



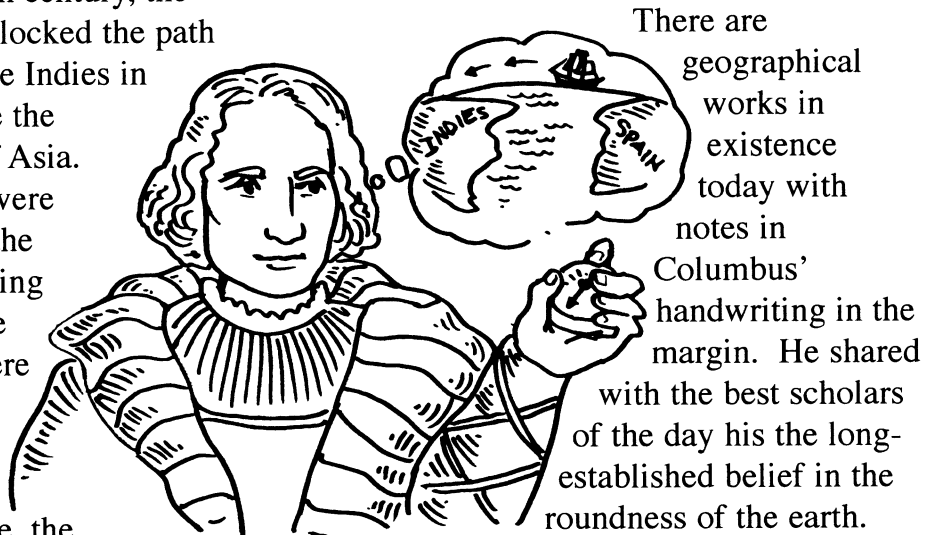
God Gave Me the Faith Story Two

Several years ago, we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. We know most of the story, but let's review a Providential moment in this history.

"In the fourteenth century, the Osmanli Turks blocked the path of caravans to the Indies in an effort to drive the Christians out of Asia. The Europeans were therefore under the necessity of finding a new way to the Indies if they were to continue to enjoy trade with these distant countries. Hence, the explorations by sea, both around South Africa and westward over the Atlantic.

Columbus believed he could reach the Indies by sailing westward. Although there were some people who still thought the world was flat, Columbus did not, and he was anxious to make his journey. But it was more than an urge for adventure that impelled the discoverer to undertake what he called his "enterprise."

Columbus was a mariner and geographer of top rank in his day. He was a student as well as a man of affairs. Christopher Columbus' son, Ferdinand, tells us in his biography that his father was influenced by the old Arabian and Greek astronomers.



As a guide for the voyage he had a chart made for the King of Portugal in 1474 to demonstrate that the Indies could be reached by sailing westward.

When Columbus appealed to the royalty of both Spain and Portugal, he went well equipped to argue his case. But he also went with enthusiasm born of what he frequently described as inspiration. He truly felt he was guided by the Holy Spirit.



Alistair Cook's *America* called Columbus, "a Christian of almost maniacal devoutness" and says, "he had a sense of a mission something like Galileo, Don Quixote, and John the Baptist all combined."

In Columbus' journal he wrote the reason for his motivation. "It was the Lord who put it into my mind. I could feel His hand upon me with the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected with laughter, ridiculing me . . . There is

Isabella, were so pinched for money that at first they would not even consider his proposition. However, when the queen's confessor, Juan Perez, and the court treasurer told Isabella that the voyage would cost no more than two or three royal banquets, she relented, and had the discouraged Columbus stopped and brought back to the royal court. Columbus was then informed the queen would support his undertaking.

Queen Isabella was very sparing in



no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because he comforted me with rays of marvelous illumination from the Holy Scriptures."

For more than ten years Columbus tried to receive support for this voyage, but with no success. The Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand V and

the extent to which she outfitted him. However, he was given the Santa Maria and two smaller vessels, the Pinta and the Niña.

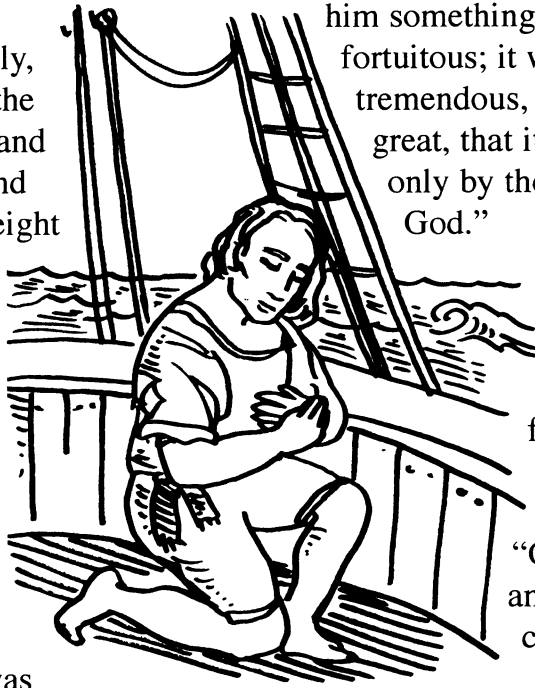
On August 2, 1492, the entire crew went to prayer in a little church near the docks. The next morning they set out on their voyage over what was called The Sea of Gloom.



Many sailors still thought the world was flat and that there was a real possibility if they kept going to the horizon they might fall off the edge. This superstition worried some of Columbus' crew.

as inspired by the Holy Spirit, he is convinced from the bottom of his heart that he is speaking the truth . . . [It is] no attempt to ingratiate himself with the dignitaries of the Church; it is bitter, deep, earnest."

After weeks of their sailing with no sight of land, mutiny raised its head. Finally, Columbus promised the captains of the Pinta and the Niña that if no land was sighted in forty-eight hours, he would turn back. Then Christopher Columbus went to his cabin and prayed mightily to the God of Heaven, as he himself expressed it.



"His achievement did not seem to him something unimportant and fortuitous; it was in his eyes so tremendous, so inexpressibly great, that it could be achieved only by the direct assistance of God."

Columbus' own son, Ferdinand, in a biography of his father, quotes the discoverer as saying on one occasion, "God gave me the faith, and afterwards the courage so that I was quite willing to undertake the journey."

On October 12, the very next day, land was sighted. In Wassermann's *Don Quixote of the Seas*, we read that in the year of his success, Columbus wrote to King Ferdinand of Spain and said, "I came to our Majesty as the emissary of the Holy Trinity", upon which the author comments: "In the same way, before that pious assemblage in San Esteban (the clergy), he insisted that he must be regarded as one inspired."

The last will and testament of Christopher Columbus includes this expression: "In the name of the most Holy Trinity who inspired me with the idea, and then afterwards made it perfectly clear to me that I could navigate and go to the Indies from Spain by traversing the ocean westward."

"When Columbus represents himself

There were earlier expeditions and



discoveries of this great land but none of them led to permanent colonization in America. Only the

Columbian voyages did that. Why? Because it was done by God's hand for God's purposes.

A great testament that God governs in the affairs of men.

Suggestions for Discussion

- What sometimes happens when you get those special feelings inside?
- What were some of the things Christopher Columbus felt?
- There were several instances of Providential help. Can you name them?
- Was prayer important to Columbus and his crew? Give several examples.
- Were there people at an earlier time that had discovered America?
- What importance to us was Christopher Columbus' discovery?
- How long did it take Columbus before he received help for this voyage?
- Who helped him and how many ships did they give him? Can you name them?
- Is following the Holy Spirit always easy? Please give some examples.