Lumen Fidei ("Light of Faith")
The Encyclical Written “with Four Hands”

Lumen Fidei Facts
• Signed by Pope Francis on June 29, 2013
• Released July 5, 2013
  • “Year of Faith”
  • “Year of New Evangelization”
  • 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council
• Supplement to Deus Caritas Est (“God Is Love”) and Spe Salvi (“Hope of Salvation”), both written by Pope Benedict XVI
• Pope Benedict XVI: “first draft” of Lumen Fidei
• Pope Francis: “further contributions” to Lumen Fidei
• Circumstance of encyclical: urgent need today to understand the value and importance of faith to all humankind

Lumen Fidei Purposes:
• To enliven our understanding of faith
• To restore the light of faith to its proper understanding
• To present the contention of Pope Francis that faith, as a gift from God, is Light

Lumen Fidei Outline and Some Important Quotes

INTRODUCTION (§1)
• An illusory light? (§2–3)
• A light to be revealed (§4–7)

“Slowly but surely, however, it would become evident that the light of autonomous reason is not enough to illuminate the future; ultimately the future remains shadowy and fraught with fear of the unknown. As a result, humanity renounced the search for a great light, Truth itself, in order to be content with smaller lights which illuminate the fleeting moment yet prove incapable of showing the way. Yet in the absence of light everything becomes confused; it is impossible to tell good from evil, or the road to our destination from other roads which take us in endless circles, going nowhere.” (§3)

“Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us and upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives. Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realize that it contains a great promise of fulfillment, and that a vision of the future opens up before us.” (§4)

CHAPTER 1: WE HAVE BELIEVED IN LOVE (1 John 4:16)
• Abraham, our father in faith (§8–11)
• The faith of Israel (§12–14)
• The fullness of Christian faith (§15–18)
• Salvation by faith (§19–21)
• The ecclesial form of faith (§22)
“Faith opens the way before us and accompanies our steps through time. Hence, if we want to understand what faith is, we need to follow the route it has taken, the path trodden by believers...” (§8)

ABRAHAM AS MODEL OF FAITH: CALLED BY GOD – JOURNEYS TO GOD AND WITH GOD
“Here a unique place belongs to Abraham, our father in faith. Something disturbing takes place in his life: God speaks to him; he reveals himself as a God who speaks and calls his name...Faith thus takes on a personal aspect. God is not the god of a particular place, or a deity linked to specific sacred time, but the God of a person, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, capable of interacting with man and establishing a covenant with him.” (§8)

“The sight which faith would give to Abraham would always be linked to the need to take this step forward: faith ‘sees’ to the extent that it journeys, to the extent that it chooses to enter into the horizons opened up by God’s word.” (§9)

“Abraham’s faith would always be an act of remembrance. Yet this remembrances is not fixed on past events but, as the memory of a promise, it becomes capable of opening up the future, shedding light on the path to be taken...Abraham is asked to entrust himself to this word. Faith understands that something so apparently fleeting as a word, when spoken by God who is fidelity, becomes absolutely certain and unshakable, guaranteeing the continuity of our journey through history.” (§9–10)

ISRAEL CALLED BY GOD TO JOURNEY OF FAITH – TEMPTED TO UBEIER AND SOMETIMES FAILED
“Faith by its very nature demands renouncing the immediate possession which sight would appear to offer; it is an invitation to turn to the source of the light, while respecting the mystery of a countenance which will unveil itself personally in its own good time.” (§13)

FULFILLMENT IN JESUS CHRIST - FULFILLMENT OF ALL OF GOD’S PROMISES – SHOWS WHY WE CAN TRUST HIM, HE DIED FOR US!
“All the threads of the Old Testament converge on Christ; he becomes the definitive ‘Yes’ to all the promises, the ultimate basis of our ‘Amen’ to God.” (§15)

“Our culture has lost its sense of God’s tangible presence and activity in our world. We think that God is to be found in the beyond, on another level of reality, far removed from our everyday relationships...Christians, on the contrary, profess their faith in God’s tangible and powerful love which really does act in history and determines its final destiny: a love that can be encountered, a love fully revealed in Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection.” (§17)

“In faith, Christ is not simply the one in whom we believe, the supreme manifestation of God’s love; he is also the one with whom we are united precisely in order to believe. Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing.” (§18)

“We come to see the difference, then, which faith makes for us. Those who believe are transformed by the love to which they have opened their hearts in faith. By their openness to this offer of primordial love, their lives are enlarged and expanded. ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me’ (Gal 2:20).” (§21)

“Faith becomes operative in the Christian on the basis of the gift received, the love which attracts our hearts to Christ (cf. Gal 5:6), and enables us to become part of the Church’s great pilgrimage through history until the
end of the world. For those who have been transformed in this way, a new way of seeing opens up, faith becomes light for their eyes.” (§22)

CHAPTER 2: UNLESS YOU BELIEVE, YOU WILL NOT UNDERSTAND (ISAIAH 7:9)
- Faith and truth (§23–25)
- Knowledge of the truth and love (§26–28)
- Faith as hearing and sight (§29–31)
- The dialogue between faith and reason (§32–34)
- Faith and the search for God (§35)
- Faith and theology (§36)

FAITH AND TRUTH
“We need knowledge, we need truth, because without these we cannot stand firm, we cannot move forward. Faith without truth does not save, it does not provide a sure footing.” (§24)

“Today more than ever, we need to be reminded of this bond between faith and truth, given the crisis of truth in our age. In contemporary culture, we often tend to consider the only real truth to be that of technology: truth is what we succeed in building and measuring by our scientific know-how...in the end what we are left with is relativism, in which the question of universal truth—and ultimately this means the question of God—is no longer relevant. It would be logical, from this point of view, to attempt to sever the bond between religion and truth, because it seems to lie at the root of fanaticism, which proves oppressive for anyone who does not share the same beliefs.” (§25)

“True love...unifies all the elements of our person and becomes a new light pointing the way to a great and fulfilled life. Without truth, love is incapable of establishing a firm bond; it cannot liberate our isolated ego or redeem it from the fleeting moment in order to create life and bear fruit.” (§27)

CHAPTER 3: I DELIVERED TO YOU WHAT I ALSO RECEIVED (1 COR 15:3)
- The Church, mother of our faith (37-39)
- The sacraments and the transmission of faith (40-45)
- Faith, prayer and the Decalogue (46)
- The unity and integrity of faith (47-49)

CHURCH – RECIPIENT AND TRANSMITTER OF FAITH
“Because faith is born of an encounter which takes place in history and lights up our journey through time, it must be passed on in every age. It is through an unbroken chain of witnesses that we come to see the face of Jesus ... Faith’s past, that act of Jesus' love which brought new life to the world, comes down to us through the memory of others — witnesses — and is kept alive in that one remembering subject which is the Church. The Church is a Mother who teaches us to speak the language of faith...The love which is the Holy Spirit and which dwells in the Church unites every age and makes us contemporaries of Jesus, thus guiding us along our pilgrimage of faith.” (§38)

“By its very nature, faith is open to the "We" of the Church; it always takes place within her communion...Those who receive faith discover that their horizons expand as new and enriching relationships come to life. Tertullian puts this well when he describes the catechumens who, "after the cleansing which gives new birth" are welcomed into the house of their mother and, as part of a new family, pray the Our Father together with their brothers and sisters.” (§39)
STOREHOUSE OF MEMORY OF FAITH – SACRAMENTS

“For transmitting a purely doctrinal content, an idea might suffice, or perhaps a book, or the repetition of a
spoken message. But what is communicated in the Church, what is handed down in her living Tradition, is the
new light born of an encounter with the true God, a light which touches us at the core of our being and
engages our minds, wills and emotions, opening us to relationships lived in communion. There is a special
means for passing down this fullness, a means capable of engaging the entire person, body and spirit, interior
life and relationships with others. It is the sacraments, celebrated in the Church’s liturgy.” (§40)

“The transmission of faith occurs first and foremost in baptism…Those who are baptized are set in a new
context, entrusted to a new environment, a new and shared way of acting…Baptism makes us see, then, that
faith is not the achievement of isolated individuals; it is not an act which someone can perform on his own,
but rather something which must be received by entering into the ecclesial communion which transmits God’s
gift. No one baptizes himself, just as no one comes into the world by himself. Baptism is something we receive.” (§41)

“On the one hand, there is the dimension of history: the Eucharist is an act of remembrance, a making present
of the mystery in which the past, as an event of death and resurrection, demonstrates its ability to open up a
future, to foreshadow ultimate fulfilment…On the other hand, we also find the dimension which leads from
the visible world to the invisible. In the Eucharist we learn to see the heights and depths of reality. The bread
and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, who becomes present in his passover to the Father:
this movement draws us, body and soul, into the movement of all creation towards its fulfilment in God.”
(§44)

STOREHOUSE OF MEMORY OF FAITH – THE CREED

“In the celebration of the sacraments, the Church hands down her memory especially through the profession
of faith. The creed does not only involve giving one’s assent to a body of abstract truths; rather, when it is
recited the whole of life is drawn into a journey towards full communion with the living God. We can say that
in the creed believers are invited to enter into the mystery which they profess and to be transformed by it.”
(§45)

STOREHOUSE OF MEMORY OF FAITH – LORD’S PRAYER

“The Lord’s Prayer, the ‘Our Father’. Here Christians learn to share in Christ’s own spiritual experience and to
see all things through his eyes.” (§46)

STOREHOUSE OF MEMORY OF FAITH – THE DECALOGUE

“The Decalogue is not a set of negative commands, but concrete directions for emerging form the desert of
the selfish and self-enclosed ego in order to enter into dialogue with God, to be embraced by his mercy and
then to bring that mercy to others.” (§46)

CHAPTER 4: GOD PREPARES A CITY FOR THEM (HEB 11:16)

• Faith and the common good (50-51)
• Faith and the family (52-53)
• A light for life in society (54-55)
• Consolation and strength amid suffering (56-57)
• Blessed is She Who Believed (Lk 1:45) (58-60)
FAITH AS ACT OF BUILDING

“That faith is not only presented as a journey, but also as a process of building, the preparing of a place in which human beings can dwell together with one another. (§50)

“Faith is truly a good for everyone; it is a common good. Its light does not simply brighten the interior of the Church, nor does it serve solely to build an eternal city in the hereafter; it helps us build our societies in such a way that they can journey towards a future of hope.” (§51)

“The first setting in which faith enlightens the human city is the family...Promising love for ever is possible when we perceive a plan bigger than our own ideas and undertakings, a plan which sustains us and enables us to surrender our future entirely to the one we love.” (§52)

“Absorbed and deepened in the family, faith becomes a light capable of illumining all our relationships in society...we gradually came to realize that this brotherhood, lacking a reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation, cannot endure.” (§54)

“Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey.” (§57)

“To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness which touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light.” (§57)

“In union with faith and charity, hope propels us towards a sure future, set against a different horizon with regard to the illusory enticements of the idols of this world yet granting new momentum and strength to our daily lives. Let us refuse to be robbed of hope..." (§57)

MARY, THE PERFECT ICON OF FAITH – PRAYER OFFERED TO HER THAT SHE MIGHT ASSIST US IN OUR FAITH

Mother, help our faith!
Open our ears to hear God’s word and to recognize his voice and call.
Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps, to go forth form our own land and to receive his promise.
Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith.
Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at times of trial, beneath the shadow of the cross, when our faith is called to mature.
Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One.
Remind us that those who believe are never alone.
Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path.
And may this light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of that undying day which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!
Amen.