to frequently asked questions on Scripture, morals, and theology. Try running these questions and answers in your parish bulletin.



# The Human Longing for God



## Seeds... Seeds of Faith

During a visit to Rome in the 1930s, Thomas Merton was surprised that he was much more inspired by the art and architecture of the churches than by the temples and statues of imperial Rome. "I found myself looking into churches rather than ruined temples. After all the vapid, boring, semi-pornographic statuary of the empire, what a thing it was to come upon the genius of an art full of spiritual vitality...an art that was tremendously serious and alive and eloquent and urgent in all it had to say."

The ancient frescoes of the saints moved him to a felt knowledge of the sacred. Divine beauty shone through human art and sowed seeds of invitation to faith in the young seeker. "I was no longer visiting these churches merely for the art. There was something else that attracted me: a kind of interior peace. I loved to be in these holy places." This was one way by which God our Father drew Merton to his divine reality and eventually to the Church and membership in the Trappist order.

### 1. What are we looking for?

We want to be happy, and we desire peace and personal fulfillment. We also seek to love and be loved.

### 2. Where shall we find happiness, love, and peace?

We will find happiness, love, and peace in Jesus, who shows us God the Father, and sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts. "He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken" (Ps 62:2).

### 3. Can this goal be reached here, in this life?

Each of us begins to find divinely given happiness, love, and peace on earth. But its fullness will come only in heaven. God's love is everlasting. "My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast" (Ps 63:5).

## From the Catechism of the Catholic Church...

### The Human Capacity for God

#### A. What is our most fundamental desire?

The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for. (*Catechism*, 27)

#### B. Why can we say we are all basically religious?

Throughout history down to the present day, men have given expression to their quest for God in their religious beliefs and behavior: in their prayers, sacrifices, rituals, meditations, and so forth. These forms of religious expression, despite the ambiguities they often bring with them, are so universal that one may well call man a *religious being*. (*Catechism*, 28)

#### C. What is it within me that opens me to God's presence and existence?

The *human person*: With his openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness, man questions himself about God's existence. In all this he discerns signs of his spiritual soul. The soul, the "seed of eternity we bear in ourselves, irreducible to the merely material,"<sup>1</sup> can have its origin only in God. (*Catechism*, 33)

<sup>1</sup> GS 18 § 1; cf. 14 § 2.



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#### 4. Does God want us to be happy?

The kindness of the Lord is eternal. God is ever gracious, merciful, and compassionate. Jesus says, “Abide in my love....I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:9, 11). The psalmist writes that the Lord “satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Ps 103:5).

St. Paul repeatedly speaks of the happiness that comes from being loved by God. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice....And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:4, 7).

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#### 5. Where do we find signs of God’s desire to make us happy?

We behold God’s loving care in his works of creation, providence, and salvation:

- a) Creation: How many and various are the works of the Lord! In his wisdom and love he gives us the world and our lives as a sign of his care. God made the world for us and us for the world.

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them?...You have given them dominion over the works of your hands.... O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Ps 8:3, 4, 6, 9).

- b) Providence: “The world is charged with the grandeur of God” (Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”). “By his providence God protects and guides all things which he has made, ‘reaching mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and ordering all things well.’ For ‘all are open and laid bare to his eyes,’ even those things which are yet to come into existence through the free action of creatures”<sup>2</sup> (*Catechism*, 302).

“Faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God’s design for man’s total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human” (GS, 11).

- c) Salvation: God’s greatest sign of his desire for our happiness is manifested in the saving work of his Son. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

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#### 6. Where are we tempted to look for happiness?

We are too often tempted to try to find happiness in a world without God, seeking satisfaction in food, sex, drink, drugs, possessions, and other earthly sources. Jesus cautions us to get to the heart of the matter. “Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt 6:33).

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#### 7. How can we know that true happiness is with God?

Our restlessness is a clue. Augustine writes, “You have made us for yourself, O God. Our hearts are restless until they rest in you” (*Confessions*, 1, 1). From the psalmist we learn that “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?” (Ps 42:1-2).

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#### 8. How does God draw us to his love, happiness, and peace?

God has an infinite number of ways of touching our hearts. Among these are:

- a) Love of truth: God plants in all human beings a love of truth. Even a liar is not without this hunger. God uses our inborn reach for truth to draw us to him. “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (Jn 8:32).
- b) Attraction to goodness: God sows within us all an attraction to goodness, especially moral goodness. When we follow our inborn affinity for goodness, we follow a star that leads to the goodness of God.
- c) Enchantment with beauty: God awakens in us a longing for him through the enchantment of beauty. Emerson is often attributed with writing, “Never lose an opportunity for seeing something beautiful. For beauty is God’s handwriting—a wayside sacrament.” God brings us toward him



by our experience of beauty. “One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord” (Ps 27:4).

- d) Human affection: Experiencing human affection is a powerful opening to the possibility of experiencing God’s love. Every act of kindness and mercy allows the possibility of meeting Christ. “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40).
- e) The person of Jesus: Drawing near to Jesus brings us closer to God and closer to the hope for love, happiness, and peace. “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). Jesus draws us to him by this truth, goodness, beauty, and love, manifested in his passion and resurrection.

### 9. Therefore, where am I going?

We should be going to God, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. We should be cautious not to aim for another goal, less worthy of our calling. We believe we should be aiming our sights toward God, to enter a love relationship that grants us a happiness that “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9).

### 10. How does God think of us?

He thinks of each one of us as someone lovable. “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine....Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you” (Isa 43:1, 4). God does not think we should be afraid of him, for we need not fear one who loves us. Through his Son Jesus, we have been saved from our sins and restored to friendship with God.

### 11. What kind of love does God have for us?

He loves us like true friends. “See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands” (Isa 49:16). God loves and accepts us, with both our strong and weak points. He treats us like a friend who knows everything about us

and still accepts us. Jesus says, “I have called you friends” (Jn 15:9). And, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love” (Jn 15:15).

### 12. What has been God’s greatest proof of love?

God’s greatest proof of love was in sending his Son to be our friend and redeemer. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love” (Eph 1:3-4).

### 13. Why should we look to Jesus in our quest for identity?

We need to look to Jesus because he shows us what it is like to be fully human. Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6). Pope St. John Paul II writes, “The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly... must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ” (RH, 10).

### 14. What motivates Jesus to be near us?

He knows we cannot live without love. Life would be senseless if love were not revealed, and if we did not his inexhaustible love. This is why Jesus liked to dine with publicans and sinners, and why he wanted to be near prodigal sons and adulterous women, as well as the sick and the poor.

St. Paul felt Christ’s love so close to him that he said that the Lord was inseparable from him. “Who will separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom 8:35).

### 15. How did Jesus best prove his love for us?

Jesus showed us his love by his passion, death, and resurrection. “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13).

“The Redemption that took place through the Cross has definitively restored his dignity to man and given back meaning to his life in the world, a meaning that was lost to a considerable extent because of sin” (RH, 10).





## 16. How does the Church describe our relationship with God?

Vatican II drew a picture of being human that is based on our relationship with God. Faithful to revelation, the picture embraces the following seven qualities:

- a) Dignity: “All things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown” (GS, 12).
- b) Image of God: “Sacred Scripture teaches that man was created ‘to the image of God,’ is capable of knowing and loving his Creator, and was appointed by Him as master of all earthly creatures that he might subdue them and use them to God’s glory” (GS, 12; Gen 1:26, Sir 17:3, 10).
- c) Relational: “God did not create man as a solitary. For from the beginning ‘male and female he created them’ (Gen 1:27)....By his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential” (GS, 12).
- d) Truth Seeker: “In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals and from social relationships” (GS, 16).
- e) Free: “Authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within man. For God has willed that man be left ‘in the hand of his own counsel’ (Sir 15:14), so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him.... Such a choice is personally motivated and prompted from within. It does not result from blind internal impulse nor from mere external pressure” (GS, 17).
- f) Spiritual: “Man is not wrong when he regards himself as superior to bodily concerns, and as more than a speck of nature or a nameless constituent in the city of man. For by his interior qualities he outstrips the whole sum of mere things. He attains to these inward depths whenever he enters into his own heart. God, who probes the heart, awaits him there. There he discerns his proper destiny beneath the eyes of God. Thus, when man recognizes in himself a spiritual and immortal soul, he is not being

mocked by a deceptive fantasy springing from mere physical or social influences. On the contrary he is getting to the depths of the very truth of the matter” (GS, 14).

- g) Immortal: “It is in the face of death that the riddle of human existence becomes most acute....All the endeavors of technology, though useful in the extreme, cannot calm his anxiety....Christ won this victory when He rose to life, since by His death He freed man from death....Faith arouses the hope that they have found true life with God” (GS, 18).

### LIVING THIS MESSAGE

Modern culture tries to teach us that we are purely secular people. But God has made us essentially religious. Even though the United States is thought by some to be a thoroughly secular country, it has more houses of worship than any industrialized nation. History shows that most people have always expressed their urge toward God in prayers, sacrifices, rituals, churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques right into the present age.

Remember that God is always close to you. “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

### DISCUSS THIS MESSAGE

What should I do to stay in touch with and respond to my longing for God?

### READ MORE ABOUT THIS MESSAGE

*Catechism for Adults:* Chapter 1, “My Soul Longs for You, O God,” pages 1–9.

<sup>2</sup> Vatican Council I, *Dei Filius* 1: DS 3003; cf. Wis 8:1; Heb 4:13.