

Why I Am Catholic

Our belief in the eternal, the spiritual, the unseen God who reveals Himself to us in visible and invisible ways. That the material and physical world are not all there is.

One of the biggest spiritual challenges we face is that an increasing number of people—especially young people—do not believe in a spiritual world. They believe only in what they see, feel, smell, taste, and touch, and do not believe in a God or anything beyond this world. Other Christian denominations and other religions believe in spiritual things, but they do not speak out with the same clarity, consistency, or concern at what is happening.

Pope Benedict XVI spoke about these concerns at the opening session of the world Synod of Bishops on the Bible, Oct. 6 at the Vatican. "We need to change our idea of realism. The realist is someone who recognizes in the word of God, in this reality that appears so weak, the foundation of everything.

"On sand is built only things we can see and touch: success, career, money. . . Whoever builds his life on these things—on material things, on success, on appearances—is building on sand." (*Catholic News Service*)

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago pointed out how society and individuals at times place eternal worth in our secular institutions—banks, corporations, government agencies. And we are shocked when they falter. "Here we have institutions—financial and political—upon which people relied as if they were ultimate.

"There is nothing ultimate except God and the word of God, which is, as (the pope) said, more real than all the material dimension of creation that so preoccupies us." (*Catholic News Service*)

Today we have many doubting Thomases. "Seeing is believing." Jesus reminds us, "blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." (Jn 20:29)

St. Thomas Aquinas speaks clearly about the issue of believing. "To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible."

Put another way, Jesus says: "No one can serve two masters. . . You cannot serve God and mammon. . . Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. . . But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." (Mt 6:24, 19-21)