



has spoken to individuals in every age and still continues to choose individual people to receive his message. This is different from the Revelation given in its entirety to Jesus Christ and his apostles. Once the Apostles had died nothing could be added to this. Even when doctrines and teachings are developed, it is still only a case of going back to the Scriptures and the teachings of the Apostles to deepen our understanding of what was revealed to them.

Questions

Most of this information is taken from the Catholic Catechism. Does it answer or raise any questions for you?

Does God reveal things to you? Any examples?

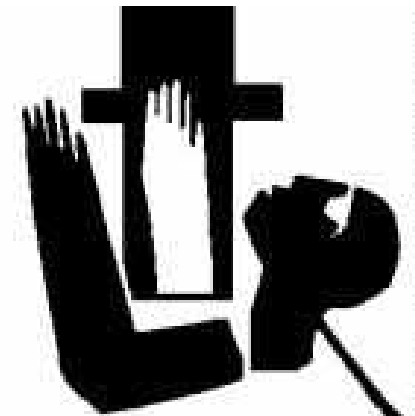
Where do you experience most powerfully God's revelation?

How would you know if someone speaking about their personal revelation from God was misguided or wrong?

Do you expect God to reveal things to you? How often?

Revelation

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1. The Meaning of Revelation

We can define Revelation as a communication of truth by God to a rational creature, through means which are beyond the ordinary course of nature. These truths may be inaccessible to the human mind but which, even when revealed, the human mind struggles to fully understand (mysteries). However, God may also use revelation to affirm truths which human beings have, to some degree, already come to realise (e.g. God loves us). At the heart of revelation lies the fact that it is God speaking to humanity. However, the way in which God reveals things may be through someone or something else – in other words it is mediated.

2. The Possibility of Revelation.

Because of attacks on the idea of revelation in the last century, the Church felt it necessary to state clearly that revelation can and does take place. Once we believe in a personal God, the physical possibility of revelation is undeniable. Since God has endowed humanity with the means to communicate thoughts to one another, it would seem most strange to deny God the possibility of communicating his own thoughts to us. The Church puts revelation into 3 categories : i) truths and the natural law, ii) mysteries of faith and iii) positive precepts, for example, regarding worship.



- i) This is a gift bestowed upon humanity, enabling every human-being to instinctively know right from wrong. Every people, nation and tribe in the whole world shares certain common principles of right and wrong. However, this natural ability to know God and his ways has been weakened by sin and so there is a need for salvation outside of ourselves.
- ii) There are certain things that our minds cannot fully understand. When the infinite is being made known to us we cannot fit into a mind that is limited (finite).
- iii) The church believes that God also uses revelation as a way to direct God's people in the ways in which we interact with him through worship

3. The Necessity of Revelation.

If God wants human beings to be in his image, then revelation is essential. We need God to reveal the existence of his kingdom and the means by which we are to reach it. Even with the gifts of reasoning and natural law very few people would come to the truths that have been revealed to us.

4. Criteria of Revelation.

The identifying marks of revelation are either external or internal.

1. External criteria consists of the signs attached to the revelation showing its divine origin, e.g. miracles.
2. Internal criteria is found in the nature of what is being revealed, the way in which it is presented to the world and its effect on souls. So this teaching must not contradict another clear truth and should have positive effects. The Church has always taken a very strict view on these things to ensure that God's people are not misled. In this sense, the Church has been a guardian of the people against false revelation and a guide for God's people to bring them closer to the truth.

5. Christian Revelation.

This is a good point of distinction between Christian revelation and private revelation. We know from the Scriptures and tradition that God



