



CATHOLICISM
THE PIVOTAL PLAYERS
Family Devotional



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WORD
on FIRE

CATHOLICISM

THE PIVOTAL PLAYERS

Family Devotional

	INTRODUCTION	5
Days 1-5:	ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI	
	<i>Early Years</i>	7
	<i>Rebuild My Church</i>	8
	<i>Growth of the Order</i>	9
	<i>Missions Near and Far</i>	10
	<i>Stigmata and Death</i>	11
Days 6-10:	ST. THOMAS AQUINAS	
	<i>St. Thomas Aquinas: Theologian</i>	13
	<i>Scholar and Saint</i>	14
	<i>Thomas' Doctrine of God</i>	15
	<i>The Human Person</i>	16
	<i>Why is Thomas a Pivotal Player</i>	17
Days 11-16:	ST. CATHERINE of SIENA	
	<i>Life and Times</i>	19
	<i>There is a Bridge in Avignon</i>	20
	<i>Catherine's Understanding of God</i>	21
	<i>Sin and Salvation</i>	22
	<i>Christ the Bridge</i>	23
	<i>Cooperating with Grace</i>	24

Days 17-20:	BL. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN	
	<i>The Convert and An Oxford Man</i>	26
	<i>A Slow, Meditative Conversion</i>	27
	<i>Ordination and the Oratory</i>	28
	<i>The Development of Christian Doctrine</i>	29
Days 21-24:	G.K. CHESTERTON	
	<i>Introduction and Coming of Age</i>	31
	<i>Literary Lion</i>	32
	<i>Becoming Catholic</i>	33
	<i>The Everlasting Man</i>	34
Days 25-30:	MICHELANGELO	
	<i>Michelangelo: The Artist</i>	36
	<i>Life and Times</i>	37
	<i>The Pietà</i>	38
	<i>The David</i>	39
	<i>The Sistine Chapel Ceiling</i>	40
	<i>The Last Judgement</i>	41



INTRODUCTION

Through this *Family Devotional*, you can share the beauty, truth, and goodness of Bishop Robert Barron's *CATHOLICISM: The Pivotal Players* video series with your whole family. Suggestions on the following pages are offered so that both adults and children can experience the videos in a deeper way, and then use those experiences to become better disciples of Christ.

Each *Pivotal Player* inspires us to live an abundant Christian life in the way God desires. By understanding, accepting, and using the unique talents, abilities, and blessings provided to each and every one of us by God, we can live life to the fullest, fulfilling the purpose for which we were each created.

The *Family Devotional* is organized in 30 sections with each session focused on one chapter or track of a *Pivotal Player's* video story. We encourage you to complete all the sections for one *Player* before moving on to another, so the full story of his or her life will come more fully alive.

Scripture Verse: Each section begins with a verse from Scripture that relates to the video topic and highlights the spiritual lesson of that chapter. You can start by reading the verse aloud and then pause for a few moments of silence to let the words sink in. After reflection, feel free to share to any thoughts or feelings that the verse inspires. Keep the verse in mind as you proceed through the rest of the section. Some families might even be inspired to memorize the verse and use it in prayer at meals or bedtime.

Video Selection: Watch the track or chapter listed. You can find the exact track by opening the menu on the video and clicking on that track to begin viewing. It is best to watch just what is suggested and complete the rest of the session before moving on to other parts of the video.

Discussion and Activities: Topics and activities are provided to help you and your family dive more deeply into the video and the *Player's* life and contributions. You can choose the suggestions that make the most sense for your family or group. Most suggestions are appropriate for ages 9-adult; however, even younger children will be able to relate to some of each session's content.

Closing Prayer: The session ends with a prayer that encourages you to lift your hearts and thoughts to the Lord in praise, thanksgiving, and petition. We suggest that you say this prayer together and add spontaneous prayers as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

**May God bless you in this walk with the *Pivotal Players*
... and with Jesus forever!**



ST. FRANCIS *of* ASSISI
The Reformer

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ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI: *The Reformer*

Early Years - Track 2

Read: 1 Tim 6:17-18 “*Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.*”

Watch: *Early Years* video segment

Discuss:

- When Francis was a young man, he wanted to be famous, so he volunteered to fight in several wars. Do you every hope to be famous?
- What do you think you’ll have to do to become famous? What kind of sacrifices are you ready to make to become famous?
- After Francis was a prisoner of war, he stopped seeking fame. What changed in his life? How did he spend his time then? What do you think he was seeking then instead of fame?
- Bishop Barron told a story about Francis hugging a leper, which made him feel great joy. Prior to this hug, he was repulsed by lepers and would never have touched one. Describe a time when you overcame your fear or your dislike of something, and acted in a way that brought you great joy.
- Francis started living with “*radical detachment from the goods of the world and radical attachment to the purposes of God.*” What does this mean to you? Give some examples of “goods of the world” and “purposes of God.” Which things provide lasting joy – the goods of the world or the purposes of God? Why?
- Bishop Barron said that poverty gave Francis freedom. In what ways can voluntary poverty make someone free?

Pray: *Lord, you created us for your own purposes and for friendship with you. You gave us the beauty and goods of this world as gifts. Help us to keep our focus on you and on your purposes for our lives. Keep us away from the temptation of pursuing the things of this world, like money, fame, or power, in place of you and your purposes. Amen.*



ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI: *The Reformer*

Rebuild My Church - Track 3

Read: Eph 2:19-22 “So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being build together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

Watch: *Rebuild My Church* video segment

Discuss:

- What did Francis do first after he heard Christ tell him to “rebuild my house that is falling into ruin”? What did his father think about Francis’ approach? What do you think about what he did?
- Francis went to see Pope Innocent III to ask permission to start a new, religious order. The Pope finally listened to him because he saw Francis in a dream as a little poor man holding up the Lateran church, a very significant church in Rome. Have you ever had a dream or a strong, spiritual experience that helped you decide something? Describe it.
- What is the “mustard seed principle”? What do you have that is small that you can give to Jesus to make bigger?
- Francis loved singing. He wrote the *Canticle of the Sun* and a contemporary composer put it to music and posted it on YouTube. Take a look and sing along! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lE_Ei6JRI1o

Pray: *Lord, we praise you for your wisdom and grace that lead us here on earth. Thank you for giving us direction for our lives. Help us to realize that although we are small, like a mustard seed, your power can transform our small gifts into something large and glorious. Give us the wisdom and faith to give you all that we have, so you can multiply it and cause it to bear much fruit, according to your will. Amen.*



ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI: *The Reformer*

Growth of the Order - Track 5

Read: Matt 19:16-17, 20-21 “Now someone approached him and said, ‘Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?’ Jesus answered, ‘If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.’ The young man said to him, ‘All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’”

Watch: *Growth of the Order* video segment

Discuss:

- Many joined Francis and committed to living in poverty and totally trusting God for everything. Do you think this was a popular choice then? How about now? Why or why not?
- Francis loved nature and believed all creatures are our brothers and sisters. What do you love in nature? How can you see God in that part of nature?
- Act out the story of the wolf of Gubbio. Someone can play the wolf, someone else St. Francis, and all the others can be the townspeople of Gubbio. There is also an interesting reflection on this story here: <http://www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog/st-francis-and-the-wolf-of-gubbio/4657/>
- Many parishes bless pets and other animals on the Feast Day of St. Francis, October 4. Find out if your parish does this. If so, gather friends and family with their pets and attend. If not, volunteer to help get it started, especially if you have pets of your own.

Pray: *Lord, we praise you and thank you for the thousands of creatures you have put upon this earth. Help us take good care of all the animals that you created, and to treat them as your blessed creatures. Also, help us to live more simply, so we can take care of the people you created who are sick, homeless or poor. Amen.*



ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI: *The Reformer*

Missions Near and Far - Track 6

Read: Matt 28:19-20 *Jesus said, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”*

Watch: *Missions Near and Far* video segment

Discuss:

- Francis did reform the church, but not with worldly power or strength. He did it by example. What are some of the things he did that you think brought the Church of his time back to better practices of the faith?
- When the Friars Minor, Francis’ brothers, went around the world to tell others about Jesus and how to live the ideal, Christian life, many were ignored, tortured or even killed. Does everything we do for God have to be successful to be worthwhile? Why or why not?
- According to Francis, to “bear all suffering for the love of God” is the definition of pure joy. What suffering can you bear in your own life out of love for God? How does suffering connect us more deeply with Jesus?
- Francis started the tradition of the Nativity Scene that we still follow today during the Christmas season. He set up a manger with hay and two live animals—an ox and a donkey—in a cave in the village of Greccio. Francis preached about “the babe of Bethlehem,” while the villagers stood around the manger and reflected on the first Christmas. Draw your vision of the Nativity and explain who and what you included.

Pray: *Jesus, you asked us all to go and tell others about you and how much you love all of us. We thank you for giving us the strength and courage to talk to others about you. Help us to always be ready to tell our friends about the joy that comes from a friendship with you. Amen.*



ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI: *The Reformer*

Stigmata and Death - Track 7

Read: John 20:25 *After Jesus' resurrection, some apostles said to Thomas "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.' Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.' Thomas answered and said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.'"*

Watch: *Stigmata and Death* video segment

Discuss:

- What is the "stigmata"? Why do you think God gives it to some of the saints?
- Bishop Barron said that most of the saints find great joy in suffering. He also said that when we are suffering, we can't control our lives, so can become "utterly abandoned" to God. Think about this for a while and then share your reaction. How might we find greater joy when we are suffering?
- Francis was very joyful as he was dying, and he actually died singing! Plus, he died in "complete poverty." How could he be joyful as he neared death? How could he be joyful in "complete poverty"?

Pray: *Jesus, you showed the apostle and saint, Thomas, your wounds, so he would believe that you are God and that you rose from the dead. You also said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Please give us the faith to believe in you, even though we have not seen you in person. Also, please give us joy in all our suffering and help us abandon ourselves to your loving care. Amen.*



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
The Theologian



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: *The Theologian*

St. Thomas Aquinas: Theologian - Track 1

Read: Psalm 139:13-14 “You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! My very self you know.”

Watch: *St. Thomas Aquinas: Theologian* video segment

Discuss:

- A theologian is someone who explores God and his relationship with us and with the world. Do you think that is an important job? Why or why not?
- If Jesus wanted to give you a reward for something good you had done, what would you ask from him?
- When Jesus offered Thomas a reward, he said that he wanted nothing other than Christ. What do you think he meant by that answer? How could you get Christ as a reward or blessing?
- Do you consider God your friend? Why or why not?
- God wants all of us to become saints. Bishop Barron said, “*Thomas was a saint, deeply in love with Jesus Christ.*” What are other ways to describe a saint? (Smaller children can draw a picture of themselves as a saint and explain what the picture shows.)

Pray: *Dear Lord, you have created me and you know me better than I know myself. You have put me on this earth for a reason and for a special mission. No matter what I do in my life on earth, please help me to do it with love and holiness, so I can become a saint and live with you forever. Amen.*



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: *The Theologian*

Scholar and Saint - Track 3

Read: Isaiah 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.”

Watch: *Scholar and Saint* video segment

Discuss:

- St. Thomas studied the ways of God and wrote many, many pages about God and his relationship with us and with the world. Yet near the end of his life, Thomas said that his own writings were worthless compared to “what has been revealed” to him. What do you think he meant?
- In what ways do we hear the voice of God?
- How can we be sure we are open to the God’s voice?
- Discuss the reading from Isaiah above. How is God different from us? How are we similar to God?

Pray: *Dear Lord, don't let me get too caught up in my daily tasks and the things of the world, so that I miss seeing you and hearing your voice. What you have to show and tell me are more valuable than anything else in this world. Please help me always be ready to receive what you have to give. Amen.*



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: *The Theologian*

Thomas' Doctrine of God - Track 4

Read: Psalm 139:1-2, 13-14 “Lord, you have searched me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works!”

Watch: *Thomas' Doctrine of God* video segment

Discuss:

- How would you describe God to someone who never heard of him?
- When God shows himself to us, it is called “revelation.” What are some of God’s revelations that you’ve noticed or received?
- Who is the perfect revelation of God?
- Do you believe God knows you very well? Why or why not?
- How do we know that God loves us?

Pray: *Dear Lord, you gave me life on this earth and want to give me life forever in heaven too. Please help me understand that you love me and only want what is good for me, and for all the people you created. Help those who do not know you to want to learn about you and have a friendship with you. Help me tell others about my friendship with you. Amen.*



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: *The Theologian*

The Human Person - Track 6

Read: Genesis 21:7 “he Lord, God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.”

Watch: *The Human Person* video segment

Discuss:

- God created human beings with both physical and spiritual dimensions. What do we call the physical part? What do we call the spiritual part?
- Is one part – spiritual or physical – more important than the other? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to be “created in the image and likeness of God”? How should we take care of our soul and body then if we are made in God’s image?
- When we die, what happens to our body? What happens to our soul?
- When will the body and soul be re-united?

Note: Smaller children can draw an image of the Genesis quote above.

Pray: *Dear Creator God, thank you for making me both a physical and spiritual being with a soul and a body. Please fill my soul with your love and mercy, and help me to always respect and take care of my body. Amen.*



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: *The Theologian*

Why is Thomas a Pivotal Player? - Track 8

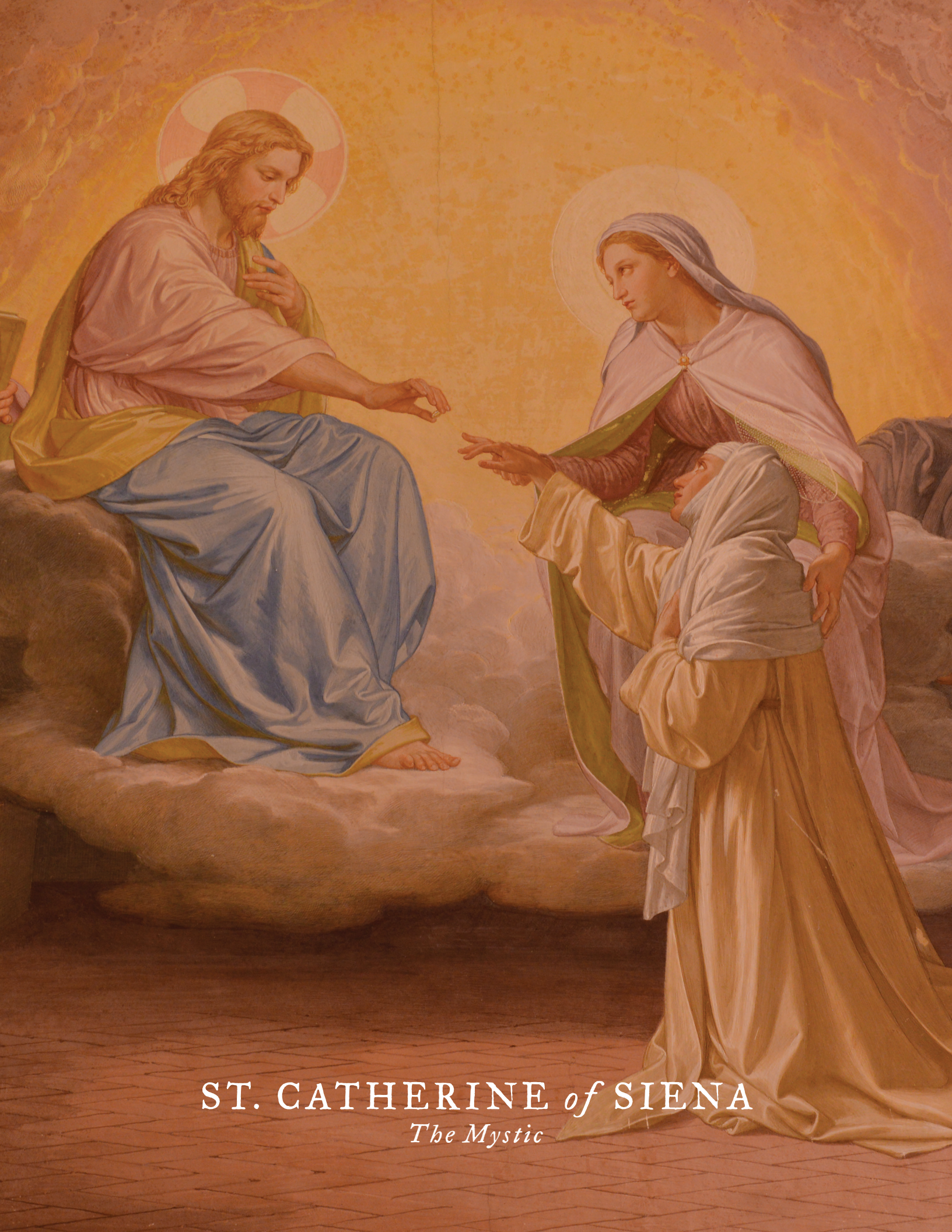
Read: Matt 7:7-8 *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”*

Watch: *Why a Pivotal Player* video segment

Discuss:

- What does the promise from Jesus quoted above mean to you?
- Are you afraid to ask questions about anything? Why or why not?
- What questions do you have about God or any part of the Catholic religion? (An older family member can do research in the Catechism of the Catholic Church for any questions that your family cannot answer.)

Pray: *Dear Lord, you promise that we will receive answers when we ask or seek. Please guide us in our search for truth and help us use the good minds that you have given us to find and understand the truth, which comes from you. Amen.*



ST. CATHERINE *of* SIENA
The Mystic



ST. CATHERINE *of* SIENA: *The Mystic*

St. Catherine: the Mystic - Track 1



Life and Times - Track 2 (up to 9:43)

Read: Matt 11:25 “Jesus said, *I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, you have revealed them to the childlike.*”

Watch: *St. Catherine: the Mystic* and part of the *Life and Times* video segment, stopping at 9:43. Note: The ending of *Life and Times* discusses aspects of Catherine’s life that might be disturbing to young children.

Discuss:

- What extraordinary power did St. Catherine have and when did it start?
- Catherine did not have an education and came from a regular, Italian family. Does it surprise you that God chose her to receive visions and communication from Jesus, Mary, and the saints? Why or why not?
- Most often, Catherine received her visions and instructions from Jesus while she was praying. How is she a model of a good prayer life?
- Bishop Barron said that Catherine was able to help make God’s will a reality on earth (as we pray “*your kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*”). How could she do this? How did Catherine follow God’s will in her life?
- Catherine was committed to helping the poor and the sick around her. Who is poor or sick around you? What can you do to help them?

Pray: *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.*



ST. CATHERINE of SIENA: *The Mystic*

There is a Bridge in Avignon - Track 3

Read: Catechism of the Catholic Church 1831 *“The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Jesus Christ. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them.”*

Watch: *There is a Bridge in Avignon* video segment

Discuss:

- Without an invitation, Catherine traveled from Siena, Italy, to Avignon, France, to meet the Pope and persuade him to move back to Rome. What virtues and gifts from the Holy Spirit did Catherine have in order to do this?
- Bishop Barron says that the Pope listened to her because she had a reputation for “extraordinary sanctity.” Who in our culture do we find extraordinary? Name someone who is your hero or that you find extraordinary, and explain why you think he/she is great.
- A saint is someone who thinks and acts according to God’s will, not their own. When have you had to make a decision between your own will (desire) and God’s will (desire)? How did you decide?
- Avignon was a familiar place in France because of a very popular children’s song: *On the Bridge in Avignon*. Watch this YouTube video, and if you would like, sing along and/or dance with your family. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZansTWTeKqs>

Pray: *Dear Lord, we praise you for giving Catherine and the other saints the courage and strength to do your will. Please help us recognize and imitate those people who value friendship with you as their greatest treasure and who put your will above their own. Amen.*



ST. CATHERINE of SIENA: *The Mystic*

Catherine's Understanding of God - Track 4

Read: Acts 17:26-28 “He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us. For in him, we live and move and have our being.”

Watch: *Catherine's Understanding of God* video segment

Discuss:

- Catherine said that God told her that she is “one who is not” and that he is “one who is.” How does this statement show the primary relationship between God and man?
- Catherine said that we are all like fish and God is like the sea where they swim. How do you think the fish get along with the sea? Can they survive without the sea? Can we survive without God? Why or why not?
- “God is beauty itself and all creation reflects the beauty of God,” said Catherine. What are the things in creation that you find very beautiful? (Younger children can draw pictures of these things.)
- Because of Catherine's writings about God, she was named a Doctor of the Church. That means that her teachings are important, not only for people of her time, but for every generation. What have you heard so far about Catherine's ideas that help you understand God better?

Pray: *Dear God, please help us remember that we can do nothing without you. You created us and you keep us alive to do your will here on earth. Thank you for all the beautiful things you created for us in the world, especially our family. Amen.*



ST. CATHERINE *of* SIENA: *The Mystic*

Sin and Salvation - Track 5

Read: Romans 7:19-20 *“For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil that I do not want. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.”*

Watch: *Sin and Salvation* video segment

Discuss:

- Catherine knew that God is love and she described him as “crazy in love with the world.” What are some of the ways that God shows his love for you and for the world?
- When we don’t love God or do something that he does not like, we sin. What are some examples of sin in the world?
- Bishop Barron says that sin is like an addiction — doing something bad over and over again and not being able to stop. What are some addictions that people can have?
- We need help to stop sinning. In other words, we need to be healed or saved from our sins. What did God do to save us from our sins?

Pray: *Heavenly Father, we praise you and thank you for loving us no matter what we do. Thank you for sending Jesus to earth to teach us about your love and help us avoid sin. Through his death and resurrection, he paid the price for our sins and made it possible to live eternally united to you. Amen.*



ST. CATHERINE *of* SIENA: *The Mystic*

Christ the Bridge - Track 6

Read: John 14:6-7 “Jesus said, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father.’”

Watch: *Christ the Bridge* video segment

Discuss:

- Catherine used a metaphor of a raging river and a bridge to describe the only way to overcome sin and grow closer to God. What does the river represent? Who is the bridge?
- There are three steps or levels on the bridge that represent our growth in the spiritual life. Those on the first step are beginners who avoid sin because they are afraid of God’s judgment. When have you avoided doing something wrong because you did not want to get punished?
- Those on the second step have moved beyond fear, and avoid sin because they love God and want to be friends with him. Can you think of any time that you avoided doing what was wrong because you loved someone?
- Those on the third or highest level of the bridge have achieved unity with God. They only think and do what God thinks and does. They are willing to accept any suffering or pain to be in union with God. Can you think of any time that you accepted pain or suffering to do something that was right?

Pray: *Dear God, thank you for giving us Jesus Christ as the bridge between heaven and earth. Since he is both God and man, he brings all people who follow him into unity with God. Help us to know Jesus, love him, and serve him more completely, so we can be fully united with you. Amen.*



ST. CATHERINE of SIENA: *The Mystic*

Cooperating with Grace - Track 7

Read: Matt 22:36-39 “*Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?*” Jesus replied, *‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*”

Watch: *Cooperating with Grace* video segment

Discuss:

- What is grace? What graces you have received?
- St. Catherine believed that humility, obedience, and love (or charity) were the foundations of the spiritual life. What is humility? Give examples of people acting in a humble, not prideful, way.
- Bishop Barron says that love is “willing the good of the other” and that “true love always involves suffering.” Can you put these thoughts in your own words?
- Jesus said we must die to ourselves to love God and our neighbor. Does this kind of love sound challenging? Give examples of people loving “for the good of the other” and then either suffering or not getting anything in return.
- Prayer is our communication with God. What are some ways we can engage in “inner prayer”? What are some examples of “outer prayer”?

Pray: *Jesus, you taught us to love God and one another unselfishly. Thank you for coming to earth and showing us how to love others without wanting anything in return. Thank you for your greatest act of love – dying on the cross to pay for our sins and to unite us eternally with you, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Please give us your grace, so we can truly love others and put their needs above our own. Amen.*



EX · UMBRIS · ET · IMAGINIBUS · IN · VERITATEM

BL. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN
The Convert





BL. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: *The Convert*

Newman: The Convert and An Oxford Man - Tracks 1 & 2

Read: Psalm 25:4-6 “*Make known to me your ways, Lord; teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior. For you I wait all the long day, because of your goodness, Lord. Remember your compassion and love, O Lord; for they are ages old.*”

Watch: *Newman: The Convert and An Oxford Man* video segments

Discuss:

- Bishop Barron said that Blessed John Henry Newman was a “lover of the truth.” What does that mean to you?
- During Newman’s lifetime, many believed that religion was all about feelings and did not contain any positive truth. Do you agree or disagree with this notion? Why? Give an example of a “truth” in the Catholic religion. Give an example of a religious feeling that you think relates to the truth.
- Newman attended and then taught at Oxford University in England. He spent many years there and dearly loved Oxford. After he converted to Catholicism, he no longer could teach at Oxford because of the controversy of his conversion. Have you ever had to leave a place or person that you loved? How did that feel? How did you cope with that change?
- One thing that Newman loved about the Catholic religion and did not find in the Protestant tradition was the Sacraments. What is a Sacrament? Why do you think Newman loved them?

Pray: *Dear Lord, we praise you for being truth itself and leading us in your ways through our Catholic faith. Help us to firmly believe that you are the way and the truth and the life and be faithful to your teachings. Amen.*



BL. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: *The Convert*

A Slow, Meditative Conversion - Track 4

Read: Galatians 3:26-28 *“For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Watch: *A Slow, Meditative Conversion* video segment

Discuss:

- The Anglican or Episcopal religion is a church that started in England and at Newman’s time, non-Anglicans were not allowed in positions of authority. Newman was criticized for his conversion to Catholicism and also called a traitor to England because he changed religions. How do you feel about how he was treated? Have you ever been criticized or called names that were unjustified? What can you do in those types of situations?
- After leaving Oxford, Newman went into seclusion and studied the writings of the Church Fathers, the men that were leaders of the early Christian Church. He found many answers there. How can studying our Catholic history help us better understand the challenges of today’s Church?
- Because of the Reformation in the 16th century, there were many disagreements between Protestants and Catholics that continue to this day. Do you have any non-Catholic friends? What, if anything, have you discussed with them about religion? Can you have a respectful dialogue with them? Why or why not?
- Newman’s writing desk reminded Bishop Barron of Newman’s great skill as a writer. What would be a symbol of one of your talents? How about a symbol of a friend or family member’s talent?

Pray: *Dear Lord, thank you for all the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding you poured out on the Church Fathers through the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Continue to pour your Spirit into today’s Church and help us have a respectful dialogue with other religions to heal the divisions brought about by the Reformation. Amen.*



BL. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: *The Convert*

Ordination and the Oratory - Track 5

Read: 2 Cor 12:9-10 *“The Lord said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.’ I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

Watch: *Ordination and the Oratory* video segment

Discuss:

- Even though Newman moved from one Christian religion to another, his conversion meant the loss of his job at Oxford and also his reputation. However, he did it anyway as he was in search of the truth. What characteristics or virtues do you see in story of Newman’s conversion?
- After Newman entered the Catholic Church, he decided to become a priest. He was required to attend classes with seminarians who were much younger and less learned than he was. Yet he approached this requirement with humility. What is humility? Where are you called to practice humility in your own life?
- When he returned to England, Newman formed a new Oratory of St Philip Neri, which was a community of priests that worked together with the same goals and commitments. Why is being in community important? What communities are you in that you find helpful?

Pray: *Dear Jesus, you are always ready to give us your grace in times of trial and weakness. Thank you for the blessings of communities where we can join together with other Christians and share our faith. Help us to always rely on you, and on our parish and family communities, for help in times of trouble. Amen.*



BL. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: *The Convert*

The Development of Christian Doctrine - Track 7

Read: 12 Thes 2:15-17 “Brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting encouragement and good hope through his grace, encourage our hearts and strengthen them in every good deed and word.”

Watch: *The Development of Christian Doctrine* video segment

Discuss:

- One Protestant criticism has been that the Roman Catholic Church has added unnecessary things to the revealed truth of the Bible. Catholics rely both on the Bible and on “sacred tradition” to fully understand the truth given to the apostles by Jesus. Explore the meaning of “sacred tradition” and how it influences Catholic beliefs by reflecting on this excerpt from Vatican II:
“The tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts, through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For, as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her” (Dei Verbum 8).
- Bishop Barron uses a full-grown tree as an example of a fully-developed idea or belief. How does the tree start its life? What are the “riches” of its full development that are only visible much later? How does this analogy help you understand sacred tradition?
- Talking about religious beliefs and the journey of faith, Newman said, “*In a higher world it is otherwise; but here below, to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.*” How has your faith or beliefs changed in your lifetime? What Catholic beliefs do you hope to understand better as you grow older?
- To guide the development of doctrine, the Church has created the Magisterium, an infallible and living teaching authority guided by the Holy Spirit. The Magisterium includes the Pope and all the Bishops. Do you think the Magisterium is necessary? Why or why not?

Pray: *Dear Jesus, Thanks for sending the Holy Spirit to continue to teach us and remind us of all you said and did. Please bless the leaders of the Church and continue to fill them with the fullness of the Spirit, so they can shepherd us in the truth. Amen.*



G.K. CHESTERTON
The Evangelist



G.K. CHESTERTON: *The Evangelist*

Introduction and Coming of Age - Tracks 1 & 2

Read: Acts 1:8-9 “You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.”

Watch: *Introduction and Coming of Age* video segments

Discuss:

- Bishop Barron calls G. K. Chesterton an “evangelist.” What is that? Who else does Jesus ask to become an evangelist? Are ordinary, lay Catholics called to evangelize? Why or why not?
- Chesterton was very joyful and imaginative. Does it make sense to you that a deeply religious person can be jovial? Why or why not?
- Once Chesterton spent 18 hours discussing and arguing about something with his younger brother. Is it acceptable to argue with someone about your ideas? Why or why not? What do we need to avoid when we have a heated discussion or argument?
- It was through gratitude that Chesterton came to believe in God. He believed life was wonderful and felt very grateful for his own existence. Then he realized that if he felt grateful, he had to be grateful to *someone*. For what are you grateful? Is there anything in your life that is *not* a gift from God?

Pray: *Dear Lord, thank you for giving us life and also sending your holy Spirit to us, so that we can be your witnesses “to the ends of the earth.” Please help us use our natural personalities and the gifts and talents you gave us to live an authentic, Christian life. Give us the ability to always be grateful for each day and for each person you have put in our lives. Amen.*



G.K. CHESTERTON: *The Evangelist*

Literary Lion - Track 3

Read: Romans 12:3, 9-10, 16-18 *“For by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned. Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.”*

Watch: *Literary Lion* video segment

Discuss:

- How does Chesterton’s friendship with George Bernard Shaw reflect the Scripture quote above? Is it difficult for you to follow St. Paul’s advice in your friendships? Why or why not?
- Bishop Barron said that Chesterton could tell the difference between a *person* and his or her *ideas*. Think about that and explain how people and their ideas are different. Is it easy to separate a person from his or her ideas? How would you do it? How should you treat someone with whom you disagree?
- Chesterton liked paradoxes, which are truths that have contradictory parts. Christianity has many paradoxes. Can you name some?

Pray: *Dear Lord, Thank you for putting so many different types of people here on earth with us. Show us the beauty and dignity of each person we meet. Help us to love one another because you love each and every person you create, regardless of their ideas. Help us to see your divine image in each person we meet, so we can truly live at peace with everyone. Amen.*



G.K. CHESTERTON: *The Evangelist*

Becoming Catholic - Track 4

Read: Philippians 4:8 *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”*

Watch: *Becoming Catholic* video segment

Discuss:

- Chesterton was a popular fiction writer and his stories, especially the Fr. Brown detective series, have remained popular to this day. Somehow, Chesterton always found a way to slip the truth of Catholicism into his stories. That was one of the ways he evangelized. Select one of the Fr. Brown detective stories and read it together as a family. Discuss the Christian teachings you find in the story. You can find several free stories at: <http://manybooks.net/titles/chestertotext95infrb10.html>
- Chesterton became a Roman Catholic in 1922. When asked, he said he converted because “Catholicism is true and talks as a real messenger refusing to tamper with a real message.” Discuss this comment. Give examples of messengers that *do* tamper with God’s message.
- Being Catholic in England during Chesterton’s time was not always easy or popular, yet he was proud to publicly proclaim the Faith. Are you proud to be Catholic? Why or why not? What are some of the challenges to Catholicism that you’ve seen in our culture? What can we do in the face of those challenges?

Pray: *Dear God the Father, we praise you for sending you Son, Jesus Christ, who is truth himself, to earth to reveal the truth of life and of your love for us. Lead us your ways by keeping us close to your Son and our Savior, Jesus. Help us to be proud of our Catholic heritage and to be able to explain it to those around us. Amen.*



G.K. CHESTERTON: *The Evangelist*

The Everlasting Man - Track 8

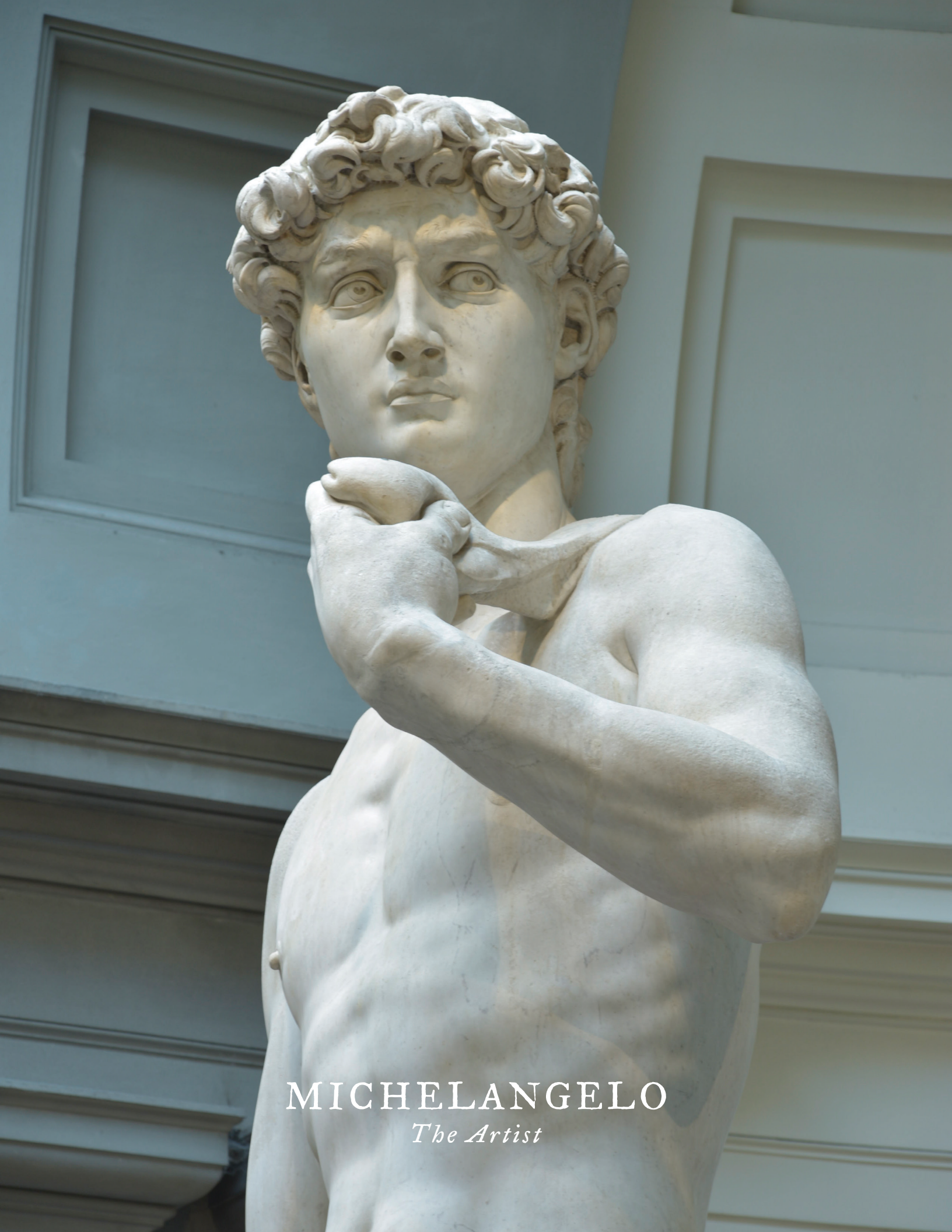
Read: John 8:56-59 “Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad.” So the Jews said to him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM. So they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area.’”

Watch: *The Everlasting Man* video segment

Discuss:

- Chesterton wrote the first part of his book, *The Everlasting Man*, to respond to the extreme evolutionist who saw man as just a highly evolved animal. Are men and women “highly evolved animals” in your mind? Why or why not?
- Chesterton talks about the prehistoric cave paintings found in southern France. What do these paintings have to do with our belief that we are “made in the image of God”? How do the paintings contradict the idea that man is just an animal?
- In the second part of the book, Chesterton wrote in response to those who believed all religions were equal and that Jesus was just another good, moral teacher. How is Jesus different than any other good, moral teacher?
- Bishop Barron talks about the “supreme paradox of the Incarnation.” What is the Incarnation? Why is it a paradox?

Pray: *Dear Lord, you made us in your image and through your grace, gave us creative power to use for the good here on earth. Thank you for also giving us the way and the truth and the life through the Incarnation. May we all come to share in your everlasting life by holding fast to Jesus, the second person of the Trinity who is fully God and fully man. Amen.*



MICHELANGELO
The Artist



MICHELANGELO: *The Artist*

Michelangelo: The Artist - Track 1

Read: Exodus 20:3-6 “You shall not have other gods besides me. You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or worship them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their fathers’ wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and the fourth generations, but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation, on the children of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Watch: *Michelangelo: The Artist* video segment

Discuss:

- Bishop Barron said in the introduction to this episode, “*Every created thing in the world reflects God’s being.*” What do you think this means and why is it true?
- Icons are still used by the Eastern Church. What is a religious icon? Look it up at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icon> Create your own icon by drawing, painting, or searching for images on the Internet.
- In the Roman Catholic Church, we usually display statues, paintings and stained glass windows instead of icons in our churches. Why do you think icons and other religious art are used so often?
- Go to your own parish church and take a closer look at the art that is there. What is depicted? What details did you notice that you had not seen before? What meaning do you find in this artwork?
- In the Old Testament, there was a ban on creating an image of God in any form. How does the Incarnation support the development of Christian art?
- Each icon, statue, or painting found in a church represents a spiritual reality. As Bishop Barron says, we are supposed to be drawn *through* the piece of art to connect with the “transcendent reality” it represents. When we pray before a statue in church, are we worshipping that statue? Why or why not?

Pray: *Lord, God, we worship only you as the one, true God and creator of all things in heaven, on earth, under the earth and in the sea. When Jesus, your Son, came to earth, he took on human flesh from his mother Mary, while retaining his own divinity. So now knowing Jesus, we are able to know you. Seeing Jesus, we see you. Taking Jesus into our very bodies at the Eucharist, we take you into our bodies. Help us to continue to worship only you, not created things of this world. Let all religious art lift our minds and hearts to you alone, the one, true God. Amen.*



MICHELANGELO: *The Artist*

Life and Times - Track 2

Read: 2 Chronicles 1:10-12 “Give me, therefore, wisdom and knowledge to lead this people, for otherwise who could rule this great people of yours?” God then replied to Solomon: ‘Since this has been your wish and you have not asked for riches, treasures, and glory, nor for the life of those who hate you, nor even for a long life for yourself, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge in order to rule my people over whom I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge are given to you.’”

Watch: *Life and Times* video segment

Discuss:

- In the days of Michelangelo, artists and others who worked with their hands did not attend high schools and universities as we know them today. They were “apprenticed” to masters of the craft they were pursuing. Michelangelo was apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandaio, an accomplished fresco painter who also worked on the Sistine Chapel walls. Michelangelo also lived in the court of Lorenzo de’ Medici, the ruler of Florence, and apprenticed in his sculpture garden. How do you think learning this way was different than attending modern-day high schools or universities?
- What “masters” of a skill, craft, or subject do you know? Consider spending some time with one of those people to more directly learn about and appreciate their expertise.
- Lorenzo de’ Medici was a patron of the arts and humanities. What does this mean? Why is it important to support the development of art and literature?
- During Michelangelo’s time in Florence, the Dominican Friar Savonarola stridently preached against vanity. Savonarola saw all non-religious art as an expression of vanity. What is vanity? Can art be used for good and evil both? Give some examples.

Pray: *Dear Lord, thank you for putting masters of life’s many skills into our lives, so we can get to know them and learn from them. Thank you for the opportunity to have a good education and build our minds, so we can better serve you and those who are less fortunate. Please help us always to be open to learn from any person and any experience, so that we might become who you want us to be, and also fulfill our purpose here on earth. Amen.*



MICHELANGELO: *The Artist*

The Pietà - Track 3

Read: Hebrews 9:3-4 “*Behind the second veil was the tabernacle called the Holy of Holies, in which were the gold altar of incense and the ark of the covenant entirely covered with gold. In it were the gold jar containing the manna, the staff of Aaron [the high priest], and the tablets of the covenant.*”

Watch: *The Pietà* video segment

Discuss:

- *The Pietà* depicts Mary as very young, looking more like a sister of Jesus than his mother. Some people relate her youthfulness in this sculpture to Dante’s great poem, *Paradiso*, when St. Bernard addresses Mary as “*virgin mother, daughter of your son.*” What does St. Bernard’s salutation mean, and how can it be possible?
- *The Pietà* was originally commissioned as an altar piece, so would most often have been seen during the celebration of the Mass. How does *The Pietà* serve as a visual explanation of the Eucharist?
- How was the Eucharist foreshadowed when Mary first laid Jesus in a manger after his birth?
- In this sculpture, Mary is so much larger than the adult body of Christ. Bishop Barron says that Mary almost “contains” Christ in *The Pietà*. How does this visual of Mary “containing” Christ relate to the Church’s view of her as the Ark of the New Covenant? How is Jesus related to what was in the Ark of the Old Covenant?

Pray: *Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*



MICHELANGELO: *The Artist*

The David - Track 4

Read: Psalm 139:13-16 “*You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! My very self you knew; my bones were not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth. Your eyes foresaw my actions; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be.*”

Watch: *The David* video segment

Discuss:

- How is King David of the Old Testament linked to Jesus? How do the New Testament writers refer to the connection between David and Jesus?
- How does Bishop Barron see Jesus Christ in Michelangelo’s statue, the *David*?
- Christians believe that all people will be resurrected bodily at the end of the world. Do you understand what this means? What does this belief tell us about how God views the body? In light of this view, how should we treat the body, our’s and other’s, here on earth?
- What inspiration about humanity and divinity do you get from viewing the *David*?

Pray: *Dear Creator God, we praise you because we are wonderfully made. You have created each of us as both matter and spirit – citizens of the earth and also of heaven. Your only Son, Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, is the perfect fulfilment of every possible human quality, and those who have faith in him will share in your divine life forever. Please help us respect our bodies and the bodies of others because they are made so lovingly by you. Amen.*



MICHELANGELO: *The Artist*

The Sistine Chapel Ceiling - Track 5

Read: Genesis 1:1-5 *“In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ Thus evening came and morning followed—the first day.”*

Watch: *The Sistine Chapel* video segment (track 5 up to 1:02)

Discuss:

- The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is where all the Roman Catholic Cardinals meet to select a new Pope. How do you think the Cardinals are affected by being surrounded by the beautiful artwork on the ceiling and walls?
- Bishop Barron says that all the artwork in the Sistine Chapel points to Jesus Christ. Give some examples of this observation from the video.
- Much of God’s involvement in the created world comes as “acts of separation.” Looking around the Sistine Chapel, how is this visible in the story of the creation of the world, the creation of humanity, the fall of Adam and Eve, and the Last Judgment? What does God accomplish by these acts of separation?
- We are all made in the image and likeness of God, which Bishop Barron calls our soul. The soul gives us divine traits, such as our will, intelligence, imagination, and freedom. Which painting shows the creation of man’s soul? How is this creation event depicted? Who else is in this scene other than the man who is being created? Why are those others present?

Pray: *Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.*



MICHELANGELO: *The Artist*

The Last Judgement - Track 5 (starting at 1:06)

Read: Revelation 20:11-13 “Next I saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds.”

Watch: *The Sistine Chapel* video segment (track 5 starting at 1:06)

Discuss:

- At the time Michelangelo painted *The Last Judgment*, people were starting to realize that the earth and other planets revolved around the sun, not that everything revolved around the earth. How is this emerging belief reflected in the organization of *The Last Judgment*? Who or what is in the center of the painting? Why is that?
- Mary is turning away from Jesus as he raises his hand in judgment. Why is she turning away, according to Bishop Barron? Does this explanation encourage you to ask for her intercession when you pray? Why or why not?
- St. Peter is handing Jesus the keys to the kingdom that Jesus gave him before he ascended into heaven. Why do you think St. Peter is handing them back to Jesus?
- How did Michelangelo “personalize” his masterpiece, *The Last Judgment*?
- What are your impressions of how hell is depicted? How would you define “hell”?

Pray: *Lord Jesus, we praise you for taking away the power of death by your resurrection. We thank you for being the way, the truth and the life, so we can come after you and also be raised bodily at the last judgment. Please give us the grace to be faithful to you and to your teachings, so that we can rise to your call of eternal life on the last day. Amen.*