

A painting depicting Jesus walking on water. Jesus, on the left, is shown from the back, wearing a white robe with a golden halo around his head. He is reaching out towards a man in a blue tunic and brown cloak who is looking up at him with a look of awe and fear. The background consists of dark, turbulent green and blue waves under a dark sky.

# **Faith is Reasonable and Essential**

**Tapping Into Theology**

## Prayer

**Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, please ask your Son to keep us faithful, to nurture hope in the midst of difficulties, and to infuse our hearts with His burning charity.**

**You who aided in the miraculous conversion of 9 million Aztecs, please now seek to free our world from its present paganism, so that all will recognize the reign of the One we just celebrated, Christ the King.**

**We ask these things in Jesus' Name.**

**Amen**



# **Outline for Tonight: The Secularist Assertions...**

**Believing in God is old-fashioned and totally foolish.**

**God is like a 'flying spaghetti monster,' a silly fantasy.**

**There is simply no evidence for the existence of God.**

**The people who believe in God are uneducated and gullible.**

**Religion and science are opponents, science has won.**

**The Genesis Creation accounts contradict each other and reality.**

**The only way to be Christian is to take a blind 'leap of faith.'**

**You don't need God to have a good, happy, fulfilling life.**

# **Outline for Tonight: Our Catholic Understanding...**

**God created us for relationship, communion with Him.**

**We are, by God's great design, religious beings.**

**Our loving God thirsts for and came searching for US.**

**Christianity is, in key ways, different from other religions.**

**Catholicism is, in key ways, different from Protestant denominations.**

**Faith is a special kind of knowing – its object is a divine fact.**

**Religion and science, faith and reason, are complementary.**

**The 'leap of faith' is not blind – it reveals the fullness of reality.**

**Faith often precedes seeing and understanding.**

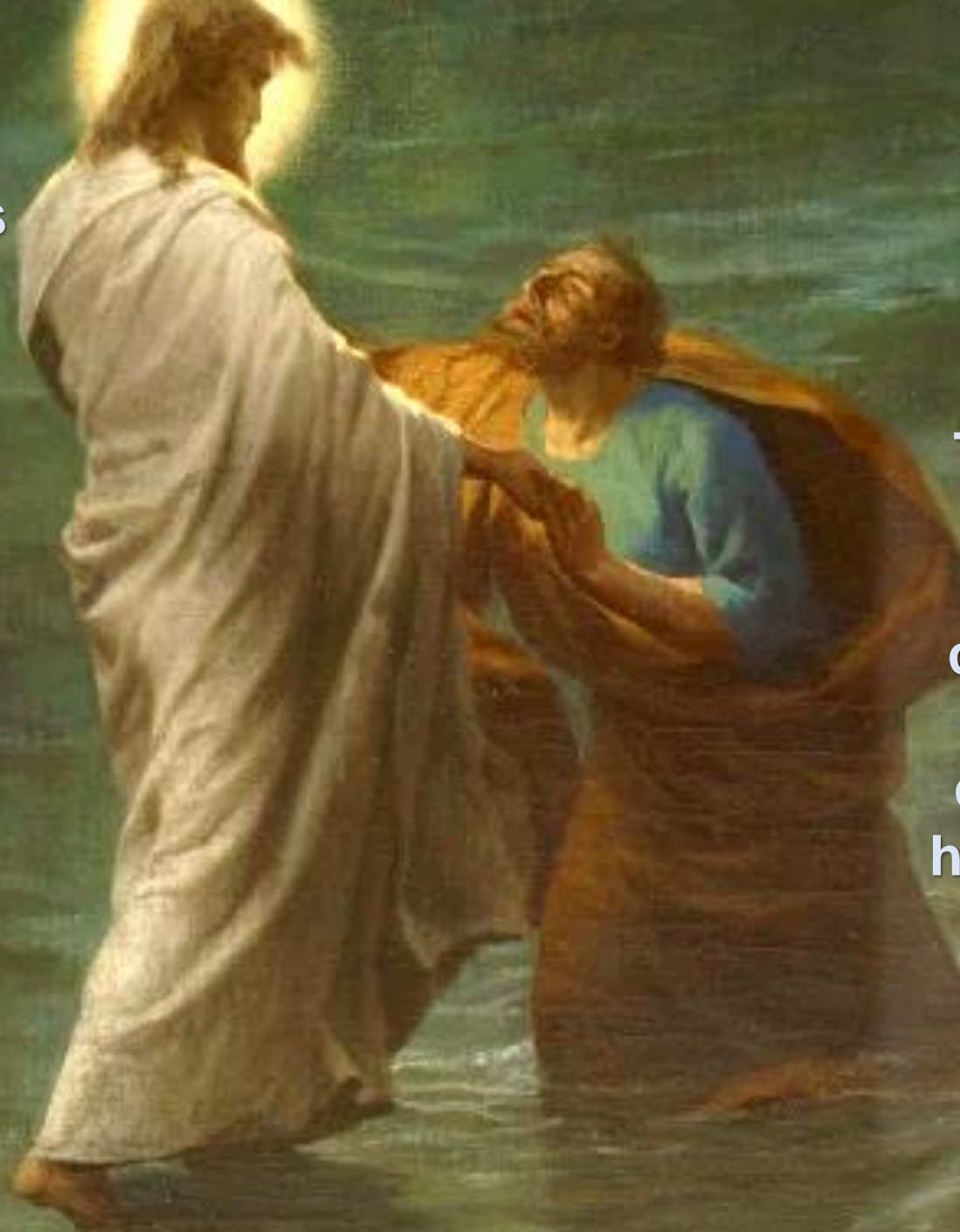
**Our response, the 'obedience of faith,' requires...**

**The assent of both our intellect and our will.**

**The act of believing and entrusting ourselves.**

**The evidence from our words and deeds.**

**Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. [CCC 44]**



**The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for. [CCC 27]**

# **Through Instinct, Intellect, Observation...We Search for God**

**When God created man in His own image and likeness, He intended for him to be in communion with Him.**

**This means that man is indeed, by design, a religious being – *homo religiosus*.**

**Our search for God is essentially ‘genetic’... it’s ‘in our DNA.’**

**We are like adopted children who – no matter how much we love our present life – have an inherent desire to trace our roots and find our ‘Birth-Parent.’**

**Gifted with intellect and restless to satisfy it, we seek answers to life’s key questions.**

**In a sense, this is the foundation of the sciences.**

**Throughout history, in every culture and place, man has sensed a transcendent reality, a Truth larger than himself, and has sought to find and know it.**

**In seeking that Truth, man searches for the One in Whom he can put his faith.**

**NOTE: It isn’t just simple-minded folks who have sensed and sought a divine being. Well-respected, educated people also search for the God Who is Truth.**

# Through Instinct, Intellect, Observation...We Search for God

Man instinctively knows he must fill himself with that Truth to have fullness of life. [CCC 31-34]

St. Augustine (354-430 AD) – one of the brightest men in history and the very best communicator the Church has had – is a prime example of one who was acutely aware of God's existence and acknowledged he must fill himself with that Truth.

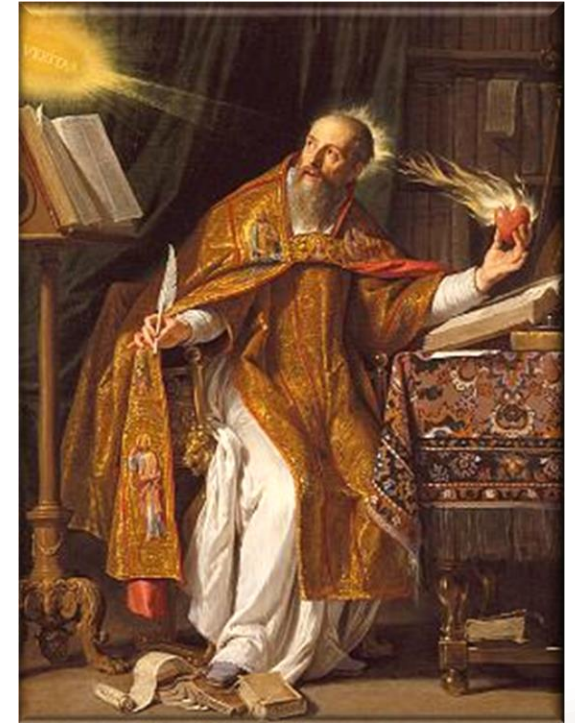
In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine praises God and focuses on our inherent desire to search for Him.

This is evident in the first lines of his masterpiece: *Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.*

Like Augustine, and St. Paul before him (Rom 1:19-20), we can know God exists by studying the world around us...

For what can be known about God is plain... because God has shown it... Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature... has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.

Studying that world around us is science.



*St. Augustine*  
Philippe de Champaigne

# Through Instinct, Intellect, Observation...We Search for God

True science can't contradict true religion, since they have the same Source.

As St. John Paul II wrote: **Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of Truth...to know the Truth and know Himself.**

- We'll look, in a bit, at what the Church teaches us about the One who is Truth.
- But let's begin with a focus on what instinct, intellect, and observation reveal about Him.

Catholic philosopher Peter Kreeft says faith is a knowing, and its object is divine fact.

He illustrates this concept with an ancient Chinese parable:

- Fact, Faith, and Feeling were walking along a wall.
- As long as Faith kept his eyes ahead on Fact, all three made progress.





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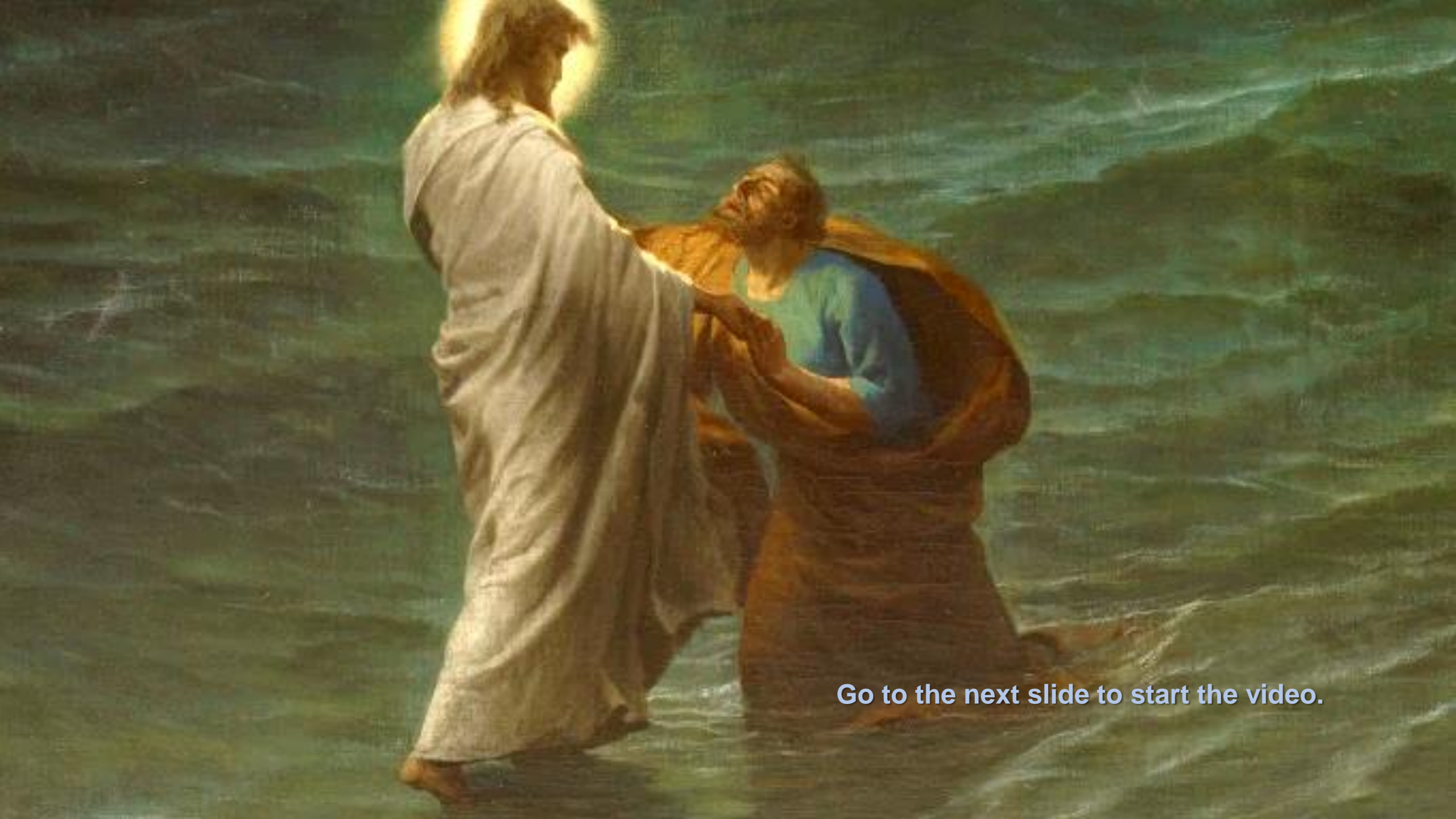
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- Fact, Faith, and Feeling were walking along a wall.
- As long as Faith kept his eyes ahead on Fact, all three made progress.
- But when Faith turned around to check on Feeling, both Faith and Feeling fell off.





Go to the next slide to start the video.

# Beginning the Journey of Faith

The video clip *Beginning the Journey of Faith* is from Episode 3 the Augustine Institute's series *The Search: Why a God?*

The episode is 30 minutes long; the clip we presented starts at **0:00** and ends at **27:50**.

The episode can be found on the Augustine Institute Formed website at the link below:

<https://watch.formed.org/the-search-1/season:1/videos/thesearch-ep3>

If the link above does not link you directly to the episode, you will have to log onto Formed at: [www.Formed.org](http://www.Formed.org)

Once on the Formed site, SIGN IN.

When you are Signed In, Search for: *The Search: Why a God?*

Select: Why a God? | The Search | Episode 3 and start to watch.

# **In Love and Mercy, God Reveals Himself to Us**

**As that video shows, we can know God exists by studying everything around us. We can also know He exists by considering everything inside us...the complexity of the human eye, the structure of the human brain, the countless beats of the human heart. But there are some things we could not know about God if He had not told them to us Himself, through what we call Divine Revelation.**

**Realizing man was a spiritual toddler who couldn't take everything in all at once, God chose to gradually reveal Himself to His human children.**

**In the beginning, He partially disclosed Himself to Adam and Eve. Later, He revealed Himself a little more to His Chosen People, through the Law and the Prophets. And then, in "the fullness of time," He perfectly revealed Himself through His beloved Son.**

**Jesus is fully divine and fully human.**

**Jesus, fully divine, is the final Word. He is all the Father has to say about Himself!**

**Jesus, fully human, is the perfect man. He is the model of what we are called to be.**

# **A Journey of Faith**

**Our acceptance of the divine self-revelation which culminates in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sets our Christian faith apart from all other religions.**

**Because of what God Himself has shown us, we know, as this video says, He is not a so-called 'clockmaker God' who created the universe and then just walked away.**

**We know, instead, that He is immanent, so near to us that when we pray, it's as if His ear is right next to our lips.**

**We know He loves us so much that, as Jesus Himself said, He truly thirsts for us.**

**And we know He was so determined to bring us back to the Father after the great sin of our first parents that He actually came down to earth to seek us out and save us.**

**Thanks to the great gift of Divine Revelation, we know our Creator is the One who has taken the initiative in our relationship and in our conversations.**

**So while other religions launch their search for God with 'maps' of their own making, we confidently follow the path specifically laid out for all of us by Jesus, Who identifies Himself as "The Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6)**

# A Journey of Faith

**What do we need in order to trust in the Almighty who has revealed Himself to us? For this, we need the grace of faith, a supernatural virtue infused into us by the great Gift-Giver. But because we have free will, we can either accept or reject that grace.**

**If we choose to accept the gift of faith, we must actively participate, assenting through both our intellect and will. The Bible emphasizes this.**

- **“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...” [Phil 2:12]**
- **“... the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.” [Mt 24:13]**

**Even if we originally accept the gift of faith, we can subsequently lose it...through indifference, worldly influence, scandal, revolt, etc. The Bible addresses this too.**

- **“By rejecting conscience, some have made shipwreck of their faith...” [1 Tim 1:18-19]**
- **“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom...” [Matt 7:21]**

**Either way, God never ceases inviting us to embark on the Journey of Faith.**

# Hints about the Journey of Faith, in Secular Media

As the video said, faith in the human sense is choosing to believe something based on the statement of someone whom we assume, and hope, is trustworthy.

Faith in the religious sense is the theological virtue by which we believe all God has revealed (and everything His Church proposes) because God is Truth itself.

For many of us, the Journey of Faith requires a 'leap.' But it is not blind!

- We often say, "I'll believe it when I see it." This gets it all exactly backwards.
- When we trust in God, He helps us to see what was not visible to us before.
- In other words, it's more accurate to say of faith: "I'll see it when I believe it."

I think there's a good analogy about this element of the Journey of Faith in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. In case you never saw it, let me summarize it for you.

Indy and his dad Henry are archeologists. But while Henry is a believer, Indy isn't.

Henry has spent his life searching for the Holy Grail, said to have miraculous powers. He's recorded all the evidence from his rational study in a notebook he carries.

*part of stained*

**Toward the end of the movie, Indy's dad is shot and is dying. And while he is not yet a real believer, Indy realizes that, if his father is right, drinking from the Holy Grail will save him.**

**Knowing his dad has been a careful scientist, Indy takes the notebook and starts following the intellectual information recorded in it.**

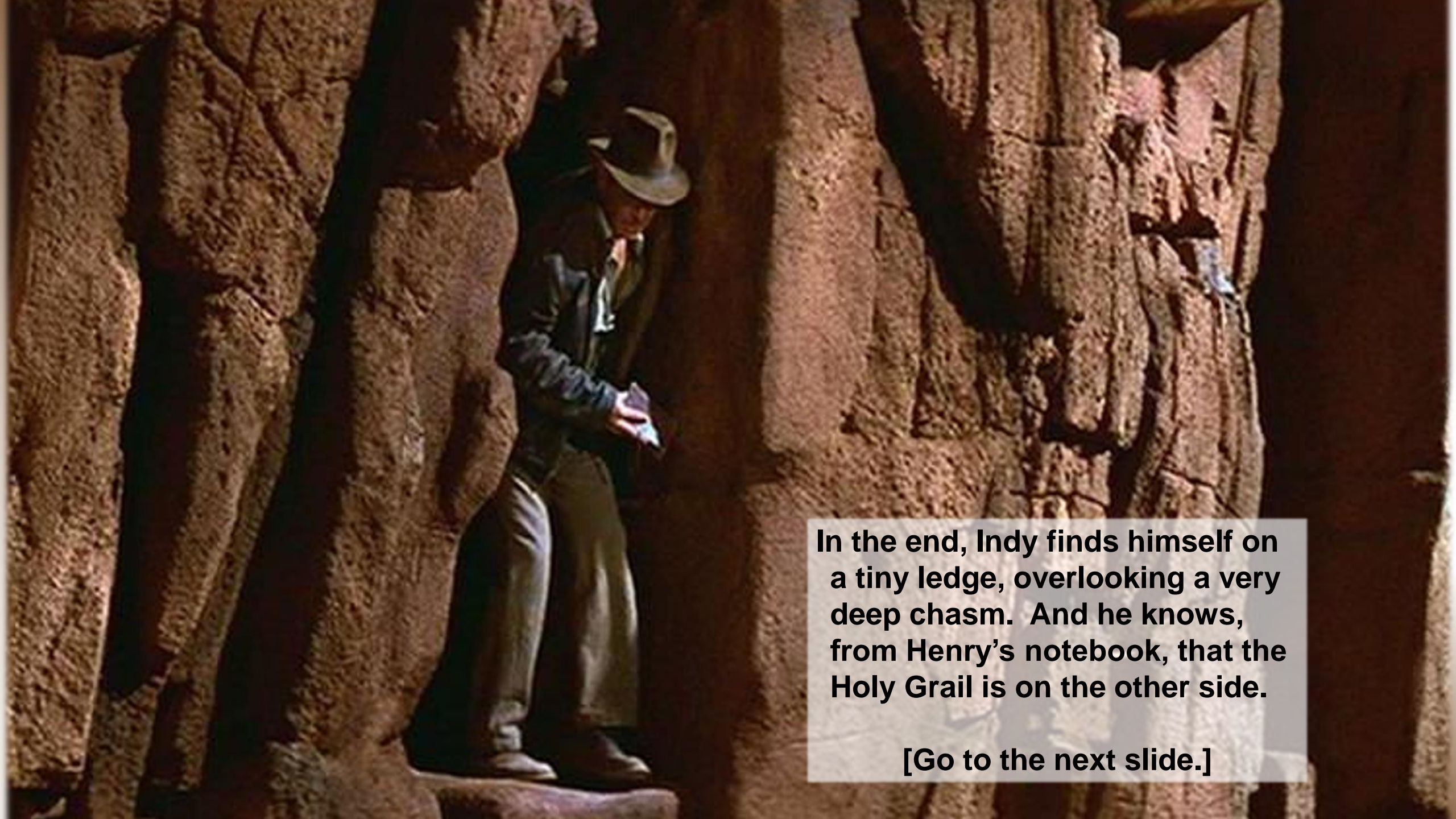
**Those rational findings take Indy a long way, through some treacherous situations. In fact, they get him very close to the Holy Grail.**

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*note by ... Mark?*








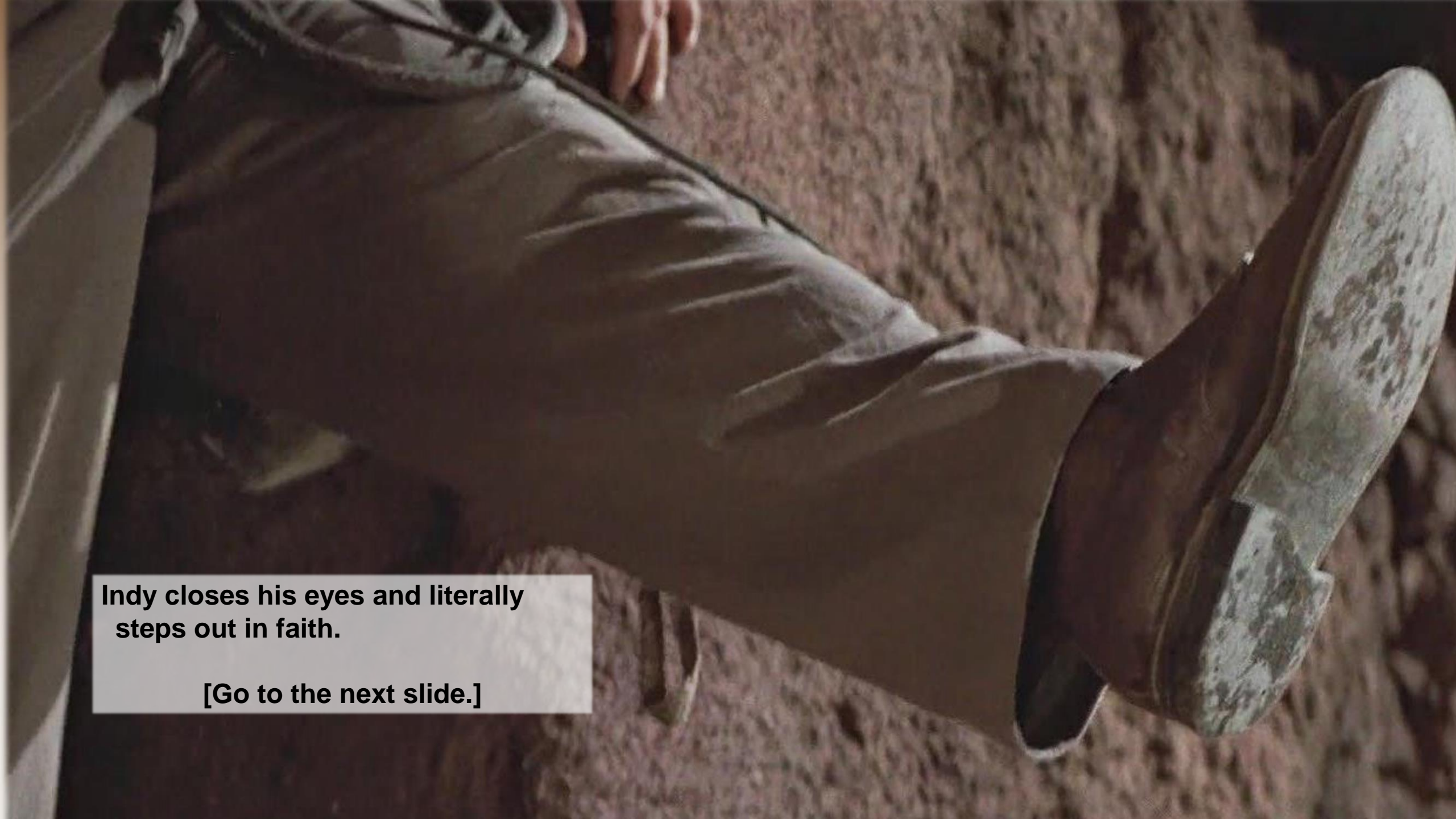
**In the end, Indy finds himself on a tiny ledge, overlooking a very deep chasm. And he knows, from Henry's notebook, that the Holy Grail is on the other side.**

**[Go to the next slide.]**



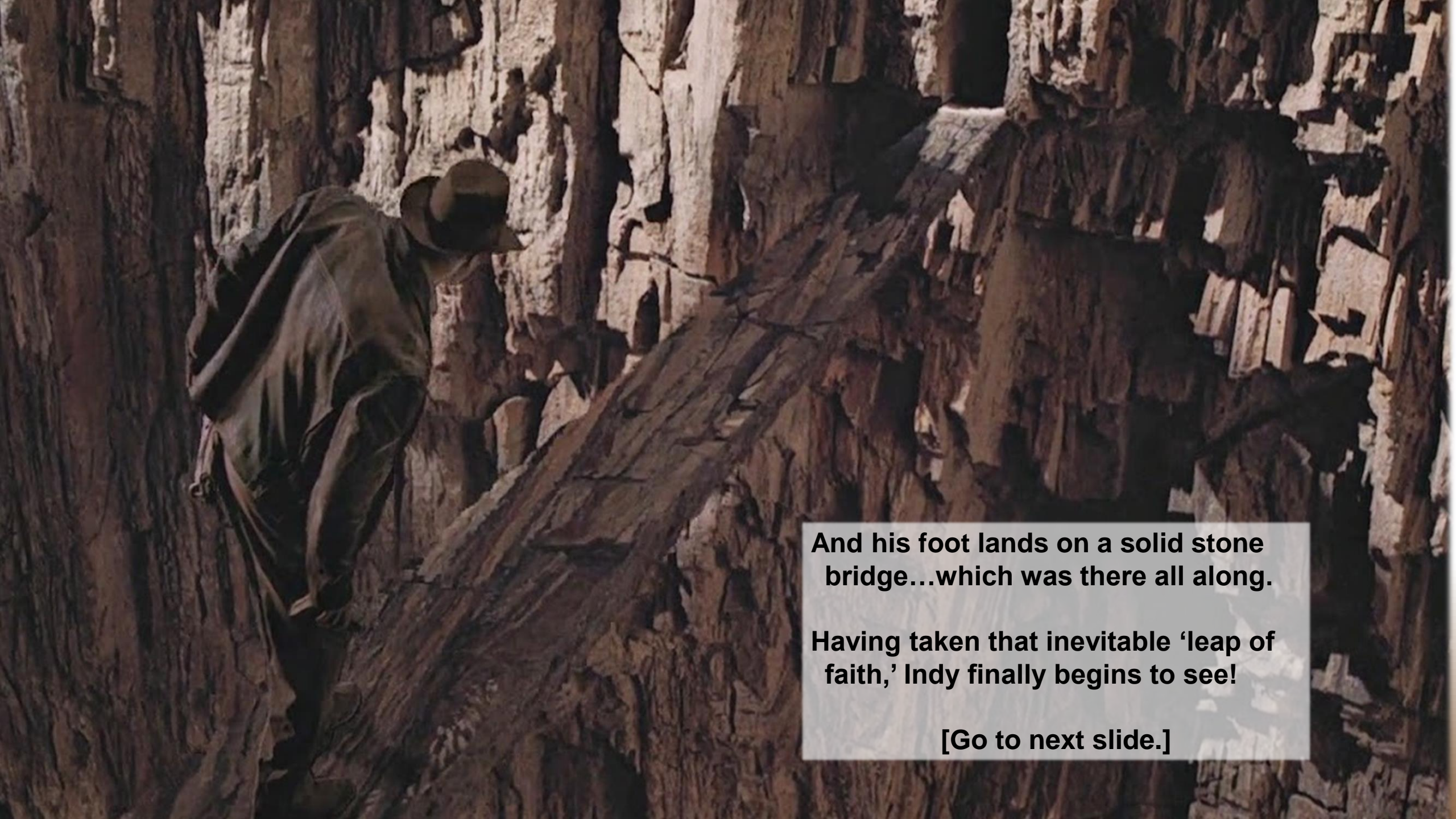
**Trusting now, not just in his dad's  
research, but in the fact that Henry  
is good man and a firm believer...**

**[Go to the next slide.]**



**Indy closes his eyes and literally  
steps out in faith.**

**[Go to the next slide.]**

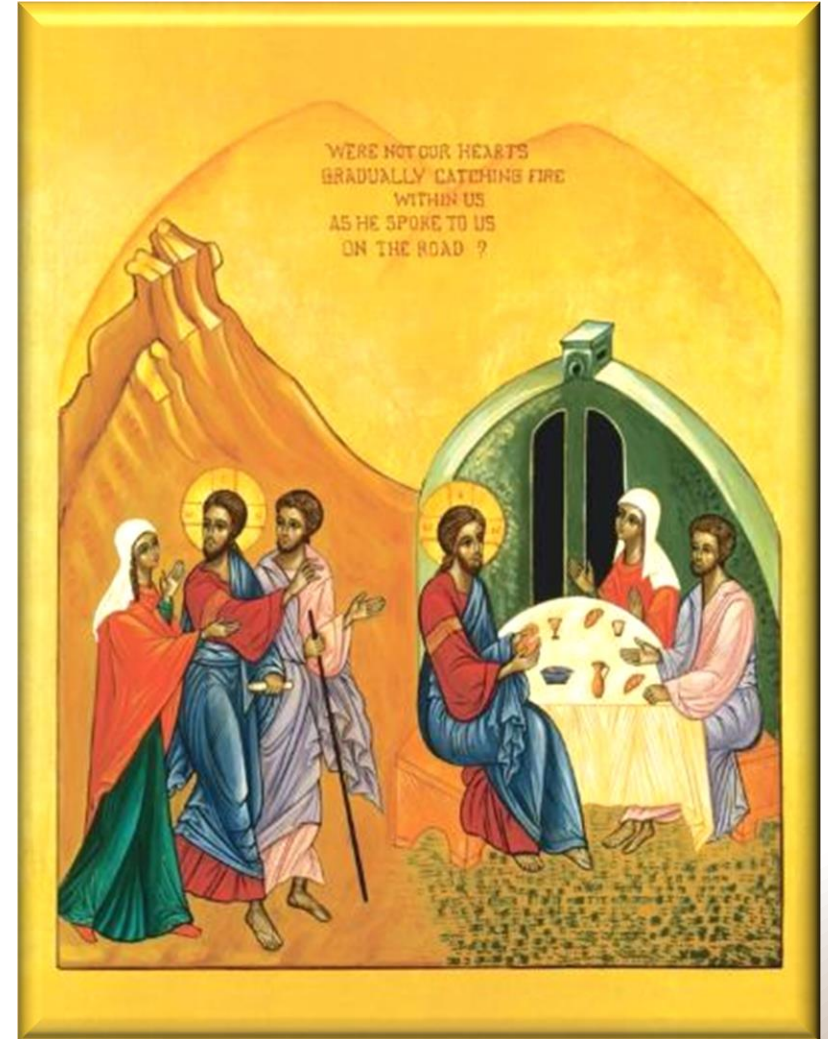


**And his foot lands on a solid stone bridge...which was there all along.**

**Having taken that inevitable 'leap of faith,' Indy finally begins to see!**

**[Go to next slide.]**

# Similar Hints about the Journey of Faith, in Scripture: THE ROAD TO EMMAUS



*The Road to Emmaus*  
Sr. Marie-Paul Farran

# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

**V1:** On Easter morning the women who'd come with Jesus from Galilee reported about the empty tomb and the angels. But to most of the apostles "their words seemed to be an idle tale." (Women were not then considered reliable witnesses.) That same day, two former followers of Christ were on the road to Emmaus "talking about all these things that had happened."

- V33 says the Eleven "and those who were with them" stayed in Jerusalem.
- So while the Church is united in Jerusalem, these two have 'fallen away.'

**V15-16:** While the two were discussing, Jesus drew near and went with them. "But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him."

- Maybe Jesus hides Himself because He has something He wants to reveal first.
- Maybe the two can't see the reality of Jesus because they've lost their faith.

**V17:** Jesus said, "What is this conversation which you are holding...?"

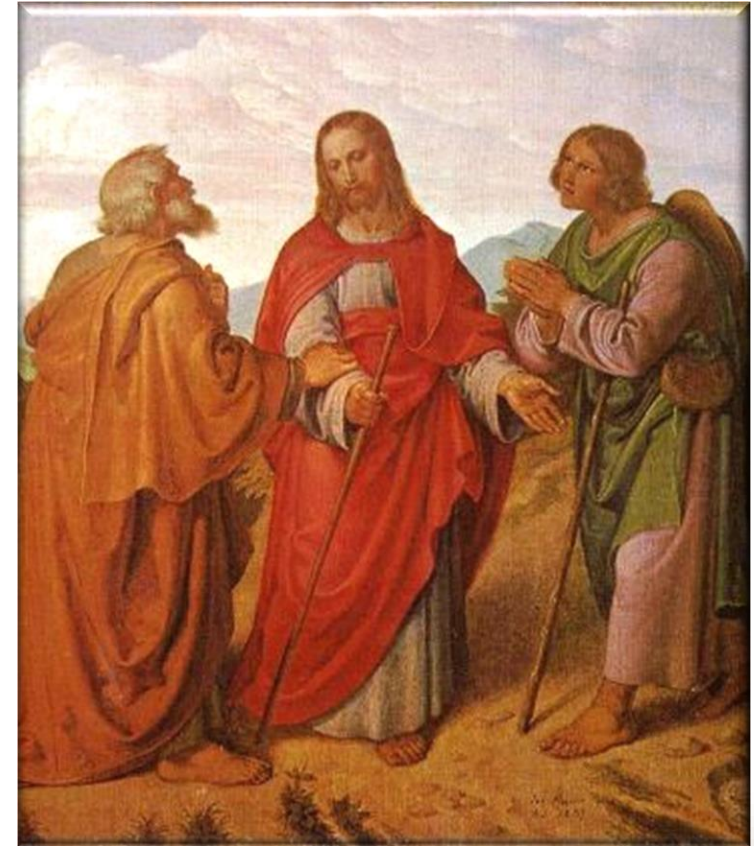
# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

**V18:** “Then one of them, Cleopas, asked ‘Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there...’”

- Jesus is the only one on earth who **DOES** know.

**V19-24:** The two summarize all that’s happened, from their perspective. They say “We **HAD** hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel.”

- Due to the scandal of the cross, they have lost faith.
- Though they had followed Jesus, they didn’t yet understand who He was or what He’d come to do.



**In the early stages of the Journey, people often have questions, doubts, or struggles. But Jesus is walking with them, even if they don’t recognize Him.**

# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

**V25-27: Jesus said, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” Then beginning with Moses [the first five books of the Old Testament, attributed to Moses], “He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”**

- **Keep in mind that, as devout Jews awaiting the Messiah, Cleopas and his wife Mary have probably memorized much of Hebrew Scripture.**
- **But knowing the words and understanding the meaning are different things.**
- **(Many Christians wish they could have tagged along on Jesus’ Bible Study...or ordered His CDs. Yet the Church has been sharing that Study for 2000 years!)**

**Through the teaching handed down to and through His Church, Jesus opens both Scripture and Sacrament for us...revealing Himself and His Father’s loving Plan of Salvation.**



# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

**V28: Cleopas and Mary drew near to their village and urged Christ “Stay with us, for...the day is now far spent...” And “He went in to stay with them.”**

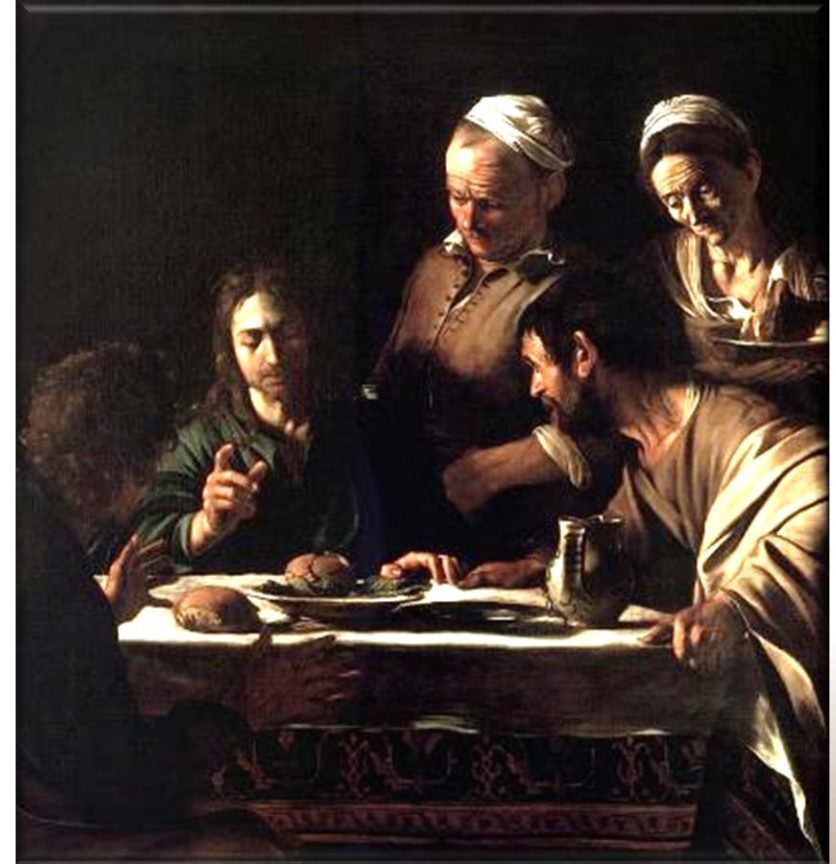
- **As powerful as Jesus’ Bible Study was, it will not have its full effect until the two disciples open their hearts to all that is in it...and actually invite Jesus into their lives.**
- **We must help others uncover the awesome details of God’s loving plan. And we must pray that, like these disciples, they will yearn to know Christ better and will invite Him in.**
- **When they do this, they will begin to really see Him, to see Him as they never have before.**



# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

V30: “When He was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.”

- These are the verbs Jesus used during the Last Supper when He gave us the Eucharist.
- So we see that Luke’s story here is about our High Priest’s first post-Resurrection Mass.
  - Walking through the Bible is the Liturgy of the Word.
  - Consecrating the bread is the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- It’s clear from Luke’s account of the Road to Emmaus that Scripture and Sacrament go together.
- That’s why it’s such a blessing to be Catholic; we have both the menu and the meal!



# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

**V31: “And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished out of their sight.”**

- **Jesus has not left them any more than He has left us. His visible presence may have been gone, but His Real Presence was still right there with them.**
- **In other words, Jesus stayed in His visible, bodily form till He knew they recognized Him in His hidden sacramental form. (Once they believed, they could see who this ‘stranger’ was and had been all along.)**
- **And once they fully understood that the Eucharist is the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to stay with them “until the end of the age,” He could depart.**

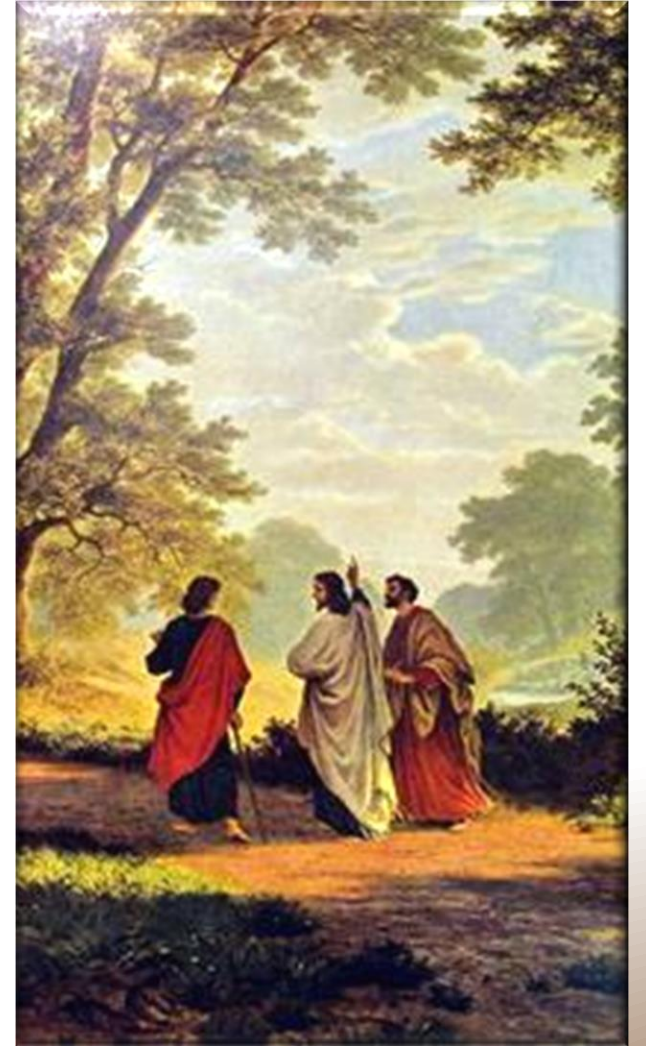


# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

**V32: “They said...‘Did not our hearts burn within us while He opened to us the Scriptures.’”**

- In short, Jesus really touched their hearts when He broke open the Sacred Scriptures for them.
- And He opened their eyes to the fullness of reality – curing their spiritual blindness – when He broke open the Bread.

**In sum, the disciples had learned a great deal from Christ, and they wanted to learn more. Drawn by His obvious and incredible love for them, they sought a deeper relationship. They invited Him into their home and into their hearts. Once they did so, they shared a real Communion with Him.**



# The Road To Emmaus: Luke 24:1-34

**V33-34: “And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem.”**

- **Once their minds and hearts were opened to the Truth and they could see with the eyes of faith, they hurried back to Jerusalem, to the community of believers.**

**The two return to Peter and the Church Christ established. They participate in the Sacraments, share the Good News, carry Christ to all those around them and – in everything they say and do from that point on – reflect His presence in their lives.**

- **Cleopas and Mary were among the first witnesses to the Resurrection, and they continue as witnesses each time we read their wonderful story.**
- **They’re also great examples of our mission: go out and joyfully share this amazing news, even with those who initially consider it just “an idle tale.”**

**We’ve shared hints about the Journey of Faith from the media and Scripture. Now let’s consider Church teaching: Why did God make us; what difference does His inner trinitarian life mean for us; how is the obedience of faith our proper response.**

A serene sunset scene over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, shimmering path of light across the water's surface. The sky is a mix of soft oranges and yellows, with a few birds visible in flight. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of palm trees are visible against the water.

# **Beginning the Journey of Faith**

**Go to the next slide to start the video.**

# Beginning the Journey of Faith

The video clip *Beginning the Journey of Faith* is from Episode 1 of the Augustine Institute's *Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained*.

The episode is 31 minutes long; the clip we presented starts at **10:47** and ends at **22:50**.

The episode can be found on the Augustine Institute Formed website at the link below:

<https://watch.formed.org/videos/the-journey-of-faith-trinity-faith-the-god-who-is-love>

If the link above does not link you directly to the episode, you will have to log onto Formed at: [www.Formed.org](http://www.Formed.org)

Once on the Formed site, SIGN IN.

When you are Signed In, Search for: Symbolon Session 1 The Journey of Faith.

Select: Symbolon: Session 1: The Journey of Faith and start to watch.

You may watch the entire episode or fast forward to watch **10:47** to **22:50**.

# Through the Obedience of Faith, We Respond to God

God calls us to respond to His great love and mercy through Faith, which is more than an intellectual assent to a set of truths or facts.

Faith is the submission of our minds and hearts – our entire selves – to the Almighty God who created us out of His love and for His love.

In short, Faith requires obedience...deeds, good works.

The Greek word for faith in the Bible is *pistis*. Its meaning encompasses both intellectual understanding and action.

God wants us to know Him better, even if we can never know Him completely.

In faith, we assent to what we do know and to what we cannot comprehend.

God also wants us to experience Him in an intimate way...to truly live in Him.

In obedience, we put our knowledge and experience into action.

And when we – through the obedience of faith – surrender all we are and all we do, He transforms us, heals us, and uses us as His instruments to do ‘good works’.

In obedience, we begin to experience Him and to fully participate in His divine life.



# Through the Obedience of Faith, We Respond to God

Our faith is demonstrated through love of God and neighbor, prayers, and good works.

- ‘Good works’ is often a point of contention with non-Catholic Christian denominations.
- Most non-Catholic denominations understand ‘good works’ as the deeds we do ourselves.
- The Catholic Church understands ‘good works’ as those deeds that God does through us.

It’s important to understand that we are not saved by our own efforts.

What we call our works are really God working through us.

They are the result of our faith and the love of God which we have put into practice through the obedience of faith.

Our works, our deeds in life, are not separate from our faith. As St. James explains:

*For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. [James 2:26]*

Our faith is certainly necessary, but contrary to Martin Luther, it is not sufficient.

# Through the Obedience of Faith, We Respond to God

Luther misinterpreted and misunderstood Romans 3:28: *For we hold that men are justified by faith apart from works of the law.*

He apparently thought 'works of the law' and 'works' meant anything that people did, including good works.

He did not understand (or accept) that 'works of the law' referred to ceremonial and judicial tenets of the Mosaic law (judicial practices, ceremonial practices, dietary restrictions, circumcision...) that no longer applied in the New Covenant.

Unfortunately, Luther concluded that nothing we do contributes to our salvation, which is contrary to St. Paul.

- *...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...* [Phil 2:12]
- *...in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions...* [Col 1:24].

Consequently, Luther rejected 'works' and formulated the doctrine of *sola fides*.

He then edited Romans 3:28 to express his own, private interpretation: *For we hold that men are justified by faith alone...*

Perhaps anticipating Luther, the Holy Spirit inspired St. James to write in his epistle *...man is justified by works and not by faith alone.* [James 2:24]

# Abraham: Old Testament Example of the Obedience of Faith

Abram/Abraham is the OT archetype of faith, but he didn't always trust and obey God. When Abram left the land of Ur, God told him to take his immediate family – Sarai. Failing to fully trust God, Abram also took his nephew, servants, and livestock. Abram and Sarai were childless, but rather than believing they would have the offspring God promised, Abram fathered Ishmael with Hagar, Sarai's maidservant. God made a covenant with Abram and changed his name to Abraham, but Abraham still did not trust God to protect him, telling the lecherous king of Gerar that Sarai was his sister.

Despite all this, God gradually developed Abraham's faith and firm obedience through a series of tests. So, when God told him to sacrifice Isaac, his only beloved son, Abraham promptly set out to do it.

(Contrary to misinterpretations, God never intended that Abraham would sacrifice Isaac. His command was meant to confirm Abraham's trust in Him.)



*The Sacrifice of Isaac*  
Caravaggio

# Mary: New Testament Example of Perfect Obedience of Faith



*The Annunciation*  
Sandro Botticelli

Unlike Abraham (and the rest of us), Mary did not have to grow in faith, obedience, or holiness. She was conceived without sin and remained sinless, due to her special role in God's Plan.

Fortunatus wrote this of her: "O Mother blest! The chosen shrine wherein the Architect divine, whose hand contains the earth and sky, vouchsafed in hidden guise to lie."

Mary believed the words of the Archangel Gabriel, even though she did not fully understand them. It was enough for her that they came from God.

Mary's simplicity and saintliness were so perfect that they reduced her reply to merely one word: *fiat*, "let it be to me according to your word."

**Mary is the first and best Christian disciple, and the ideal example of the Obedience of Faith.**

# Key Points

**Man is by nature a religious being; he is created in the image and likeness of God.**

- **Our search for God is in our nature; we naturally seek something higher than ourselves.**
- **Our search for God is not on our own initiative, since God seeks us first.**

**Faith is a grace – a supernatural virtue – infused into us by God.**

**Faith draws from what God disclosed about Himself in Creation and Divine Revelation.**

**Faith does not and cannot contradict reason, since they both have the same Source.**

**The obedience of faith is our response to God's loving invitation for relationship.**

**The obedience of faith is more than just intellectually agreeing to a set of truths.**

**The obedience of faith is the rational assent of our mind and the submission of our will.**

**The obedience of faith requires, and grows from, our prayers and good works.**

**Faith is our response to God's unconditional and steadfast Love!**

