



A Summary of Porta Fidei from Benedict XVI

Let's consider what the Holy Father has in mind for this special Year. He published an Apostolic Letter (a "motu proprio data") entitled Porta Fidei on October 11, 2011, to announce and shape the Year of Faith. In it, he made these points, using these or similar words:

- The "door of faith" (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church. People cross that threshold when the word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace. To enter through that door is to set out on a lifelong journey of faith. (#1)
- I have often spoken of the need to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ. (#2, #3)
- Therefore, I have decided to announce a Year of Faith. It will begin on October 11, 2012, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, and it will end on the Solemnity of Christ the King on November 24, 2013. (#4)
- I have also called together the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, and the theme will be "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." They will meet in October, 2012. So this will be a good opportunity to usher the whole Church into a time of particular reflection and rediscovery of the faith. (#4)
- It also seemed to me that timing the launch of the Year of Faith to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council would provide a good opportunity to help people understand that the texts bequeathed by the Council Fathers, in the words of Blessed John Paul II, "have lost nothing of their value or brilliance. They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition." (#5)
- "The Church, 'like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God', announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes (cf. 1 Cor 11:26). But by the power of the risen Lord it is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, its sorrow and its difficulties, both those that are from within and those that are from without, so that it may reveal in the world, faithfully, although with shadows, the mystery of

its Lord until, in the end, it shall be manifested in full light” (Lumen Gentium 8). (#6)

- The Year of Faith, from this perspective, is a summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord. In the mystery of his death and resurrection, God has revealed in its fullness the Love that saves and calls us to conversion of life through the forgiveness of sins (cf. Acts 5:31). (#6)
- For Saint Paul, this Love ushers us into a new life: “We were buried ... with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). Through faith, this new life shapes the whole of human existence according to the radical new reality of the resurrection. (#6)
- Today, as in the past, Christ sends us out to the highways and hedgerows (Luke 14:23) of the world to proclaim his Gospel to all the peoples of the earth. (#7)
- We want to help everyone be more able to speak about his or her faith when appropriate. This is also a good time to renew our love for the liturgy, especially the Eucharist. (#9)
- We also want everyone to rediscover and profess our basic Catholic beliefs, to celebrate, live, and pray them. (#9, #11)
- But Saint Luke teaches that knowing the content to be believed is not sufficient unless the heart, the authentic sacred space within the person, is opened by grace that allows the eyes to see below the surface and to understand that what has been proclaimed is the word of God (cf. Acts 16:14). (#10)
- But this won't be a purely private matter. Faith is both personal and communal. We will also come together with each other in our parishes in order to achieve these goals. (#10)
- There are also many people who, while not claiming to have the gift of faith, are nevertheless sincerely searching for the ultimate meaning and definitive truth of their lives and of the world. We want to help these people! This search is an authentic “preamble” to the faith, because it guides people onto the path that leads to the mystery of God. We have an inborn hunger to encounter God. To this encounter, faith invites us and it opens us in fullness. (#10)
- In this Year, then, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* will serve as a tool providing real support for the faith, especially for those concerned with the formation of Christians, so crucial in our cultural context. (#12)
- During this time we will need to keep our gaze fixed upon Jesus Christ, the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12:2): in him, all the anguish and all the longing of the human heart finds fulfillment. The joy of love, the answer to the drama of suffering and pain, the power of forgiveness in the face of an offence

received, and the victory of life over the emptiness of death: all this finds fulfillment in the paschal mystery. (#13)

- The Year of Faith will also be a good opportunity to intensify the witness of caring for those who are vulnerable, hungry, and in need of justice. Faith without charity bears no fruit. Through faith, we can recognize the face of the risen Lord in those who ask for our love. “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). (#14)
- May this Year of Faith make our relationship with Christ the Lord increasingly firm. Let us entrust this time of grace to the Mother of God, about whom we say, “Blessed is she who believed” (Lk 1:45). (#15)