

Chapter 11 The Church Renewed

Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. *Malachi 3:7*

To the Parents:

In chapter 11, your child learned the following:

- God sometimes subtly takes people off one path and puts them on another.
- Through selfish and irresponsible behavior, members of the Church can damage the unity of the Body of Christ.
- The Church periodically renews itself through an ecumenical council, which the pope calls into session to deal with important issues.

Once a Christian becomes aware of some aspects of behavior or attitude that get in the way of living out the Gospel message more completely, there is a recognition of the need to take a closer look at what is not quite right. The Catholic Church, an institution that is both human and divine, is also in constant need of reflection and renewal that ultimately brings about repentance, change, and transformation.

Catholics throughout the centuries have recognized the need to rethink, reexamine, and restate the Gospel message so that it is clearly understood and expressed for all people in every age. In official gatherings (synods, councils) and official statements (encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, catechisms), the Church continues the task of interpreting the message of Jesus for today's world. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, a new life of faith is possible for those who search for truth, transformation, and renewal.

With Your Child:

1. Find out if anyone in your family remembers how it was like before the changes made by the Second Vatican Council, and ask him or her to talk about it.
2. To practice ecumenism (the desire for the unity of all Christians), research other religious denominations and look for similarities—and not just differences—in beliefs and practices.
3. Read the story of Blessed Marie of the Incarnation on the Review and Explore page.