



TOTALLY Catholic!

A Catechism for Kids
and Their Parents
and Teachers

Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND



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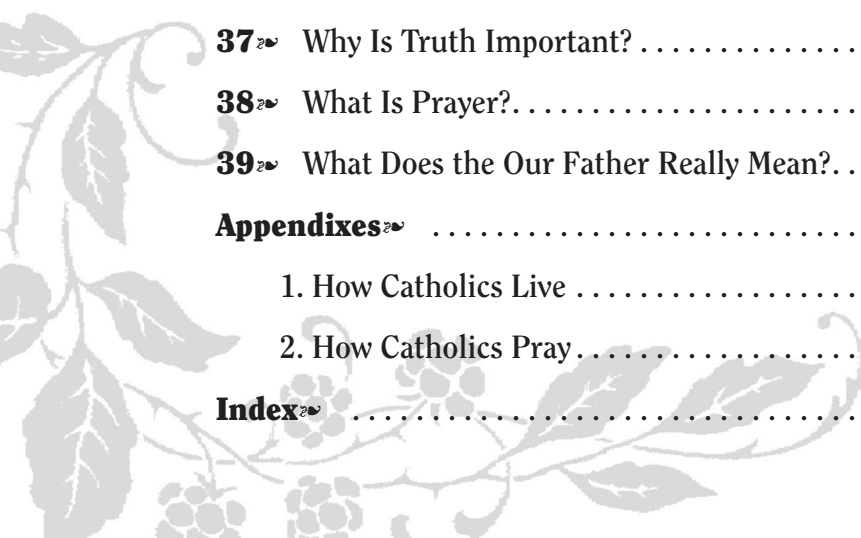
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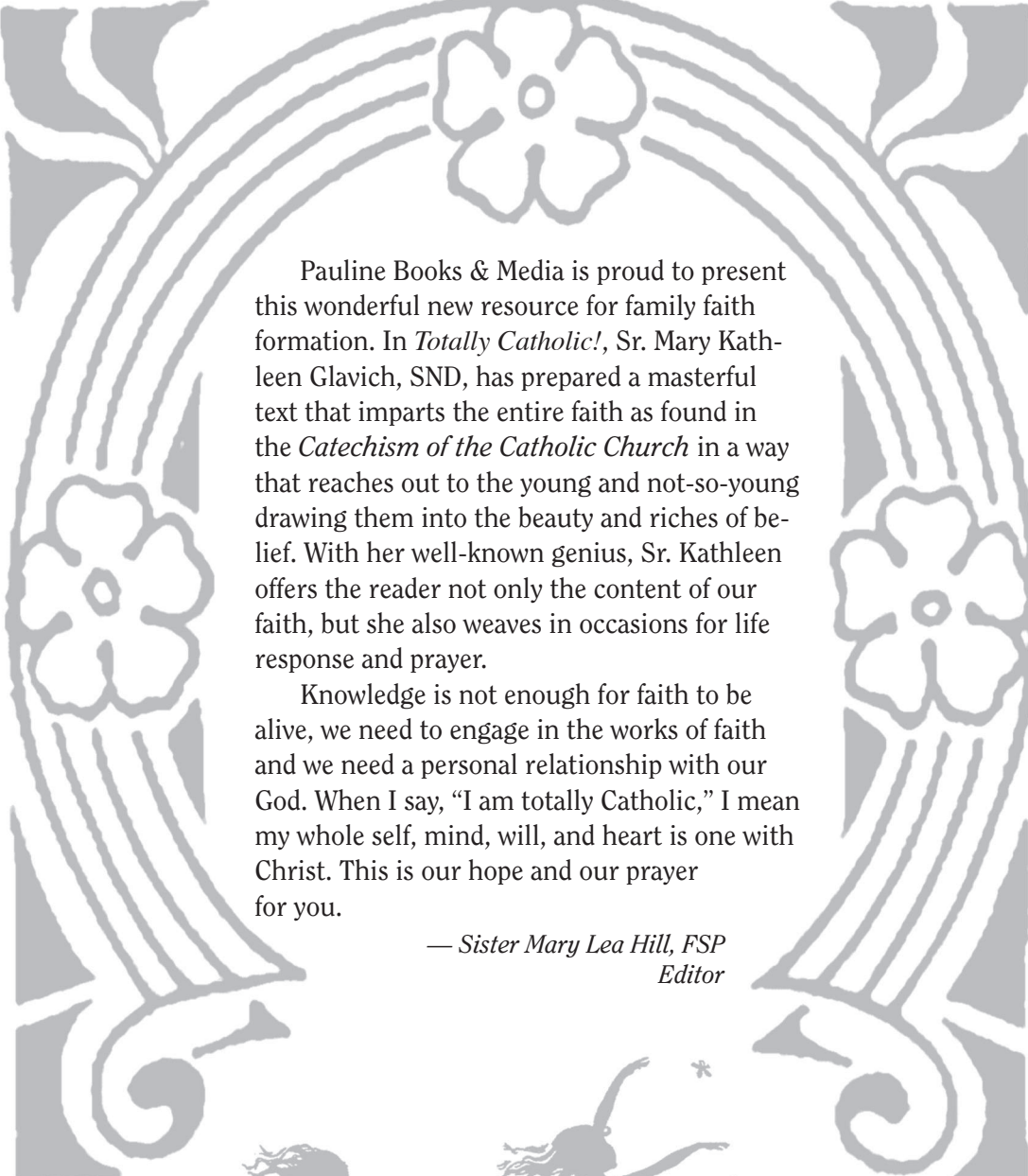
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A decorative border featuring a rainbow arching over three stylized flowers. The background is a light, textured grey.

Pauline Books & Media is proud to present this wonderful new resource for family faith formation. In *Totally Catholic!*, Sr. Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND, has prepared a masterful text that imparts the entire faith as found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in a way that reaches out to the young and not-so-young drawing them into the beauty and riches of belief. With her well-known genius, Sr. Kathleen offers the reader not only the content of our faith, but she also weaves in occasions for life response and prayer.

Knowledge is not enough for faith to be alive, we need to engage in the works of faith and we need a personal relationship with our God. When I say, “I am totally Catholic,” I mean my whole self, mind, will, and heart is one with Christ. This is our hope and our prayer for you.

— *Sister Mary Lea Hill, FSP*
Editor





Dear Parents, Guardians, and Teachers,

Our Catholic faith infuses this life with meaning, gives us values to live by, and offers hope for an eternal life. It is a precious gift that we want to pass on to our children. In 1994, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was first published to summarize the essential teaching of our faith in light of today's world. It has four parts, or pillars: creed, liturgy, Christian way of life (commandments), and Christian prayer, notably the Our Father. This book is for adults.

Totally Catholic! is based on this catechism and translates its Gospel message for children. Besides simpler language, *Totally Catholic!* has stories, tidbits of information, examples, and a format that will engage young minds and hearts. Scripture is woven throughout the text, most clearly as a feature in each chapter. Also each chapter presents a saint as a role model for young Christians. Both the Scripture feature and the saint feature further develop the chapter's theme.

Although *Totally Catholic!* serves as a good reference book in the home or classroom, it is most suitable as a resource for children to study their Catholic faith more deeply. You might be using this book as a “catch-up” text to help prepare older children for the sacraments. If so, you'll want to take advantage of these chapter components:

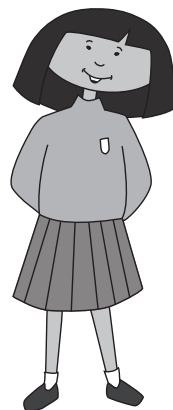
- ☞ questions for discussion or reflection
- ☞ a prayer that introduces the children to the rich variety of prayer forms

The two sections in the back of the book, “How Catholics Live” and “How Catholics Pray,” both contain material for reference.

Keep in mind as you teach that it's more important to talk to God about your children than to talk to your children about God. Furthermore, your example is more influential than any book. As Pope Paul VI pointed out, people today are more apt to listen to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. This is especially true for children.

May the Holy Spirit, our Teacher and Counselor, be with you, inspiring you to be an effective apostle to the child or children in your care.

— *Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND*



Dear Child of God, ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

I have a new computer capable of doing many fantastic things. With this computer came a manual that explains how it works, but I haven't read it yet. Wouldn't it be silly if I never read the manual? For the most part, my computer would be wasted.

If you are a Catholic or about to become one, you have a tremendous gift—far greater than a computer. Our Catholic faith enriches our lives and gives us purpose. This book explains what it means to be a Catholic. It contains what we believe and how we live as members of the community of believers. Catholics are Christians, that is, we are followers of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He taught us how to have a full life and, more important, by his death and rising, he won eternal life for us.

Today Jesus teaches us through his Church. This Church wrote a catechism for adults. The word *catechism* means “to echo.” A catechism is a book that hands on the truths of the faith that have been echoed down the centuries from Jesus, through generations of people, to you. *Totally Catholic!* is this catechism adapted for kids your age. I hope it will make you eager to learn more about our faith.

By reading this book, you will better understand and appreciate being a Catholic. You will have the knowledge and values necessary to continue to grow as a disciple of Christ. God bless you!

— Sister Mary Kathleen



1

What Is Faith?

Catechism *A longing for God is written in our hearts (cf. no. 27).*

Did you know that our sun is one star in the Milky Way galaxy, which has at least 200 billion other stars? That there are more than 100 billion galaxies in what we can see of the universe? That our universe is more than 13 billion years old? Looking up at the stars at night, don't you wonder: Where did everything come from? Why am I here, living on planet earth?

We Catholics can answer questions like these because we have **faith** or belief. We believe in God, the Supreme Being who loves us and communicates with us. We believe that in Jesus, God came to earth and taught us. And we believe that God teaches us today through the Church that Jesus began. Your parents have probably passed on this faith to you. You will learn more about the Catholic faith in this book. Faith will unlock for you some of the mysteries of the universe. It will also help you live a good life so that you can enjoy an everlasting life in heaven.

God Exists

Faith in God is a gift. But we have good reasons to believe in God. Here are three:



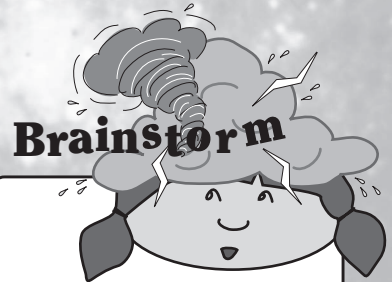
1. The wonders of and the order in creation: giraffes, fish, dogs, trees, roses, rainbows, and mountains, in fact, everything in the whole universe. Look at your marvelous body. Your eyes let you see colors and are protected by eyelashes. Your heart beats 100,000 times a day to bring your cells oxygen. Your every movement is coordinated by your nervous system. Everything is so intricate and precise. Someone very intelligent and very powerful must have figured everything out and made it. We call that someone God.

2. The knowledge of right and wrong: we know that killing and stealing are wrong and that helping others is good. There must be someone who sets in our hearts what is right. That someone is God.

3. The desire for happiness: everyone longs to be happy. We want certain things because we think they will make us happy. But nothing keeps us happy for long. That is because God made us to be with him. God alone can make us completely happy. It's as though we have a hole in our heart that God alone can fill. Only in heaven, when we're with God, will we have lasting happiness.

BTW

Faith is accepting something as true because we trust the person who tells us. For example, we have faith in our doctors.



Think about the world. What are your favorite things about it? What are your favorite things in creation?

Share about something you wanted very much. Were you totally happy when you received it? If you are no longer satisfied, do you know why?

God Loves

You might feel puny compared to the universe. But in God's eyes, you are important. God made you because he wanted to share his life with you. You are God's child. God loves you. Nothing shows God's love more than the fact that God became a man like us in Jesus who died nailed to a cross for us, and rose from the dead.

A Catholic VIP



St. Augustine (354–430)

St. Augustine was born in North Africa. He was raised by a Christian mother, St. Monica. But in his search for truth, Augustine became a follower of a false religion and strayed from the Christian values his mother had taught him. Through Monica's prayers, Augustine met good teachers like St. Ambrose and turned his life around. He was finally baptized and then became a priest and later the Bishop of Hippo. Augustine wrote so many books, letters, and sermons explaining the faith, that he was named a **doctor of the Church**, a title given to a saint outstanding in guiding the Church. His most famous book is the *Confessions*, the story of his life. St. Augustine's feast day is August 28.

Faith and Prayer

If we believe in God, then we will respond to God with love. Think how much you enjoy being with your friend or someone you love. When people love each other, they think about each other and they talk to each other. Thinking about God, and talking and listening to God is called **prayer**. In this book you will learn several ways to pray. Through prayer your love for God will grow.

The Saints

Jesus, who is God in human form, told us to have faith. He said that whoever believes in him will have eternal life. **Saints** are people who had great faith and lived like Jesus lived and taught. They were holy and full of love for God and others. The Church has declared that some of them are in heaven. The saints are examples for us. You will meet a few of them in these pages.

BTW

Of the more than 7 billion people in the world, about one third are Christian. About half of those Christians are Catholic.

Scripture Link

Appearance to Thomas

After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to the apostles. Thomas wasn't there. When the other apostles told him they had seen Jesus, Thomas couldn't accept it. He said he wouldn't believe until he saw and touched the wounds on Jesus's hands, feet, and side. A week later Jesus returned and this time Thomas was present. Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounds and believe. Thomas declared, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

(cf. Jn 20:24–29)

The Creed

A **creed** is a summary of beliefs. At Sunday Mass we pray the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed. The first part of this book explains the truths we say that we believe when we pray the Apostles' Creed. This creed is based on the teaching of the **apostles**. These were the first followers of Jesus and the leaders of the early Church. The **pope**, who is the head of the Church, and other **bishops** are their successors. They continue to teach us about the faith. Our Catholic faith is the same throughout the world.

The Catholic Life

The next part of the book introduces you to the ways Catholics worship God together. Then there are chapters that explain how Catholics live according to God's laws. The final chapters explore ways to pray. This book will help you have a living faith that you will want to share with others.

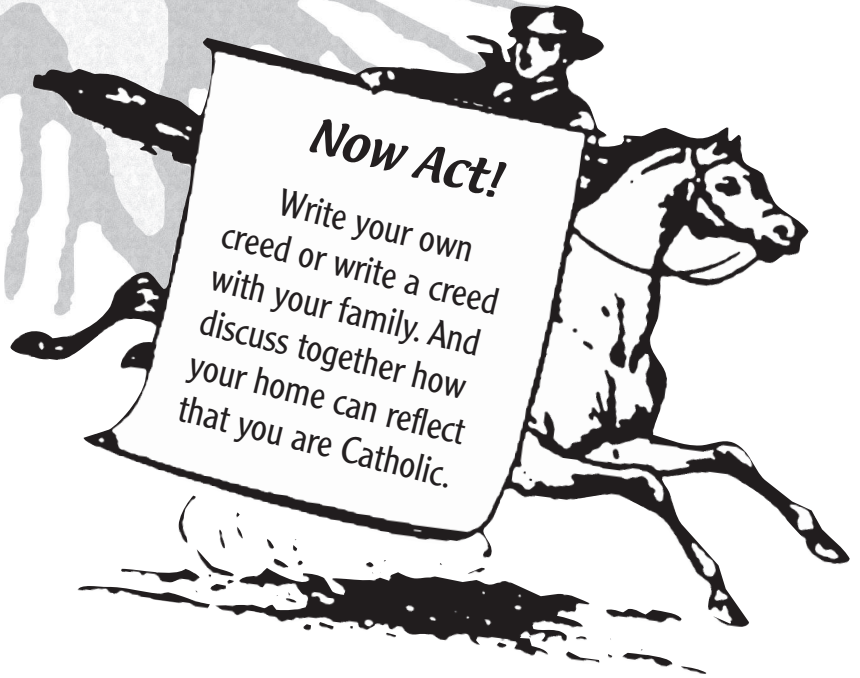
Did You Know?

Someone who dies for the faith is called a *martyr*. This word is Greek for "witness."

From My Heart

Here is an act of faith:

“My God, I believe in you and all that your Church teaches, because you have said it, and your word is true. Amen.”



Recap

- Faith is belief that God exists.
- Reasons for faith are creation, our sense of right and wrong, and our longing for happiness.
- We develop a relationship with God through prayer.

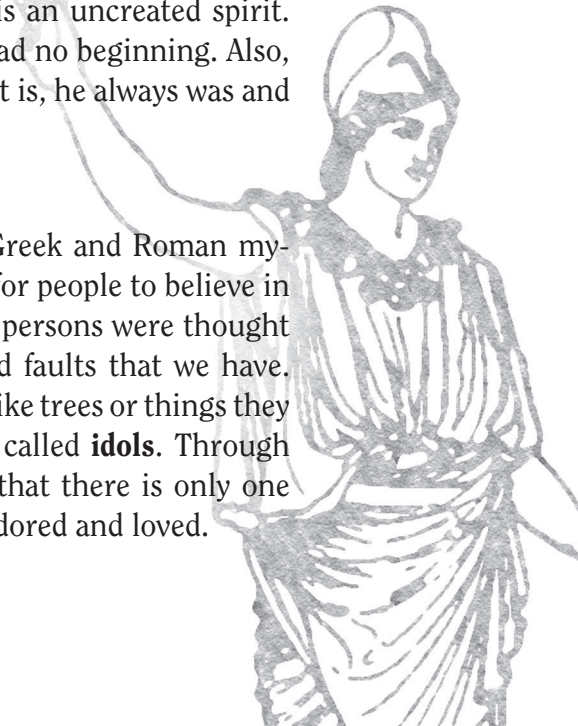
What Is God Like?

Catechism *God is the one who is, who has every good quality to the full, and who has no beginning or end (cf. no. 213).*

When we think about the fact that God is pure spirit, what comes to mind? Sometimes it's tough to understand how God is always with us watching over us, because we can't see or hear or touch God. God is a pure **spirit**, which means that he has no physical body and is invisible. God is an uncreated spirit. In other words, no one made God. He had no beginning. Also, God will always exist. God is **eternal**, that is, he always was and always will be.

One God

If you studied or have read about Greek and Roman mythology, you know that it was common for people to believe in many gods and goddesses. These divine persons were thought to be like us with the same virtues and faults that we have. Other early people believed that objects like trees or things they carved were gods. These false gods are called **idols**. Through the Jewish people, we came to believe that there is only one God, the Supreme Being, who is to be adored and loved.



Holy God

Take the word *God*, stretch it out, and it becomes “good.” That is fitting because God is good. There is nothing evil about him. We say that God is **holy**. Think of any good quality, or perfection, such as kindness, and God has it without limit, that is, to an **infinite** degree. For example, God is infinitely kind. God, however, is basically a mystery. He is beyond anything we can imagine. The words we use to describe him are only a shadow of what our great God is really like. We do, though, get glimpses of God’s qualities. Anything you make is a reflection of you. It tells something about you. Similarly, what God has made teaches us about him. Everything in the universe speaks about God.

BTW

*Omn*i means “all.”
 God is **omnipresent**
 (everywhere),
omnipotent
 (all-powerful), and
omniscient
 (all-knowing).

God’s Presence

God is present everywhere, keeping everything in existence. You could go to the ends of the earth or the farthest star, and God would still be there. He is with you this moment. Better still, God is present within you! He is the source of life.

God’s Power

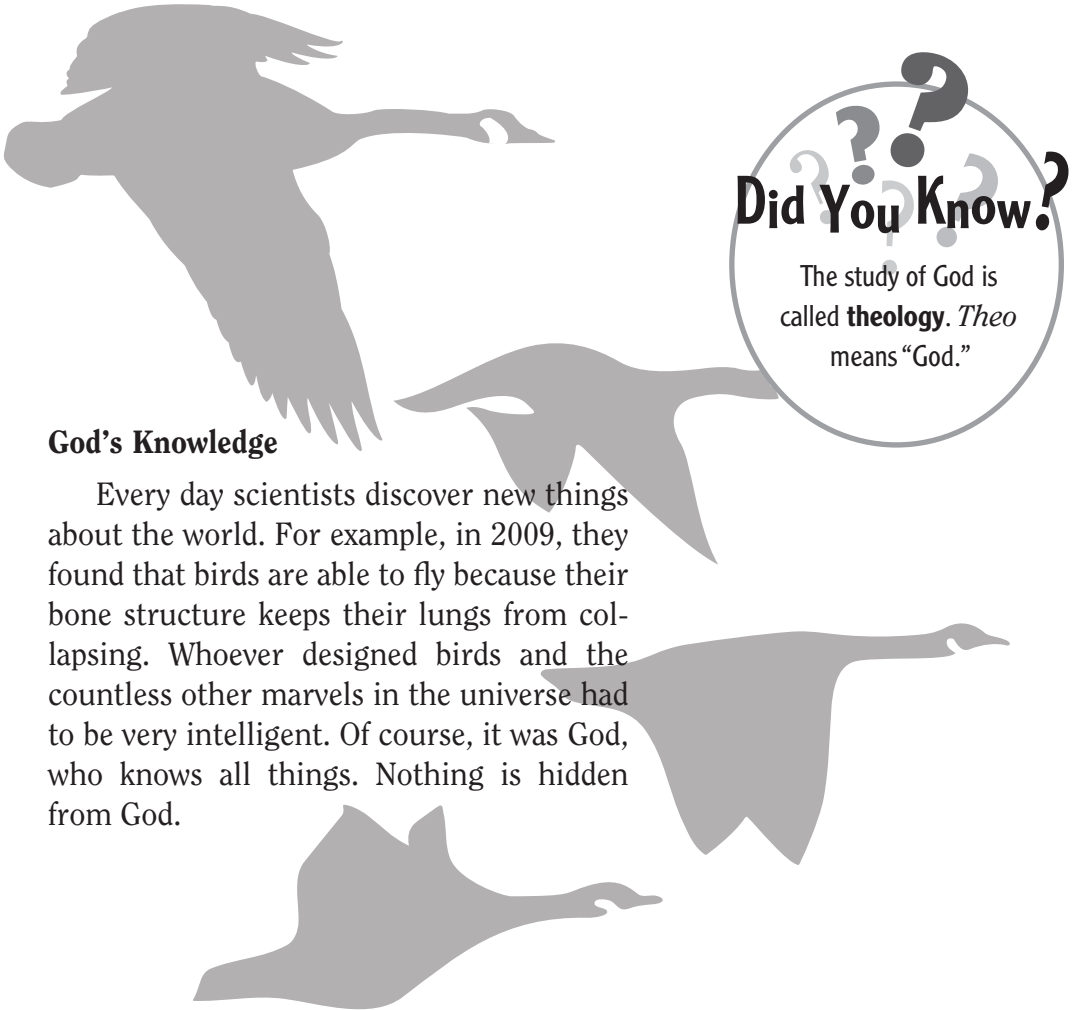
Have you ever been to the ocean and seen waves crashing on the shore and against rocks? The ocean is mighty and wide. It speaks to us of God’s power. God rules everything and can do anything. Nothing is impossible for God. He is all-powerful.

Scripture Link

God's Personal Name

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. One day when Moses led his father-in-law's sheep to Mount Horeb, he saw a bush on fire that did not burn up. When Moses approached it, God called out to him and told him to remove his sandals because the place was holy ground. Then God told Moses to ask Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to let his people go free. Moses asked God his name. God replied, "I am who I am." This is God's personal, mysterious name. It means "He who is," the source of all being. It also means "I am with you," which shows God's faithful love for us.

(cf. Ex 3:1–15)



Did You Know?

The study of God is called **theology**. *Theo* means "God."

God's Knowledge

Every day scientists discover new things about the world. For example, in 2009, they found that birds are able to fly because their bone structure keeps their lungs from collapsing. Whoever designed birds and the countless other marvels in the universe had to be very intelligent. Of course, it was God, who knows all things. Nothing is hidden from God.

BTW

Atheism (AY-thee-is-uhm) is belief in no God. **Agnosticism** (ag-NOS-ti-siz-uhm) is to be unsure of God's existence.

A God of Truth

How do you feel when someone lies to you? We always seek to know the truth. The sciences help us discover what is real. God always speaks the truth, and God keeps his promises. We can trust God not to deceive us. What our faith tells us doesn't contradict what we learn from science. There is only one truth.

A God of Beauty

When we see a beautiful flower or hear a beautiful piece of music, our hearts are glad. The beauty of the earth is only an inkling of God's beauty, which we will behold in heaven.

A God of Justice

Justice means giving everyone what is due to him or her. God is fair. He punishes evil and rewards good. We will see this at a final judgment at the end of the world.

Did You Know?

Out of respect for God's holiness, Jewish people never say or write God's name. They use the word *Lord*, and they write G-d.

Brainstorm

How many things in nature can you think of that show the power of God? How many things reflect his kindness?

A God of Mercy

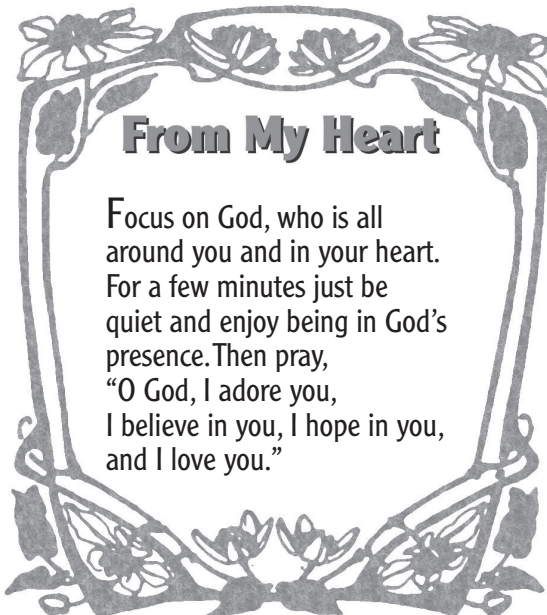
Although God is just, he also forgives. By the redemption, he forgave the human race; in the Scriptures we see how often he forgave his people, the Israelites; and he willingly forgives us whenever we ask. God has compassion for us when we are sorry for doing wrong. With love, he offers us another chance.

A God of Love

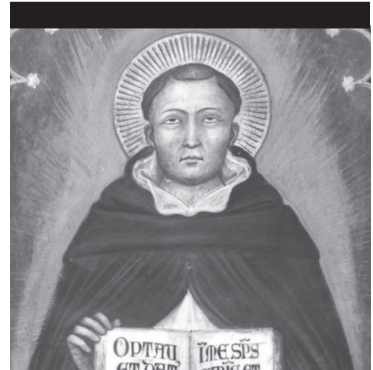
God loves us more than a mother loves her child. His love is everlasting. No matter what we do, God faithfully loves us. St. John said, “God *is* love.”

An Unchanging God

God never changes. For all eternity he has the perfections you have just read about. This wonderful Being is who we came from and the One to whom we are going.



A Catholic VIP



St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

St. Thomas was born into a wealthy family. When he joined the religious community of the Dominicans, his family was upset and imprisoned him for a year in their castle. But Thomas rejoined the Dominicans and went on to become a brilliant Christian thinker and writer. He is known for the *Summa Theologiae*, five volumes that summarize theology. Near the end of his life, St. Thomas concluded that all he had written was as worthless as straw compared to true knowledge of God. St. Thomas is a doctor of the Church. His feast day is January 28.

Now Act!

In Scripture the Israelites had names for God, such as Shield, the Holy One, Shepherd, King, Master, and Rock. Choose one of these, or make up your own name for God, and write a prayer to him, calling him by that name. When you speak to God, address him by this special name.



Recap

- There is one God, a pure, uncreated spirit who is eternal and unchanging.
- God is everywhere, is all-powerful, and knows all things.
- God has all perfections to an infinite degree. He is just, truthful, merciful, and loving.