

Common fears

Nicodemus came by night.

In short. The Church teaches that the act of faith is of its very nature a free act, and that nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. ¹ Believing is contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason. ²

Key points

- Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them. ¹
- There can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. ³
- The faith needed for Baptism is a beginning that is called to develop. ⁴
- No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. ⁵

Try this, this week

1. **Read John 3:1–21.** Notice that Jesus takes Nicodemus' questions seriously.
2. **Write down your three biggest fears.** Cross out any you could ask about this week.
3. **Read Mark 9:14–27.** A father brings Jesus his faith and his unbelief together.
4. **Tell one person you are looking into this.** Choose someone who will listen.

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him.’”

John 3:1–2, World English Bible

Watch out: what this does not mean

- Freedom is not indifference: all people are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and His Church. ⁹
- Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by Him. ¹⁰

Common questions

What if I still have doubts?

Video answer: The Thomistic Institute (Dominican friars), stoneandincense.com/en/questions/what-if-i-still-have-doubts/
The Catechism admits that faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. ⁶ It also says that revealed truths can seem obscure to human reason and experience, but “ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.” ⁷

Can faith grow, or is it all or nothing?

Video answer: Ascension Presents, stoneandincense.com/en/questions/can-faith-grow-or-is-it-all-or-nothing/
To live, grow and persevere in faith, we must nourish it with the word of God and beg the Lord to increase our faith. ⁸ The faith required for Baptism is a beginning that is called to develop. ⁴

Remember: You are free, and you are not alone.

Sources

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| 1. CCC 160 | 6. CCC 164 |
| 2. CCC 154 | 7. CCC 157 |
| 3. CCC 159 | 8. CCC 162 |
| 4. CCC 1253 | 9. CCC 2104 |
| 5. CCC 166 | 10. CCC 153 |

Quotation above: John 3:1–2, World English Bible. Catechism: official text on vatican.va.

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