



C O N V E R S I O N

Following the Call of Christ

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Bishop Robert Barron

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Bishop Robert Barron's in-depth study of conversion. This program is designed to help you understand and apply what you learn from Bishop Barron's video talks on conversion. The aim is to increase understanding, promote reflection, and encourage practical action. You will have the chance to dig into the Catholic tradition and grapple with Scripture and the Church's teaching as it is summarized in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*. You will also be able to use this study to assess and enhance your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The guide is built around QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING, which summarize Bishop Barron's key teaching points and QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION, which ask you to reflect on this teaching and apply it to your daily life.

Conversion is not just a one-time event, but an ever-deepening process of growing closer to Jesus until we are finally fully united with him and his will. Through six biblical stories, Bishop Barron demonstrates how those who have met God are forever changed and live the rest of their lives in service to his plan and his mission. By exploring these stories, we will come to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of conversion in our own lives, how to discern God's call to us, how to overcome the obstacles we put up to answering the call, and the fruit of saying "yes" to God.

The first words Jesus speaks early in the Gospel of Mark are: "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). God's order and way of doing things has been made real in the very person of Jesus. The word for repent — *metanoia* — means to go beyond the mind that you have or go beyond your attitude and perspective. We sinners live within the narrow confines of our ego, focusing on our own plans and our own projects. The spiritual masters say this is living in the "small soul." When we are converted, and give our life to Jesus Christ, we begin to live in the "Great Soul." When you are linked to Jesus Christ, you are linked to the great power that is here and now creating the whole universe, which means you are linked to everything and everyone else.

To begin, we will listen to Bishop Barron's brief introductory remarks on *metanoia* and conversion, and then work through the questions on the following pages.



QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) paragraphs 1427 and 1226-1229. How is Baptism the Sacrament of the “first and fundamental conversion”? Read CCC 1263-1266. What are the gifts of Baptism, and how does the Sacrament change a person?
2. Read CCC 1428-1433. Why is continual conversion necessary in the life of the baptized? What does it mean, and how is it lived out by the baptized?

3. Read Mark 1:14-15. Jesus' first public preaching is focused on the Kingdom of God being "at hand." Where is he saying that Kingdom can be found? What must his hearers do in order to be united with the Kingdom?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. When were you baptized? How have you experienced the fruits of Baptism and other moments of conversion throughout your own life?



2. Bishop Barron points out that what sin does is narrow our vision and experience of the world: we center on ourselves; we live out of a “small soul.” The Greek word used for repentance is “metanoia,” which means, at root, to “change one’s mind.” This is not merely accepting new ideas, but taking on an entirely new way of thinking and being. As Bishop Barron puts it, metanoia is to live in intimacy with the “Great Soul”—God— and to see the world each day with God’s eyes. In what ways have you experienced sin narrowing your vision and experience of life? If you have experienced conversion and profound repentance in your life before, how did your vision change?

3. The history of Christianity is filled with the called and the converted. Who are some of your favorite figures in the Bible and in Church history who have answered God’s call and “changed their minds”? How do their lives reflect the change from a narrow, self-centered focus to one attuned, above all, to God’s will?