

# The Church, Hidden and Revealed

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The *Catechism* teaches that “God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life. . . . The Church is the goal of all things”<sup>1</sup> (CCC 760). The Church was revealed to the world at Pentecost, yet it was present before that and foretold even earlier.

**Read the short passages below, taken from the Old Testament, and consider how they help reveal the mystery of the Church.**

Gen 2:7

2 <sup>7</sup>The LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

God created man in his own image and likeness with an immortal soul by breathing into him the breath of life. God made man to be the kind of being that can have communion with him and share in his life. After the Fall, God began to gather humanity back to himself. Through the ministry of his Church, the Lord fills us with the new life of the Holy Spirit at our Baptism.

Ex 6:7

6 <sup>7</sup>I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.”

God made Israel his chosen people “as a preparation for and figure of that new and perfect covenant which was to be ratified in Christ”<sup>2</sup> (CCC 781), which is found in the Church.

Is 2:2-3

2 <sup>2</sup>The mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains . . . and all the nations shall flow to it,  
<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways.”

By Israel’s election as the People of God, “Israel is to be the sign of the future gathering of all nations”<sup>3</sup> (CCC 762). Jesus came to call not only Israel but all nations to “cast fire” upon the whole earth and give the Spirit to all people.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. St. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 1, 1, 5: Patrologia Graeca, 41, 181C.

<sup>2</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 9; cf. Acts 10:35; 1 Cor 11:25.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ex 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; Isa 2:2-5; Mic 4:1-4.

Just as God prepared humanity for the revelation of the Church, so the Holy Spirit prepares our hearts for God’s grace to work in our lives.

**Where have you seen the Holy Spirit’s work in your life, perhaps hidden at first and then revealed?**

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# Receiving the Word

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reread Acts 2:41–42 on page 9 of the Student Text.**

In response to Peter’s preaching, three thousand people repented of their sins and were baptized. Those who were baptized on Pentecost did the following:

- 1. Received the words of the Gospel
- 2. “Held steadfastly to the apostles’ teaching”
- 3. Had fellowship with one another
- 4. Participated in the “breaking of the bread” (that is, the Eucharist)
- 5. Lived lives of prayer

Their new identity as Christians influenced every aspect of their lives in those five ways.

**Identify two or three ways that you have access to the Word of God.**

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There are so many voices in the world trying to convince us to believe something other than the faith of the Apostles, such as social media posts that misrepresent Christianity, friends who disagree with the Catholic faith, and music and movies that glorify a sinful life.

**How can you “hold fast” to the teachings of Jesus and his Church?**

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**Do you find it easier or harder to follow Christ when you are surrounded by people who also follow him? What about when you are with people who do not follow him?**

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**In what ways can you better focus and participate at Mass?**

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Time in prayer, speaking and listening to God, is essential to remaining faithful to God. God is our Father who loves us and wants to hear from us.

**What are your favorite ways to pray? How can you make more time for prayer in your life?**

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