

# **Catechism of the Catholic Church Study Guide**

**Catechism of the Catholic Church by Roman Catholic Church**

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# Contents

[Catechism of the Catholic Church Study Guide.....1](#)

[Contents.....2](#)

[Plot Summary.....4](#)

[Book 1, Apostolic Constitution: Chapter 1, Prologue.....5](#)

[Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 1, Belief & Knowledge of How God Relates to Mankind.....6](#)

[Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 2, Man's Response to God in Two Articles of Faith.....8](#)

[Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 3, The Creeds: Part One.....10](#)

[Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 4, The Creeds Part 2: Lord Jesus & the Holy Spirit...12](#)

[Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 5, The Creeds Continued, Belief in the Catholic Church.....14](#)

[Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 6, The Creeds: Articles of Forgiveness & The Resurrection.....17](#)

[Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 1, Introducing the Liturgy & Sacraments .....19](#)

[Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 2, Sacraments of Initiation.....21](#)

[Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 2, The Sacraments of Healing.....23](#)

[Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 3, The Sacraments of Personal Unions & Funerals.....25](#)

[Book 4, Life in Christ: Chapter 1, Eight Articles on Principles of the Catholic Faith.....27](#)

[Book 3, The Life in Christ: Chapter 2, The Human Community.....30](#)

[Book 3, The Life in Christ: Chapter 3, The Ten Commandments.....32](#)

[Book 4, Christian Prayer: Chapter 1, Prayer in General.....35](#)

[Chapter 2, The Lord's Prayer.....38](#)

[Characters.....39](#)

[Objects/Places.....44](#)

[Themes.....47](#)



Style.....49

Quotes.....51

Topics for Discussion.....53

# Plot Summary

This is the first revision of the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church that has been produced and published in 400 years. This remarkable update is designed to serve bishops within the Church. It is expected that adjustments will be made for local customs.

The work was completed during the 1980s and came out in the 1990s. It was written in Latin and translated into numerous languages for dispersion throughout the Roman Catholic world.

The book is massive. This is because it aims to provide a complete overview of the Roman Catholic religion. This includes the beliefs espoused by the Church. There are also descriptions and explanations of the main rituals performed by the Catholic church.

By the end of it, every conscientious reader will have a clear overview of the religion and some understanding of how it operates. The focus is the beliefs and doctrines and rites of the Church rather than upon the political organization of it. For outsiders, or insiders, a little of this is explained as the book progresses.

Below, the summary has been divided to cover portions of the book. The way these divisions have been made is not identical to the layout of the Catechism. Readers should be aware of this. Mainly what is emphasized is that this summary is designed to be an extremely helpful supplement or precursor to the text and does not make a reasonable substitute for it.

Again, what follows are: Catholic beliefs, how the Church is and endeavors to be the perpetuation of the tradition begun by the apostles of Jesus, and the main ways that Christ's teachings are presented by the Catholic Church. For anyone wondering about how accessible this work is, the Church has made efforts for people to be able to obtain it. There have been at least 8 million copies printed, and it has been provided to the world in twenty living languages in addition to Latin versions for the continuance of longstanding traditions designed to preserve the text in the event of future changes in linguistic conventions throughout the world.

Lastly, readers should bear in mind that this is an update. It is designed to show where the tradition stands now. While the Church is famous for resisting change, the authors of this book even explain why this is. It is because their main mission is to preserve teachings and knowledge in their pure form, which obviously cannot be done if people go ahead and change things around all the time or without due consideration of any lasting or after effects of the behavior.



# **Book 1, Apostolic Constitution: Chapter 1, Prologue**

## **Book 1, Apostolic Constitution: Chapter 1, Prologue Summary and Analysis**

Here the entire project is introduced to readers. The background is explained in a letter addressed mainly to other professional clerics within the denomination. It was decided that there was a need to generate an updated version of the catechism during the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

The author of the letter explains that "catechism" means the entire body of teachings of the religion. They are limited to those used throughout the Catholic denomination with the understanding that in some locations there will be additions made to these.

The book's official author is the Catholic Church. In the prologue the explanation is provided that the work has been assembled in a collaborative effort. A number of church officials have dedicated some of their time to fulfilling the request to create a new high quality edition of the catechism. This being said, it is quite unlike most books that have one author and also differs from Scriptures in that it is not and does not pretend to be, a work of God but affirms that it is a work of man intended to serve God.



# **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 1, Belief & Knowledge of How God Relates to Mankind**

## **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 1, Belief & Knowledge of How God Relates to Mankind Summary and Analysis**

Here the writers begin to set out the whole matter of catholicism. The intended audience is described as primarily Church bishops who are in the position to actively teach and use the catechism extensively in their work. However it is also designed to benefit others of the Christian faith. Even so, this can also be read by people curious to know about catholicism whether they feel they do not understand the tradition despite belonging to the Church or because they want to know without necessarily going to a catholic service to find out. This way they can find out and use that information to make a reasonable determination regarding whether or not to do this.

In the very beginning of the book, the authors explain that the entire function of the Church as an organization and of the people working in it is to be the continuance of the apostolic relationship amongst Jesus's intimate followers and other believers and those able to be brought into belief through education and exposure to Christ's teachings and miracles.

The organizers have used a special numerical system in setting organizing the book. While this comes across as rather peculiar, it actually makes great sense and enhances the books as a reference tool for those within the Church and makes it easier to share the information with others.

This covers three main subheadings within the text itself. They are presented in three articles, falling under two chapters. The first focuses upon how people desire God and wish for knowledge of God. According to the Church, people have the capacity to come to knowledge of God for two reasons. One is that human beings were designed "in the image of God." The second is thanks to the human ability to reason. Due to the limitations of the human mind, which vary within the ranks of humanity, revelation is the alternative means by which humans can come into knowledge of the divine.

Transmission is the successful movement of teachings from educator to receptive student. The Church recognizes two main methods of this as well. One is through Tradition and the other is through Sacred Scripture. Both of these are defined in these first sections of the Catechism. Tradition here means the living tradition of all the Church's operations and every other way that God directs the education of people through the Holy Spirit. This being so, the living tradition is especially the work of those



who have the authority to teach and to preach in conjunction with the use of Holy Scriptures to continue the work of the original 12 apostles who themselves were perpetuating and further spreading the education provided by Christ himself when he was incarnate.

There are a few important notes about the Holy Scriptures. First is acknowledging the reality that the Apostles did not originally have a New Testament or body of Christian Scriptures with which to work. Next is the recognition of God as the author of the entire body of Scriptures; this apparently includes both those most commonly being published in current editions of the Bible and those that are presently less likely to be included during these particular centuries. The way that God is defined as the author is not the same as the way that the Catholic Church is defined as the author of the Catechism. While many people worked on the Catechism, they all did so as representatives of the Church. Likewise, many people did the physical action of writing the Holy Scriptures through mortal hands but since each and every one did so exclusively under the authority of and by inspiration and instruction of God himself, God then is accepted as the author the entire body of works.

The Second Vatican Council provided three criteria for the successful interpretation of Holy Scripture. Each relies upon and recommends attentiveness. Some understanding of the modes and means of expressions of the context within which the particular book emerged. This means that colloquialisms and any symbolic expressions may be recognized. Also, certain forms of literature might uniformly exhibit certain characteristics. Just as the Hindu's Mahabharata was a family epic written in a way that shows this very obviously, certain elements of the Old Testament log the geneology of the Hebrews in complete accordance with the religious and cultural tradition of the people from whom the Scripture springs forth. Likewise, Jesus referred to Judaic Scripture and tradition repeatedly whenever he said that his arrival was simply the fulfillment of well known Hebrew prophecies. The three types of attentiveness recommended are: 1) the whole body of Scripture as a context which reflects the nature of God's plan for humanity and the Earth, 2) the living tradition of the whole church: here the emphasis is on the Catholic Church but may be reasonably viewed as suggestive of others as well, to the extent that other denominations are effectively representing Jesus's apostles, 3) the analogy of faith: this refers to an organic coherence amongst truths expressed through Revelation, through Christ and and by Scriptures.

These are the preliminary ideas and methods put forth as readers embark upon their reading of the full Catechism of the Catholic Church. The material covered here includes the first half of the topics headed under the following names as 2 chapters: Man's Capacity for God, God Comes To Meet Man. The second chapter contains 3 sections referred to in the book as "articles," but this is not meant in the usual sense of magazine or newspaper articles. The names of the 3 articles are: The Revelation of God, The Transmission of Divine Revelation, Sacred Scripture. The next chapter of the book summary contains the rest of the chapters under this first section.



# **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 2, Man's Response to God in Two Articles of Faith**

## **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 2, Man's Response to God in Two Articles of Faith Summary and Analysis**

This section contains the remainder of the preceding chapter. Previously, the Church has presented Man's Capacity for God and God Comes to Meet Man. Now, in this part of the summary, the third chapter of the text is covered. This is called: Man's Response to God, and is set out in the catechism as two articles of faith.

Also carried over from the previous section is that there are 4 specified types of interpretation. These are the literal and the spiritual senses of how the text is meant. The Catechism offers three means by which to help understand the real literal significance of what is written. The Old Testament is affirmed, and its books numbered at 46. The New Testament is also affirmed as the continuation of the Old albeit very different because of Christ but united since His arrival has been predicted by and prepared for through the Old Testament. There are 27 books of the New Testament. Unlike centuries ago, this version of the Catechism exhorts the members of the religion to read and study the Scriptures for themselves in addition to Church attendance. This is a shift in the policies of the Catholic Church. One must bear in mind that the realities of easy accessibility to copies of books and the radical increase in literacy throughout much of the Catholic world have combined with translations into the local languages to make this a more reasonable request than would have been the case 500 years ago.

Man's Response to God begins with the assertion that God seeks out friendship with people through activity within our daily lives. This is to be viewed as an invitation. Once God's will and Spirit are recognized within one's life despite his often invisible state, the correct response is submission. Submission to God and to the Word of God and to the Truth are all the same action. Exemplars of obedience to God are Abraham and Mary, the mother of Christ. In the latter case, her obedience took the form of embodiment which was not so in the case of Abraham. This comes from the first of the two articles in this section. There is: I Believe, and We Believe.

Faith is the next topic. Essentially, this is a very trusting situation. People are to understand and accept that one is able to trust God even better than one's own parents right after the moment of birth when one is returned to their arms. The reason is simply that unlike one's mortal parents, God is infallible, thus "safer hands" to be in. This relates directly to the request made by Jesus to some of his apostles: that this man or that should drop everything, even in the middle of work and follow him completely. In





truth this did mean the death of their old life and the beginning of a new one in terms of their lifestyle and profession. Cleaving, or holding fast to faith, is in accordance with human freedom and reason.

Faith is discussed in relation to science. Science, the human creature and all the things of the material world having their same source in God, the former need not contradict the latter at all. Investigations of all kinds that are careful searches for the truth can all be part of the human activity of faith according to the most recent Catechism.

Again, bear in mind that this is the universal catechism. This means that local bishops and other justified subdivisions may make some additions to what is presented here. However, wherever in the world one is, one can discern a real and legitimate Catholic Church as one which observes and does what is explained within this book.

Finally, Catholics are not expected to believe alone. The Church explains here to, that the Church in its entirety is deemed female, just as the mother of God in Christ is amongst the holiest of holies. Hence, people are asked to share their faith with others freely within the community. This way, people will be sustained and benefited by one another. The Church is meant to facilitate this.



# Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 3, The Creeds: Part One

## Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 3, The Creeds: Part One Summary and Analysis

This is the first of two chapters devoted to setting forth the creeds of the Catholic Church. So far, the technical terms presented to readers have been: catechism—which means "for education," ecclesial—which means the Church or the clergy of the Church. Readers have been introduced to the term exegesis, which is a critical interpretation of a religious text. The word creed is defined as a set of principles and beliefs.

The first chapter is separated into a set of articles systematically put out to the readers. The articles of the creed begin with belief in God the Father as the One and only God, and then move on to the Trinity. The first article covers the unity, affirmation and recognition of the reality of God, through what are laid out as "Paragraphs" within the book's Table of Contents. Heaven, Earth, man and even the angels and their fall are all covered, albeit briefly within nearly 60 pages.

The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are set out in a very tidy format together on one page. These are presented as the "I believe" together with the "We believe" and are a normative part of Catholic Mass. The English translation in this case may inadvertently sow minor confusion since the entombment of Christ is referred to as burial. Christ was not literally buried during the 3 days that he was dead, but was entombed after undergoing other burial rites within the traditions of his people and culture. The other matter hanging on the choice of words here is that it says that during the three days during which Christ was deceased he descended to hell. Hell is not capitalized as a location in the Catechism. Christ's resurrection after 3 days, first back into the world of the living and then his ascension to Heaven where he was given a place at the right side of God was a fulfillment of the Scriptures. He will come back and lay judgment upon the people. From then on, his kingdom will cease to have an end. There will be resurrection of the bodies of the deceased. How this will come about remains a mystery but this doctrine has come forward from Judaism.

The name of God is discussed. The Hebrew spelling of YHWH when properly translated actually says, "I AM WHO I AM." This same entity revealed various names in order for His messengers to communicate with certain groups of people. The "I Am Who I Am" was especially for Israel. The Roman Catholic stance on this is that God, ergo, I Am Who I Am, provides different names as revelations of His true nature and to facilitate intimacy as is found to be the case with the name of each individual.

The Church is described as being the Mother of the faithful, of the Christians, and it is helpful or necessary to go to her in order to better unite with the Father. The parental metaphors are used intentionally to indicate the greatest of tenderness, forgiveness and



steadfastness of love. The difference is that "I Am Who I Am" is infallible whereas earthbound parents can err.

There is discussion of the Trinity. The Father begot the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds. Although distinct in physical forms when incarnate, the three are of one essence and one substance and are therefore One, as God.

The problem of evil is encountered later during this section. The answer to the question of evil is not simple and the Catholic Church states that the entire life and practice of the faith itself is in its entirety an effort to effectively address this problem. The briefest reply is to acknowledge that the freedom of action that God grants to mankind, their own errors and the over all success that comes from strife and effort over difficulties are the main cause of the experience of evil.

Angels are also included in this first part of the section devoted to creed. They have intelligence and will but no physical bodies. "Angel" is their role.

Man and woman are defined as equals. It is also written that they are made different for one another. Hence the nature of the relations between the opposite sexes.

Finally, the view is as though the Devil already has great power and the struggles of man through childhood and adult life are themselves the very struggle of righteousness and their God-obeying natures, wills and decisions are in confrontation with all manner of temptations and threats to their integrity. Victory through Christ is achievable, but the Catechism admits that this success may come at a high price to the victor.



# **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 4, The Creeds Part 2: Lord Jesus & the Holy Spirit**

## **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 4, The Creeds Part 2: Lord Jesus & the Holy Spirit Summary and Analysis**

This part of the creed follows on precisely from what preceded. The format of the writing is the same. The tone of the book is the same. It is rather objective, but there is a kind of "mass subjectivity" that runs through it, being as the Church as a united whole has "a perspective" on the subject covered.

The next part of the creed comes as no surprise to anyone at all. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God [YHWH—"I Am Who I Am"] and is vital to the Catholic Church. An incredibly brief biography of Jesus the Christ is provided.

In an effort to better know Jesus, more is provided as it pertains to titles by which he is known. Jesus is a Hebrew word that means "God saves" in English. Jesus brought release to the Jews from sin; the Catechism describes this as an additional favor over and above rescuing them from bondage in Egypt. Jesus made sure that Israel would not be forced to wait any longer or need any more people in order to be saved. The Jews needed a Redeemer at the time when Jesus turned up to fulfill this.

Evil spirits fear the name of Jesus the Christ, and recoil from him. The Father grants all manner of miracles through the use of the name Jesus Christ and by the power of prayers. Submit your requests of the Father through the Son and they will be granted, Jesus advises as the Son of God.

In Judaism the Savior God was only invoked once annually by the high priests when the sins of people were atoned for through sacrifice of animals which were then presented to the Savior God as offerings. There was a special location known as "the mercy seat" which was for the presence of God as Savior of the people and as forgiver of sins. It was this God, this seat, this sacrifice of blood that Jesus the Savior was addressing in his life and his death.

"The Christ" means "the Messiah"; the term "Christ" comes to readers through the Greek tradition of Biblical and religious preservation and translation.

Three kinds of men were anointed by the Israelites. These were most commonly kings and priests, although some prophets were also anointed. In the case of Jesus, he was anointed in all three roles rather than in only one or two of them.



The Catechism also provides some deeper interpretation as to Jesus's title of Lord. The Lord refers to His position as Ruler of the Universe and is meant to refer to His risen state. The catechism teaches that physical death as well as all other forms of death are the direct consequence of sin and nothing else. Lord Jesus, before and after rising from the dead, is the title attributed to His powers of healing and of being God and He who gives comfort. In this chapter the Catechism explains that to address Lord Jesus either silently or allowed is to approach him with adoration, and is often for healing. The intensity of the affection shared between anyone and Lord Jesus is not to be underrated. The most important action is for individuals to submit to this divine authority wholly and to yield only partially to the dominance of any other mortal or social system. This is not designed to set up rebellion, but is for the believer's protection against the fallible nature of his and her fellow men and women. The other most important feature of Jesus the Christ presented in these sections is that He is not dead, not even in 2008. The Resurrection returned Him to life but unlike in the cases of some of the minor resurrections he performed as healings, Lord Jesus did not return only to life on Earth, but to a life that is not limited by "garden variety human perception or Newtonian mechanics."

The Holy Spirit is also described. Readers frequently easily recognize this Holy Spirit through healing words or other benevolent events or spiritual moments. Breath and wind are both indicative of the Holy Spirit but this Spirit is no mere "elemental." On planet Earth there is a set of symbols of the Holy Spirit. The Catechism tells readers that these are: water, anointing, fire, clouds and light, the seal, the hand, the finger and the dove. The process of the Church and all that teaches and supports the apostolic vision of Jesus the Christ can be understood to be the Holy Spirit in action in the world as perceivable by mankind.

Finally, Jesus the Christ's full reign will come upon the Earth when all of Israel has embraced Christ not as an act of religious conversion but as Jews, as Israel. The inclusion of all Gentiles [nonJews] and the acceptance of Jesus amongst all the tribes of Israel instead of only those who have accepted Him so far, will herald the return of Christ and God's Kingdom will then be fully established here upon the Earth.



# **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 5, The Creeds Continued, Belief in the Catholic Church**

## **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 5, The Creeds Continued, Belief in the Catholic Church Summary and Analysis**

In this section, the articles of faith explain the role of the Church in the life of the believer. The presentation of the text is consistent with what has come before it.

An explanation of the history of the Church is provided. The definition of "ecclesia" is given. Originally, it refers to a free assembly of people. Normally, when they had a purpose for gathering together, it was a religious one. This became formalized when the idea that those who had been able to hear and to meet Christ and the apostles would be heirs to such an audience. The Church's intention is to provide descendants of blood and of spirit with the best access to Christ and His message possible.

Symbols of the Church are described. A sheepfold, a cultivated field and a building, a family dwelling and a temple. Jesus was the cornerstone of a building and a temple of faith despite his having been rejected by many, including many of the Hebrew priests. The Church, the Catechism explains, is the People of God and therefore the entirety of the members of the world's congregations. The Church is also the organization, with all its professionals and volunteers, including the main audience of this book—the bishops. The divine "shepherd" is the one actually tending the flock, but in the exercise of earthly life, the people manifest the expression of this through their daily and religious lives.

The development of the Church, the Catholic Church explains, is a response of God's to the conditions that resulted from the sins of humanity. "'In every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable' to God," 156 p. 219 [156: Acts 10:35; cf LG 9; 13; 16]. The twelve apostles are intended to represent each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Church as the people of God are here not specified as being limited to Catholics but consists of everyone who has received the baptismal acceptance of Jesus the Christ in water and spirit. There are underlying notions of consent and confirmation that stem from age but many are baptized shortly after birth and there are some who view reception of Jesus as Savior to not require the physical action of the baptismal rite for the function of Christ's baptismal powers to take effect. However, for Catholics, one baptism of water and spirit as a rite within a community of believers is necessary for someone to be a Christian. Baptists emphasize this by calling their entire denomination after this rite. The Catechism explains that people who are genuine Christians even if



they are not members of the Roman Catholic Church naturally come into a kind of communion with the catholic Church by virtue of their faith.

The Catechism briefly discusses the relation of the Church to other faiths. The book begins with a description of the unique relationship to the Jews. Those who are presently Jews but not Christians are still awaiting a Messiah, rather than for the Messiah's return. According to the Catholic Church the reason for this is lack of knowledge or understanding of Lord Jesus the Savior and Redeemer of the Jews and all others who accept Him. The Church's official position on the Muslims is that the latter are recognized as worshippers of the same God and that to that extent at least are "with us."

The Holy Q'ran which is the Muslim "Bible" also states that the Muslims are "brothers of Christians" and that although their ways are to remain at least in part different, all Christians are in a sense "Muslims." Other religions, to the extent that they have truth, are, according to the Catechism, preparatory lessons for the arrival and receipt of Christ and membership into the Church.

Rejection of Catholicism is viewed as severe by the Church for those who have been adherents in the past. This is because such rejection is interpreted as rejection of Jesus the Christ. However, when someone is not "from the Catholic religion" through no fault of their own but he or she becomes a true believer anyways, the Catechism expresses that such individuals can be and are saved but that they should become Catholic as efficaciously as possible as the Church serves as the protective mother of the People of God, just as the Fathers and other officials perpetuate the apostlary mission.

The Catholic Church must proselytize as this is the direct continuation of what Jesus the Christ was doing and what he acquired apostles to do. Now, in His case, he was creating some form of conversion within Judaism, which is distinctly different, especially since the decision to include Gentiles. However, the missionary behaviors of the Church are most benevolent in their intentions: to share and to spread the love of God and knowledge and salvation through awareness of Lord Jesus the Christ.

Catholic doctrine and tradition is that the bishops are the successive apostles of Christ. To heed them within their parish is to heed Christ. To despise them is to reject Christ himself. This is a careful, limited and institutionalized form of Lord Jesus's teaching that whatever anyone does to another, one has also done to Christ himself, be it good or bad.

There follows a more detailed description of the hierarchical order of the Catholic Church. Bishops head up churches, but always under and only through consent of the Pope, who is the successor of the apostle Peter. Bishops normally have the assistance of priests and deacons. In addition to these, some will have other assistance, perhaps a Nun or a Monk along with laity. The bishops are the ones who are officially recognized as successors of the apostles.

After this, there are provided some details, albeit succinctly, about the laity, about those in Holy Orders, and about religious and secular life. These are all given in the same concise mode.

At this point in the text one salient point is the extent to which the Catechism includes recognition of opposing viewpoints. These include many quite sophisticated philosophical points. Although readers may find that not every objection has been surmounted, they will be happy to discover that the Catechism is the conscientious work of the educated faithful.





# **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 6, The Creeds: Articles of Forgiveness & The Resurrection**

## **Book 2, The Profession of Faith: Chapter 6, The Creeds: Articles of Forgiveness & The Resurrection Summary and Analysis**

This part of the summary focuses on the last articles of the chapter in the Catechism. The book begins with the affirmation of the truth that Jesus the Christ taught his apostles that they had the power to forgive sins. Whatever they would not forgive, would be remain whilst whatever they would forgive would be cleansed. Christ of course had this power. While readers may to some extent take for granted that we can all forgive one another and tend to do so frequently, especially amongst our friends and loved ones ,most will also notice that there are times when an event comes up after which the usual easy forgiveness fails to occur. At such times it is then easy to observe why the power of forgiveness offered by Jesus and the Apostles is so profound. Clearly, it is also easy to understand the significance of this when one feels the need to be forgiven for some sin. Sin, by the way, is another word for error, misjudgment or intentional misconduct of some kind.

The baptism for the forgiveness of sins is introduced in this section as Article 10. Lord Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist by full immersion during his life prior to his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. He has been alive ever since but has ceased to be limited to life on Earth in the flesh. Baptism is for those needing to be born into Christ through water and spirit. It cleanses away original sin and every sin that has occurred up to the point of baptism. It also unites the entity more intimately with Jesus the Christ and His Heavenly Father. The Church must enable itself to forgive everything and anything. Suffice it to say, at times forgiveness is effortless, in other cases an individual may run into difficulty. The catechism explains that although baptism assures salvation and the spiritual mark of purification, the character issues that led to sin and the temptations relating to it do not always instantly disappear but in some cases surely they do.

The next topic handled is the resurrection of the body. The Catechism clearly states that this is the most challenging part of the creeds. Not only is it necessary to actually acknowledge that Jesus the Christ did acheive this himself but that He assures that so will we all.

The final topic in this section of the work is regarding the doctrine of everlasting life. This relates to the imperishable qualities which after successful, complete resurrection will



make the actual living body immune from destruction and will make it into a spiritual body entirely.

One fascinating point that the Catechism makes is that it is possible for the living to help the dead. While some readers may have heard of this, it is more apt to be the Church's insiders or frequent and fervent attendees who are aware of this. According to the Church, Christ spent the three days that he was deceased in the realm of the Underworld—the land of the dead. Prayers, offerings, forgiveness, penance and sacrifices for the errors of another age are all helpful to the deceased.

There is a brief description of what happens after people die the first time, that pertains to their resurrections. There are those whose condition is such that they go immediately to Heaven in the spiritual body that contains their physical, resurrected body instead of achieving this through separation of soul and body. Those who do not go to Heaven are either purified and then sent to Heaven or else they are damned. Damnation is separation from God and is irrevocable.

The Profession of Faith ends with the "Amen." The Catechism describes this as Jesus Christ himself and as a mirror in which one can readily check one's faith. The Church suggests that readers and believers can see what they believe and what they do not. Trust and love are foundational principles along with the admission that there is much that each does not understand, but it is still essentially safe to trust in God's process.



# **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 1, Introducing the Liturgy & Sacraments**

## **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 1, Introducing the Liturgy & Sacraments Summary and Analysis**

This portion of the Catechism begins with a discourse on liturgy. Liturgy means that a "public work" will be done, as a service of God unto humanity.

When it is liturgy, the People of God do this. This may be acts of charity towards the local community. Liturgy can be performed on a mass scale, by providing health care or educational opportunities. Character development organizations and other systems that support healthy living, emotional wellbeing and so forth can all be liturgy. Through liturgy the People of God are uplifted because they get to participate in the benevolence of God through their actions.

Through liturgy, the People of God are transformed. Christ Jesus works with and through the Church with the express intent in the long term of a united human brotherhood that is also the Kingdom of God as found on planet Earth. The activities of the liturgy are a highpoint as it engages the People in transformation in acts of divinely guided and inspired love of one another and thereby furthers the work and meaning of Lord Jesus the Savior and Redeemer upon the Earth. Although the locus of activity is temporal; given the inclusive nature of the physical body within the spiritual after Resurrection, this makes the physical and temporal realms a focus for possibly the most extensive transformations. The Church is meant to support this transformation of the world on Earth into the Kingdom of God in Heaven and upon the Earth and to save and transform the souls of God's human creatures.

The sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church have as part of their intention to assist the People of God into perceiving their relationship to God more clearly. They are also intended to improve the extent and intensity of intimacy with God. People are advised to have the view of children to parents, or ideal parents. The Church is the Mother, the priests are called Father and the bishops are the Apostles under the Pope who is St. Peter's successor.

There are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church. In this first section the Church explains what is in common to them all. After that, the uniqueness of each is given in further detail. There are baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist that pertain most directly to Jesus, the Church and the worshiper of God. Then there are two that focus upon lifestyle: one is marriage, the other is Holy Orders. The other two are about

problems: Anointing the Sick and Penance. These will be further explained in the next summary chapter.



# **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 2, Sacraments of Initiation**

## **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 2, Sacraments of Initiation Summary and Analysis**

In this chapter the first four of the Catholic Church's main sacraments are covered.

The Church likes to keep perspective by cultivating a sense of what in literary language is foreshadowing, and what in other traditions has been referred to as foresight.

In this case, the significance of water in the world is recognized as one major sign of God's handiwork and interest. Scientific knowledge supports this but not to the inaccurate extreme of a man called Parmenides who concluded that everything was constituted of water. The power of water to purify and to cleanse was also advanced by the flood and the time of Noah even though it was very destructive. Israel crossing the Red Sea and the River Jordan and arriving in the promised lands are also recognized as times when the purifying powers of water were brought into play. Obviously, the works of John the Baptist are the most striking and temporally proximal precursors to Christian baptism. All of this points to the importance and meaning of the right of baptism.

What does baptism do? It washes away sins—errors and breakages of God's rules whether intentional or accidental, and helps to make people more receptive to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as well as to the love and help of He and God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Additionally baptism initiates people into the crucifixion of the Christ and thereby also to Jesus' destruction of death itself, and his consequent resurrection of flesh and spirit, but with release from the bondage of all that is earthly more completely than even He had appeared to be during his more ordinary life. Baptism is also open to people of any religion who are willing to receive it and the bishops are permitted to issue this sacrament to any willing to be initiated by it. Baptism leaves a mark. However, the cultivation of superior moral character by practicing precepts and otherwise building up value in virtue are often still of great benefit to the baptized since the purification does not significantly alter an individual's nature or disposition.

The next sacrament of initiation into the Catholic Church is confirmation. It is also known as chrismation. It is a repetition and furtherance of baptism. In it oil is used for anointing. The purpose for oil is that it is luxurious and functional: it alleviates injuries, it helps to limber up athletes, it is rejuvenating, it is aromatic. It is intended only for those who have already been baptized and who are committed to being Catholics. It is designed to be



part of a tripartite set of sacraments. There is a difference in the way this is done by the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church of the relative West. Many who take this initiation only do so after they have followed a course at the Church. Those born within the Catholic faith are most likely to have a Confirmation rite when they are an adolescent. Adults can of course also do this, but the process is apt to either be different or to be handled differently within that culture. Confirmation, especially through the symbol of the oil creates a "seal," which means "a mark" that can be discerned through the spiritual realm, and will be noticeable to many, often due to cultural and social behavior.

The other sacrament of Christian Initiation, at least within the Catholic tradition is the rite of the Eucharist. Another common name for this rite is the Holy Communion, or Christ's Communion. If it is specified as such, that is because there are other religions which attempt to deliver the renewal and rebirth portion of the teaching through the bread and the wine but in those cases it is done without the choice of Christ's personal blood and life sacrifice in superior substitution for the sacrifice of an animal. There have also been religious traditions in which there is a voluntary or involuntary human ritual sacrifice as well as others in which humans subject themselves to conditions which may result in the sacrifice of their life such as in the case of war. However, in Catholicism, the Eucharist is to receive the body and life of Christ. This furthers acceptance of Him as the means of release from sin and death as well as deepening the intimacy between those who participate in the Eucharist and the Church. The Catechism explains that in this rite, all other attempts at sacrifices honoring God that have been made are perfected. This is the one sacrament which non-Catholics are banned from largely due to the intense intimacy with the Church that the three rites taken together will consolidate. The Eucharist is part of a standard order of service that Catholics have preserved from the beginning. This rite is offered for the living and for the deceased and for those who have already ascended. In this regard it is specially designed to transcend time.

Of course there is more to the full service and value of each of these rites. The Catechism provides some greater detail. Further, the setting of the entire ritual and whether it has been taken in combination with either of the other two or both, and in what order, influences the overall affect on the participant. These are the three most imperative Christian Initiation Rites. The Catholic Church encourages people to take all three together within the Church. However, if there are specific reasons for not receiving the three then baptism is still strongly encouraged so as to invite the Holy Spirit.



# **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 2, The Sacraments of Healing**

## **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 2, The Sacraments of Healing Summary and Analysis**

This section covers what in the book are listed as Article 4 & 5. Each is expressed systematically under the heading. The first pertains to penance and reconciliation. This is one of the rituals designed to "help remedy a situation when there is a problem."

There is confession in Catholicism. This comes up more than once in the Catechism. Many outsiders have only heard of one of the two main types of confession. The one most well-known is the confession of wrongdoings, of sins committed or behavior that would be a sin if the action had not been sanctified. The other kind of confession is positive: it is to confess one's faith in God and Jesus. Those who did not deny Christ confessed Him to one another. Those within the religion may find this to be a healthy reminder and those outside may be edified.

There are those who have been baptized and those who have not been. The official doctrine is that like one's physical body even after one has been purified by baptism the person might get spiritually dirty—he or she might sin or behave in ways that would be sin had the individual not been sanctified by the grace of God, and need or be greatly benefited by renewal and refreshment via ritual purification and confession. Such a rite, designed to cleanse the person of sin or sinlike behaviors and effects since baptism, is a lot like spiritually cleaning up after the body has grown dirty again since a previous washing.

The light dirt that develops even in the baptized is called concupiscence in Catholic tradition: it is the inclination towards "unhelpful" behaviors. Seen most positively, concupiscence provides each particular individual with a unique set of challenges so that life need not be too boring or lazy with respect to personal development and intimacy with God.

The rite of confession has more than one part. Catholics must include confession of wrongdoings to a priest. This is in part because human nature is such that people feel better when they tell someone else of their struggles. This is also to keep them close in the proverbial bosom of the Church, benefitting from the spiritually parental role for which the Mother Church and Father priests are specially trained. This is followed by a reconciliation which releases the fear, sorrow and allows God's love and forgiveness to more the penitent to hope.



There is a double conversion involved. According to the Catholic Church it is best, and ultimately necessary for true Christians to be Catholics. In the Catechism it is explained that God is the one who forgives any and all sins. Repentance, simply means to work at correcting or improving behavior in order to achieve a higher standard. In simple terms: if you lied and then practiced living without lying, or at least without being intentionally deceptive, then you are engaged in the process of actual repentance. The sacrament of penance and reconciliation is devised to restore the worshiper to a healthy state of intimate friendship with Jesus the risen Son of God. The methodology of the Church is intended to protect the Christian, and to renew and purify the entire Church and the whole body of Christ. This sacrament is offered both privately and publicly through the Church. There are additional details, of course, but at this time, the next sacrament will be addressed.

The next sacrament is the anointing of the sick. It is listed as Article 5. In anointing the sick, there is a focus upon the Messiah's power to heal. In fact, healing entirely and laying on of hands were some of his characteristic miracles that he and the apostles referred to as "mighty works." Jesus healed, he often said, through the power of forgiveness as if the ailment was effectively caused by guilt and shame lodged within the sick person or from receptivity to the open or hidden hostility of others for something he or she had done.

Lastly, in this section of the material, the commonly called "last rights" are described and explained in some detail. This is given as a form of the Eucharist, perhaps as reassurance that Jesus can readily penetrate the veils of life and death as they appear to the living mortal. Further, this is also to facilitate the continued connection between Jesus the Redeemer and Destroyer of Death such that, the person will either go directly to Heaven or will be better prepared to receive the purifications necessary to get the individual's spirit into a divine condition.

Again, this portion of the text is devoted to the healing sacraments. There is the anointing of the sick. In the case of this ritual there are two ways of doing it: one is the Eastern Orthodox way, and the other is the Roman Catholic way. The difference involves some of the parts of the body that are anointed during this particular ritual. Also addressed are the viaticum, and the rite of penance and reconciliation. Indulgences come under the category of penance, and are to release people from the temporal adverse affects of sins. Binding and loosing are both covered during the presentations on this important topic.





# **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 3, The Sacraments of Personal Unions & Funerals**

## **Book 3, Celebration of the Christian Mysteries: Chapter 3, The Sacraments of Personal Unions & Funerals Summary and Analysis**

Here the book is devoted to the sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony. The Catechism explains that in both cases the emphasis is on service to another or to others and to the salvation of the other rather than the salvation of oneself or humanity in general.

One purpose of this category of rite is to unify the individual with the mission of the Church. This means that they are specially initiated into not only the Church as members but further into the mission of the Church. While the sacraments of initiation into the Catholic religion are for the salvation of the recipient as part of the Body of Christ, they do not intentionally create conditions ideal for any particular individual to serve others in certain ways with a focus on the spiritual aspect of relating.

The purpose of the Holy Orders is to integrate a person within the Church in a new way. Essentially, these sacraments make someone a functional part of the Church. One is specially sanctioned to actively pursue the mission of the Church through assisting others in more ecclesiastical ways. The different Holy Orders are Bishop, priest and deacon. The Church advocates this rite being as public and well attended as possible since the implications are so great for the community and it is such a cause for joy. Bishops confer these rites so that others can enter into Christ's apostleship and be recognized as such. According to the Catechism, this ordination is only open men. Earlier it has been explained that the baptism conferred a specific type of spiritual mark upon the entire being. This occurs also in the case of Ordination. Catholic ordination enables the minister to be as a clear window to the light of Christ's power. The reason this is so described is to emphasize that this transmission will occur both when the ordained one is properly disposed to it within his personality and when the ordained individual has mixed feelings or is suffering from some weakness of character.

The other sacrament that is covered in this portion of the book, is the matrimonial rite. Matrimony provides individuals with the opportunity to be of loving benefit to one another. The woman is designated as man's helpmeet, and it is further clarified in the Catechism, that as such she signifies God's direct assistance in the man's care. Their mutual care helps both to grow and to overcome egotism and selfishness. Their efforts are, if they are fortunate also imbued with children. The proper rearing of offspring cultivates the capacity to love unselfishly and also to find and set reasonable



boundaries. This is important as people learn what healthy self-love is: such love is not selfish nor is self-abusive. In marriage, two are made "one flesh." This rite is made a sacrament and is given God's blessing with the intention that it guard the spouses from marital discord. The Catechism defines the source of strife within marriages as being "sin." For this reason especially, God's grace is prayed for to oversee and to assist the marital partners in dealing with their own and their spouse's sins and the consequences thereof. The need to work hard and the pain of child birth are both cited, not as meaningless or coincidental nor even as the natural truth of the world, but as consequences of sin. Marriage, according to the Church requires proper preparation. The condition of being married within the Catholic Church is that such people are part of a religious order: married people. Intriguingly, marriage is also viewed as a state of affairs that is temporary and a condition of this age. It is somehow connected to another condition, which is virginity. Explanations for why this ceremony is to be conducted publicly are included in the Catechism. Part of this has to do with increased trust in another together with the "loosing" of defensive or prideful behaviors or other obstacles that grate against marital harmony. At the same time, when all are incorruptible the sensibility of reproduction will be diminished or destroyed, and when attachment to the pleasures of sexual relations are removed without harming those who participated in them, then marriage will lose much of its purpose. Finally, when the other means for union amongst people are thoroughly learned that for "two to be one flesh" will cease to require marriage, it will be sufficient to be members of the union in the Body of Christ, a position from which there will be no need for changing the condition of virginity. Fidelity within conjugal bonds is a consequence of the peoples' giving themselves to each other according to the Catholic Church's Catechism.

Here the Catholic Church has provided a vital concise form of two sacraments, both of which demand dedication to the service of others and special responsibility to others.

Last, but not least of course, are funerals. These events can occur at homes, in churches or at cemeteries. Often cemeteries have "funeral parlors" for indoor and lengthier events than might be possible at a grave site. The order of service performed by the clergy at these times varies in accordance with traditions for the best ways of handling each of the aforementioned environments.



# Book 4, Life in Christ: Chapter 1, Eight Articles on Principles of the Catholic Faith

## Book 4, Life in Christ: Chapter 1, Eight Articles on Principles of the Catholic Faith Summary and Analysis

Here, the Catholic Church sets forth a number of Catholic Principles. The Church begins by assuring the target audience—mainly Catholic bishops—that the Christian life is for those who have been baptized and are now beginning their "new life" in which they follow the Risen Lord.

Options for the earthly life are divided into two distinct yet simple categories: life and salvation or destruction. The path of salvation leads to the destruction of sin during the life, and ultimately to the complete destruction of death itself.

The first article here is about the the image of God. It is actually about how the image of God appears in mankind. Free will and sentience, or rationality are the two qualities that most strongly indicate the divine within humanity. The other animals are not self-directed and the angels have no free will. There is a discussion of the fall of the angels earlier in the Catechism. There is some seeming contradiction here: that the angels who fell did so of their own free wills, and that one characteristic that differentiates humans from angels is that angels have no free will whereas normal free humans do.

The second article is about beatitude. First there is a listing of blessings and the tribulations to which they most closely relate. These involve being able to see opportunities and advantages within difficulties. Further, suffering itself creates opportunities for the charitable to offer their generosity and assistance. This permits good works that might not otherwise not occur. Therefore, though these events and circumstances can be unpleasant trials, it is also true that they are a source for good.

The third article is about freedom and responsibility. It is important to recognize that the individual has the choice to decide whether to do good or evil. The greatest problem with sin, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church is that it undermines mankind's personal freedom. Freedom within the spectrum of choices that "fall amongst the good" is only furthered and enhanced by intimacy with Christ. Again, despite appearances to the contrary in some cases, it is the choice of evil that bind individuals and diminish their personal liberty. It is important to understand that this is the case even in cases where it may appear to be otherwise—it may look as if the evil doers are being rewarded or escaping consequences— and it is important to see that it is not permissible or advisable to "do anything" and remain within the good; freedom of choice is present within the limitations of doing what is good.



The next article is about morality. There are actions which are good, and those that are evil. In the majority of cases the truth is that a decision is either good or evil. However, there are actions and decisions the good or evil of which are influenced greatly by the intentions behind them. In such cases, what one's motivations and intentions are, are highly relevant. Nevertheless, according to St. Thomas Aquinas: a good intention cannot override the bad of an evil action. Such behaviors, in this view, cannot then be purified in the proper sense of making them good.

Following the article on morality comes the one specifically devoted to the passions. Love and the feelings associated with it are amongst the passions. After the onset of sexual maturity, then the feelings of desire can be melded with the feelings of love or not. In the former case, the chances of good being behind them and resulting from them are better than in those cases where the desire is not fused with love. It is for this reason that while marriage is advocated, fornication is viewed as a problematic evil. Other reasons why fornication is frowned upon relate to adverse consequences and side effects even when the doer's intentions and motivations are not evil.

The article that comes immediately after this one is very closely connected with the one prior to it. This one is about the moral conscience. The recognition and cultivation of the conscience within the individual is described here as of great significance. The human conscience, according to the Catholic Church requires education throughout life.

There is a matter, at times simple, in other moments perhaps complex, that makes the development of conscience based in the acceptance of external authority. Even so, it is also true that the Church strongly advocates the cultivation of the sense of the interior or psychological landscape for a nurturing place for the conscience. Lastly, the conscience is to be given time and needed attention. A very simple, basic rule is given: there is no justification for doing evil in the hopes of doing good. Also, it is wrong to do anything that might make another move towards sin. Sadly, a giant portion of adolescents are guilty of this one as a normalised part of peer pressure. This is often in part a reaction to the ill effects of the sins of elders upon them.

Article seven of these eight, focuses on the virtues. Human virtues can be actively cultivated through behavior and mindset. Good decision and actions build up and strengthen the heart and mind of the being. There are four cardinal virtues and then a few more. The first virtue is prudence: this is seeking and finding the good in every circumstance and developing discernment to nurture the good and weed out what is bad. Justice pertains to individual relations and to the common good. When people are just, the rights of each are respected and protected. The general outlook is toward what benefits the common good. Fortitude is the quality of resolve and strength of will and character with respect to problems of temptation and related matters. The last of the four cardinal virtues is temperance. This is moderation and in some respects a reigning in of some of the less than pleasant aspects of oneself and the cultivation of tighter controls over areas of difficulty within oneself.

The other three virtues are known as the theological ones. This is the threesome of faith, hope and charity. Faith is belief in God and Jesus and the individual's personal



efforts to discern and then to act upon knowledge of God's will as it directly pertains to himself or herself. God is known to love when people worship Him in private so that it is clearly not "for men rather than for God." Jesus also stated that "If you deny me before other people then I will deny you to my Father in Heaven." Charity is the last of the three and rather than focusing purely upon giving, the Catechism mainly describes it as the virtue of living the ten commandments. In the event of a failure to abide by any of them; repentance and other efforts to clear away whatever caused it to happen and then to prevent repeating the sin is what follows. The fruits of charity are described as love, peace and mercy.

Fruits of the spirit are listed prior to the eighth article. These are benefits that manifest during the earthly life although they are designed as preparation for the heavenly life. chastity, self-control, modesty, gentleness, faithfulness, generosity, goodness, kindness, patience, peace, joy.

The last of the articles presented here is named "Mercy and Sin." Sin is defined as a form of disobedience often rooted in a kind of erroneous selfishness. Again, in this chapter the Catholic Church openly confesses that in its own view, there is a problem with every non-Catholic individual. Sin, it says, is disobedience to God; as such, every sin committed is not against whoever on earth is affected but also those in the other realms and has been done to God Himself. There are two main categories of sin. One is mortal: the very worst of these are done intentionally with full awareness prior to the fact that they are evil and are committed together with the individual's complete consent. These cause the worst difficulties in the individual's relation to God and or as Jesus the Christ. The virtue that these sins conflict with, believe it or not, is charity. The other type of sin is known as venial and is a wounding of

the relationship but does not destroy it. Penance and reconciliation are the proper rites that the Catholic Church offers to restore the person into right relationship. Genuine ignorance, innocence and other forces which, in the event that they truly control the person who commits the sin, does diminish the significance of that sin but does not remove the need for repentance.

These eight articles complete this first chapter. Each is rather succinct and provides a clear view of the Catholic perspective. It blends in quite well with both its predecessor and with what follows. Naturally, the text itself provides greater details.



## **Book 3, The Life in Christ: Chapter 2, The Human Community**

### **Book 3, The Life in Christ: Chapter 2, The Human Community Summary and Analysis**

This chapter begins by affirming the social nature of humanity. A brief description of the value of human society is provided. The fact that a group of people can achieve goals not possible through the work of any one individual is a prevalent factor. Socialization is a necessary part of human development which can help or hinder a person. In the previous section it was indicated that both vice and virtue can be institutionalized, and appear in a multiplicity of guises and groups throughout a society. Groups that further virtue are strongly encouraged by the Catholic Church where those that contribute to vice are to be dissolved through repentance of the participants.

The first article addresses the notion of conversion of heart—that is, for the individual to attune himself or herself to God from the conscience and consciousness and with heart. Properly aligned from within, the individual can then work to improve conditions for all, including the just improvement of social conditions for a variety of people. The virtue of neighborly love is an apt expression of how the divine person or persons are able to help to manifest circumstances within which the virtues can grow and the vices can be cut down, outgrown or otherwise abandoned.

Participation in the life of society is a necessity for everyone. Here the Church discusses authority. Authority is necessarily invested in some individuals within a given society. The extent of the authority influences the effects of that person's decisions. This is the reason why the greatest moral virtue is normally seen as needed in those who wield public authority. The focus within the temporal realm and in earthly affairs is meant to be towards the common good. This makes it so that the individual has a just call for the rights and responsibilities pertaining to how his or her own talents, skills and abilities can be used to serve the common good. The individual is not meant to be destroyed by this at all, but rather, the ideal is that through making the most of himself or herself, the common good will benefit most and the individual will be happy and virtuous.

Article three in this section of the book is entitled "Social Justice." It begins with respect for each person, each member of society. This includes the recognition that whatever one does to another or to oneself, one has also done to Jesus the Christ. Likewise, the love that each person is able to give and to share with others is able to be extended and shared also with God. Ultimately, this contains a great deal of wisdom in how people relate. All of life should be a fraternal and sorority society of "brothers and sisters." For many this triggers the virtue of forgiveness. On the downside: the vices of conspiracy and complicity have often coexisted with the virtue of unconditional love. This is often especially true amongst siblings.



These, taken together, provide a sound basis for understanding another aspect of the Church. It is important to bear in mind however, that for Catholics, the focus is on God, and Earth is the place where people do works that honor God. This is different from the humanist, who may not consciously be a believer, but who still asserts the value of many of the rules. Such a person is also contributing to the common good, but the center of the person's motives are not God. The latter is not the Catholic way, but the virtue is still discernible and valued.

The next chapter is about "Law & Grace" and focuses upon morality. The relationship of morality and law within society is provided. The sources and types of law are briefly explained. There is God as the source of eternal law, and as the creator of natural laws and revealed law.

Natural law provides many lessons. One of the most auspicious attributes of humanity is that this creature has a capacity to learn a tremendous amount via socialized modifications of instinctive behaviors. Due to this, social customs and cultures have been able to express some variation amongst ways of handling the demands of life and society. While there has continued to be some strife, the good news globally is that there is a substantial amount of consensus.





# Book 3, The Life in Christ: Chapter 3, The Ten Commandments

## Book 3, The Life in Christ: Chapter 3, The Ten Commandments Summary and Analysis

Here the Ten Commandments are reviewed in some detail. These are listed in the second chapter of the Life in Christ portion of the text, and then have an entire chapter with an individual article devoted to each one after that.

The first of these is the request for single focused concentration upon and worship of God. This is described as totally dedicated love of God through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Love is the term used, in the context of specific requests for love and dedication on the levels of mind and heart and through action. Through practicing the virtues of faith, hope and charity, Christians can come closer to understanding how to serve God and to purify the physical realm by engaging the body in these actions that are devoted to God and are for the common good.

The second of these is the holy nature of the name of God. A name is a powerful and special device that provides a means of connection. For this reason, it is best to use it carefully. To take it in vain is to waste its power or to stir up unwanted energies.

The third commandment actually pertains to the keeping of the Sabbath. The choice of day stems from the day in the cycle of the week that Christ Jesus rose from the dead. Celebrating the Resurrection is a normal part of the ritual. There is a full recommended service for the day, as well as it being advised as a day of rest.

The fourth commandment: Love thy Neighbors as Thyself. The idea is to treat oneself well and to be humble and to be good to the neighbors. The basis for this is the family unit—not the one in which one was raised but the one people make by being husband and wife. The matrimonial bond in Catholicism is, remember, an ecclesiastical Order indicative of numerous duties towards the other members. It is also privileged within itself and it meant to be the basis for social relationships the authority of which is supposed to be second to God but equal to or greater than all other societal ties. In the event that people mate and produce offspring this becomes, according to the Catechism, an actual relationship in need of public recognition. In other words: the rite is supposed to be society's acceptance of what is rather than the artificial creation of something that would not have been otherwise. It is viewed as perfectly acceptable to forgo marriage when it is done to facilitate the achievement of other honorable ends. However, such a choice would preclude having sexual relations, since marriage is in part a recognition of people having a sexual relationship with one another.

The fifth commandment is Thou Shalt Not Kill. The article written on this in the Catechism is rather complex. There is the assertion of life as being both sacred and





being of great value. Anything that destroys healthy life is evil at worst, and bad at best. Suicide, which is self-murder, abortion and homicide are all wrong. The lesser of these evils are those in which the killer was compelled to do so as a consequence of other pressures, such as having his or her own life immediately and directly threatened, or in an effort to escape or end some form of unendurable torment.

The sixth commandment is the prohibition against adultery. Covered within this section of the Catechism is a short discourse on the virtue of chastity. The challenge of self-mastery in relation to one's own sexual desires and appetites is fully acknowledged by the Church. The idea of chastity includes encouragement of individuals to cherish themselves and their own male or female sexual identities in and of themselves. A healthy, fully developed sexual identity is a release from sexual behaviors that constitute some kind of search for completion of self. Likewise, it is advised to cultivate chastity just to stop counter-productive behaviors relating to sex. This includes the need to nurture thinking of people in ways other than in how they relate to oneself as a means to or sources of sexual pleasure, funding or other self-indulgent forms of gratification, especially if this is without the benefits to both of love, permanence, security, and child-rearing. Marital union, as well as making both parties safe to be open to their fertility, is also intended to be a mutual gift of the self to another. It is also intended to consolidate familial fealty. Therefore, all sexual relations that do not achieve the works of the "Marital Order" are somehow counter-productive and therefore sinful, which means erroneous or evil. Masturbation is referred to as a minor evil because it converts sexuality from a shared reproductive activity to a self-centred, pleasure-oriented behavior.

The seventh commandment is "Thou shalt not steal." The ownership of goods and the idea of possession, and belonging and protection are all relevant to this. The Catechism goes on from this most explicit directive into a very brief overview of matters such as employment, just wages and the like. For readers who are not aware of it, there is some considerable discussion of right relations between workers and employers in the Bible's New Testament. Love for the poor and disdain for greed occur together. The bad news is that some types of wrongdoing have been popularized. The good news is that the power of forgiveness amongst the people is mighty and can cover over sins both minor and serious.

The eighth commandment is "Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor." This means refraining from conspiracy against one's neighbors through intentional falsehood. However, like the other commandments there is more offered in the Catechism to be used along with it. False witness goes beyond malicious deceit. It also includes guarding against wild speculations against your neighbors. Also included are admonitions against the sin of lying and admission that some discretion with regards to the truth is advised. That of course, demands discernment, since discretion can easily be turned to a vice and to the service of deceit rather than making one a guardian of truth, honesty with respect for privacy.

The ninth commandment is "Thou shalt not covet." The idea is to enjoy what one has, to be open to additional things but not to desire that which belongs to another or to others.

When this takes place regarding people and has a sexual twist then it changes from simple covetousness to a form of emotional or psychological adultery. Jealousy, envy, possessiveness and greed are a few of the pernicious emotions and attitudes that can worsen these already troubling spots.

Finally there is the tenth commandment, another one about covetousness. It ends in the Catechism "Where one's treasure is, there one's heart shall be also," This is a connection with the concupiscence—the inclination towards sin—that may remain even after the purification of baptisms. Envy is cited here as the most destructive of human emotions, according to St. Augustine. It was the devil's envy of God's status that led to the fall of Satan and his angels.



# Book 4, Christian Prayer: Chapter 1, Prayer in General

## Book 4, Christian Prayer: Chapter 1, Prayer in General Summary and Analysis

This portion of the Catechism is devoted to Christian Prayer. The first chapter introduces the topic. It is asserted that prayer is an attitude and that it is a relationship between God and the one praying. The matter of God's presence, living status and the way that any given individual does or does not sense intimacy with God are all part and parcel of prayer.

Belief is crucial. However, it is not unreasonable to realize that there may be times when the believer is confused or that there is a "desert period." The Messiah did state: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

There are some qualities and attitudes that are helpful when praying. One of these is true humility. This is a sensitive issue, especially since naturally no one likes to face his or her own feelings of humiliation. As a consequence of humiliation, there may be an exaggerated fear of true humility or a misunderstanding of what it really is.

Prayer is a gift from God. Locations of the human body are referred to in reference to prayer.

It is considered significant when something comes up more than once. In fact, the Catechism agrees that because the word "heart" comes up in relation to the source of emotion over 1000 times that it has some meaning with respect to prayer. Truly this is suggestive of meaningfulness behind repetition. Repetition itself is a challenging matter, but it is true that it is an intentional strengthening of a bond or is done to intensify something. Hence, in this case, over 1000 repetitions of the use of the term "the heart" in relation to prayer indicates that prayer should come "from the heart," from the emotional center and be done with feeling. Prayer displays or expresses the covenant between God and the one praying. Naturally, it is also intended to be a form of communion.

The Catholic Catechism explains that God will initiate the relationship with each and every individual. In this respect God's affection is reminiscent of the enduring love of a parent who willingly forgives and reconciles with adult offspring who became estranged during the trials of adolescence or due to some other interpersonal dramas.

Similarly, the Catechism explains how it is that God intercedes, especially when called upon to do so through prayer. To understand what intercession is, a few brief examples of how it works in society follows. When a parent, elder sibling, or other interferes in a conflict often in the protection of both, this is intercession in action. It is also possible for



children to create or to provide some kind of intercession for people older than themselves, but in this case it may more often be through prayer. Another variant of intercession, is the police force, which when called upon, will send in people to interfere and intervene with events or make efforts to help to make amends in resolving an issue. The use of attorneys and law courts are another sociological form of intercession. These are just some of the ways God's intercession can come into play on the playing field of Earth where the drama of human life unfolds.

There are a variety of types of prayers. Some prayer is even complaint to God through Jesus about conditions or difficulties. There are prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving. Some prayers make specific requests.

There are three articles that relate to this matter in the first chapter in the Catechism devoted to this topic. In it, another peculiar feature of the relationship between humans and God emerges. This is the "approach and avoid" issue that appears to be a direct affect of the level of awe and fear that humans often feel about God. It is akin to how animals often react to the proximity of humans, but also to the way that people react to others perceived as having far greater social status or some other awe inspiring virtue. What is reassuring is that God is aware of this and does not hold it against the worshipers but finds that true humility helps the two to bridge the gap. Pride is one of the greatest causes of sin known, painful though it may be for people to admit.

It is emphasized that Jesus himself prayed extensively, with and without great feeling, including crying. He tended to give thanks prior to events that were the fulfillment of requests. The major change in policy is that Jesus teaches those who come after him to petition their Holy Father with prayer in the Son's name. This shows both that the unity of Jesus as the Son with God the Father and the willingness of Jesus to act as an intermediary.

Catholicism offers Mother Mary and Mother Church. Holy Mary, Mother of God had her own methods of prayer prior to the birth of her son, who was the Son. The Catechism offers special provision for her type of prayer. What is emphasized as so glorious about Mary is that she is offering her whole being during prayer, and that she grants God her full and complete cooperation. It is imperative to understand that the Church views her as having submitted to God the whole time and that she did so free from any trace of sin.

A first step in prayer, the Catechism explains, is requesting forgiveness. In Catholicism, after many requests for forgiveness and supplications, it is often advised to experience the Eucharist where that is possible.

This chapter of the summary also covers more than one chapter of the Catechism. The next chapter continues to be on the topic of prayer. It has three articles: "At the Wellspring of Prayer"; "The Way of Prayer"; and "Guides for Prayer." This includes a special section devoted to communion with the Mother of God.



Following this is a third chapter entitled "The Life of Prayer." Vocal, meditative and contemplative are three characteristics universal to effective prayer within the Christian tradition. Having good intentions is a necessary element to each of these types of prayer. Whenever there is composure of heart, matters will go better.

The truth is that there are people who run into difficulties with prayer. No one needs to suffer from this at all, but in the case of those who do it is helpful to know that they are not alone. Ultimately, any problems experienced in prayer require requests for forgiveness, sincerity of heart, concentration helps, and the qualities of trust, perseverance and humility.



# Chapter 2, The Lord's Prayer

## Chapter 2, The Lord's Prayer Summary and Analysis

This is the final section the Catholic Church's Catechism. It is devoted entirely to one prayer, the "Lord's Prayer." Like the previous chapters this one is divided into Articles.

The first article describes this single prayer as a summary of the entire set of the Gospels.

Later, the Catechism refers again to how this is valued as it pertains to other methods of the Church. This includes the special role and function of the Lord's Prayer as part of both the baptismal and confirmation rites.

During the second article, there are a number of features shared that contribute to the proper function of prayer and of intercession. This is called "parrhesia, straightforward simplicity, filial trust, joyous assurance, humble boldness, the certainty of being loved," [29 Cf. Eph. 3:12], p. 731.

The main body of the Lord's Prayer is laid out as "the Seven Petitions" within the last part of the fourth section of the Catechism. The Church reminds readers during this of Jesus's teaching that everyone can be and must be perfect. For many perfection feels threatening. even offensive and full of pride and arrogance. For others, perfection seems like an impossible demand that only someone ruthless and brutal would insist on.

Every reader, according to the teachings of Christ, can in fact be perfect even in the face of every deep seated insecurity he or she has. However, it is advised to submit to God's will and to ask for help with this, just as children are given guidance, and adults who take on jobs full of responsibility are often provided with people who provide training, guidance and assistance while also relying upon the individual's ability to figure a lot out for themselves and to use their free will.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church ends with a reminder that even though the Devil is a born murderer and liar, that everyone can be completely safe within God's protection—released from sin and its consequences, and protected from the Evil One. Everyone can be perfect, and all are loved with a depth and intensity that drives away demons and lets people feel content, secure and happy. Simply ask for forgiveness, admit to any wrongdoings, apologize even when you do not know what you did wrong and ask for anything you want in the name of Jesus Christ Son of God. Ultimately, you will do well to accept that God's will might be better than and will not necessarily undermine your own real will. In fact, given the depth of the love, realize that what you freely choose when you are not warped is pretty much what God knew you would or was hoping you would. Amen.



# Characters

## God

This is the focus of the book, as the work is designed to facilitate healthy relationships of individuals with God. This entity has been known by other names, and in this context is most certainly the God of the Jews, but also as the "one true God," the God of monotheists, the Creator and Maintainer of the Cosmos and Father of Jesus the Christ.

A number of his names are given in the book. Two of the most famous are actually one, but in two distinct languages. YHWH is the Hebrew spelling for when he is called "Yaweh". He has also frequently been referred to as Jehovah, and presented himself to Moses as "I Am Who I Am." His role as Father. A covenant that he made with Noah is described. Numerous of His works and ways of acquiring greater intimacy with Him are provided.

While the center of the book, He is discussed in terms of three main descriptions. He is "the Father." He is known through His one and only Son who spent a little over 30 years as a mortal man. Though still living, His Son Jesus the Christ has ceased functioning within the limits of Earthbound mortal incarnate sense.

God is also presented as moving through the Holy Spirit. The Catechism explains how this is both "an entity" and a process. Most often when God works outside the Church, especially amongst people who have actually not even heard of Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit is the one to whom the work is usually attributed.

## Jesus the Christ

This figure is both the incarnate Son of God, and also God himself. Jesus was contained by and one with God, and without God Jesus would not have been able to be a prophet or Messiah.

His mother was Mary who bore him through conception without a human male, but she explained that it was conception through God himself or an angel thereof.

His real father was God. His earthly father was a man named Joseph who was his mother's husband.

He died at the age of 33 but used this as just one more opportunity to show mastery over earthly life by rising from the dead.

In Catholicism Jesus is the Messiah, not merely a prophet. His power and works are a main focus of this book.



## Pontius Pilate

Pilate continues to be remembered due to the political position he held at the time of Christ's life, trial and death. Pilate was the representative of Roman Law in the area where the Jews were living and where Christ met his end. Pilate pressured by a mob and by the relationship between Hebrew and Roman laws to execute Christ by crucifixion.

## St. Peter

This was one of the original twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. He was viewed as the "rock" of the faithful, and the one upon whom, beyond Jesus himself, the Church could be founded. He comes up early in the book, in reference to the Pope. Peter was the head apostle. Through hand-picked succession, the present Pope is an apostle that is directly in the line of Peter.

The Catholic Church recognizes Peter as a Saint because of what he did during his lifetime. He is a historical figure.

Peter comes up in various parts of the book, including his reconciliation after the resurrection even though he denied Jesus under fear and pressure.

## Mary the Mother of God

This is Mary, the Virgin Mother of Lord Jesus. She comes up during the Profession of Faith in the Catechism. She is considered most remarkable for having been free from sin throughout her entire life. Another incredible truth about her is that she was offered the role of the Son of God's mother and she accepted it freely. She is known to have miraculously conceived in a means that is "twofold." On the level of spirit she did not conceive without a father, but the father was not an incarnate mortal man. In the case of Mary, she became pregnant without the loss of her virginity thanks to and in accordance with what she was told would happen by an angel.

Due to the nature of how she came into motherhood, she is often called The Blessed Virgin. Although she is not written of extensively in the Bible, it is shown that she was a perfectly good wife to the mortal man who was her husband although he was not the father of the child Jesus. The other main feature of Mary is that she was there during many of Jesus the Christ's experiences, including being present for her son's crucifixion.

## Mary Magdalene

This was the woman who was with Jesus and the apostles. She comes up in the early part of the Catechism during the Profession of Faith. She tended Jesus's body after the





crucifixion. As such she was one of the first to discover that his body was missing because he had risen from the dead.

Her reputation remains tainted because some believe that she was a prostitute prior to meeting Jesus and the other apostles. Like some of the men, she abandoned her work to follow Jesus. Hers was simply yet another case where Lord Jesus defied social conventions and stigmas and welcomed her genuine belief and interest in his teachings instead of rejecting her because of a bad reputation in society.

## **St. Paul**

Paul was an apostle canonized by the Catholic Church. This allows him to be venerated and called upon for assistance but it is imperative that this not be worship as that would be a grievous error.

St. Paul comes up in the Catechism during discourse of the sacraments of healing. He is referred to within the context of the healing works of Jesus the Christ conducted prior to the Resurrection and Ascension.

## **St. Thomas Aquinas**

This Catholic Saint comes up during the discourse on morality as part of a larger discussion of the Christian life and lifestyle. This man is famous amongst Catholics and amongst philosophers in general for his thought and his writings. A champion of Christian theology within a context of challenging and brilliant philosophers of other schools of thought, St. Thomas Aquinas was able to articulate a convergence of Christian and Aristotilian philosophy.

## **St. James**

This canonized apostle comes up in the beginning of the second half of the Catechism. St. James emerges as a strong critic of blasphemies involving the misuse of God's name. Doubtless venerated for other reasons, this is the reference point readers have at the first mention of his name in this concise summary of the Catholic religion.

## **Gabriel, the Angel**

This is the angel who informed Mary that she was to conceive a baby of whom God would be the actual father. This comes up in the text during a section devoted to Mary the Blessed Virgin.



## **St. John Chrysostom**

This Saint's name appears during a discussion of the Ten Commandments. In the arguments against stealing, this Saint explains that what people give to the poor belongs to them and is due to them. The gifts are not undeserved hand-outs, but to refuse them what they receive would indeed be unjust. This is a view which might not always be popular.

## **St. Riga of Lima**

This Saint also comes up during the discourse on the ten commandments. The Saint was criticized for caring for sick people in her home, thus bringin "undesireables" into her neighborhood. The Saint objected that her critics should simply be grateful that they were able to serve Jesus in this way.

## **St. Augustine**

This remarkable individual comes up in the last section of the part of the book devoted to the Life in Christ. The Saint rebukes the covetous thoughts and attitudes of others especially as it relates to desiring members of the opposite sex.

## **St. Luke**

This saint comes up in the fourth portion of the Catholic Catechism when the matter of Christian prayer is being covered. This saint was one of the writers of one of the Gospels.

## **St. Matthew**

This Saint is brought up with reference to the Lord's Prayer. He comes up in the last part of the Catechism. He is mentioned in close association with Jesus the Christ and with the Sermon on the Mount. He is known for having written the Gospel named for him.

## **Satan**

This is God and humanity's chief adversary. Satan is called a murderer and a liar by the Catholic Church, alerting God's worshipers to elements of the Devil's character. This fallen angel remains subordinate to God but powerful.

All those in God's hands are actually safe from the Devil and yet he must be defeated for the Earth and humanity to be released from the reality of Death.



## **Holy Spirit**

This is a bit peculiar because it is obvious and yet elusive. Jesus at times describes the Holy Spirit as much like the wind. The Catechism of the Catholic Church informs readers of many "guises" of the Holy Spirit. The processes of Church tradition are explained as being operations of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can be an entity in the same way that the entire Catholic Church, or a corporation or other organization can work in ways that are like "one entity." Also, the Holy Spirit can perform works through individual people.

## **People of God**

This is the entire group of God's people. They are meant to function together as the living body of Christ and in accordance with His teaching on the Eucharist.



# Objects/Places

## Crucifix

Crucifixes have been used at different times in history for torture and execution. Jesus was executed by crucifixion by the Romans as a political and religious criminal figure. There is one long pole that holds the person aloft. Then there is a short cross pole so that arms can be strung out and held down. Limbs are often broken and other injuries inflicted.

## Chrism

This is anointing oil. It is mentioned more than once. In the first case it refers to oils used in association with the first initiation rite of baptism. It can also be used for other rites, including the elevation of bishops.

## schism

This is a division amongst groups of people. One example of a schism that is used in the Catechism is the development of protestant churches. These were congregations who continued to practice a form of Christianity but refused to fall under the authority of the Pope.

## tomb

This is the location where Jesus's body was placed after it was removed from the cross. It is commonly believed to have been a kind of cave, or mausoleum.

## Magisterium

This is a segment of the Catholic Church. The Magisterium is dedicated to the education of Catholics and to the preservation and continuance of the ways of the Catholic religion. As such it is a very important part of the structure of the Church as a whole.

## commandments

These are divinely revealed regulations regarding human behavior within society. In relation to the Catholic Church, there are ten that were originally presented as Mosaic laws by God, "I Am Who I Am." This special word for 'essential rules' has long been associated with Judaism and Christianity.



## **OX**

This is a large animal that can be used on farms. The ox is often a symbol of strength. The animal is referred to in the Catechism as a sign of wealth.

## **sheep**

Sheep are referred to in the Catechism more than once. At times the reference is literal as these sources of wool and sometimes of food have been long valued by humanity. In many other instances they are used to symbolize God's relation to humanity by analogy—as the shepherd is to his own flock of sheep.

## **goats**

Goats are mentioned in the Catechism as a kind of creature that is looked down upon but more importantly is distinguished from sheep. God does not remove these, but keeps them in their own group and the goats "belong on God's left" whereas the sheep will be "at the right hand side." This is understood to be a metaphor for unfaithful and faithful humanity.

## **Holy Orders**

These are a set of types of people within the Church. The clergy are one type of order. The married people are all also members of a type of Holy Order within the Catholic Church.

## **Mother Church**

In Catholicism all congregations and all administrative and educational operations connect together into one "body" known as the Church. In Catholicism this entity is referred to as female.

## **Church's treasury also called the Communion of Saints**

This is a description of the spiritual goods held in common by the entire Catholic religion. This does not mean that they cannot be accessed by others but that they are recognized as particularly meaningful to the Church. The entire group of Saints are viewed together. The saints together are able to achieve what might not normally be possible.



## **Penance**

This is the name of a sacrament, or rite of the Catholic Church. This is also the name of a proscribed set of activities devised for the precise purpose of making amends to someone for something that he or she has done.

## **indulgence**

This is a special effect of forgiveness. It normally must be requested by members of the Church. When indulgence is attained or obtained then potential troubles that come as a consequence of some sin or another are abated. The punishment is forgone. There are some cases where only part of the unpleasant consequences can be removed.

## **bishop**

A Catholic bishop is someone who has been recognized as an apostle of Jesus the Christ and can legitimately claim spiritual lineage from the order of descendency from the original twelve. These people have typically been through extensive training along with having received initiatory rites of passage into the role. Bishops are typically associated with at least one congregation or parish. Priests are amongst those who operate cooperatively under them within the hierarchy of the Church.

## **the poor**

The poor are viewed as a group in the text. Their needs are to be taken seriously and treated as a priority. According to the Church, despite occurrences of prejudices against them, the poor are to be esteemed. It is also necessary to see that they deserve what they receive in contrast to treating them as though they do not.

## **deaconate**

The deacons are another group of ordained ministers within the Catholic Church. These people are also dedicated to ministry within the Catholic Church. Their role is distinctively different from that of the Priests. They are ordained by bishops; of the details of the rite is that a bishop lays their hands upon the candidate.

## **imprint / character / mark**

This is somehow both tangible and intangible. Initiations such as baptism and confirmation are said to mark the person to whom they are done. Events that leave strong imprints can also be said to show in their character. Rites are designed to have a discernible affect upon those who undergo them.



# Themes

## Catholic Church Overview

One of the themes of this book is to provide a concise overview of the Roman Catholic religion. It is done so that the most important aspects of the faith can be understood and shared.

This information is set out so that any reader can better understand the religion. The methods of the Church are designed to enhance the fulfillment of its purpose which is to unite God with man such that all mankind will be saved first from sin and ultimately from death and the limitations of earthly existence.

The beliefs of the Church are set out in this book. There are practices that are also set out that are intended to make the beliefs more powerfully effective in the individual's life. This is done in part by the presence of each congregation. Regular and special services are part of the unity that this is intended to cause. The Creed is also listed and explained rather clearly and succinctly.

Rituals are highly valued by the Church. The way that people respond to ritual varies. In the Catechism these are typically called sacraments. There is a large section of the book devoted to the main sacraments of the Church. What they are called, how they are performed and what they do are all explained. There are details left out with respect to the level of explanation.

The book is devised in order to be of use for Catholics all over the world. As such it includes beliefs and rituals that are used by the Roman or Eastern Catholic branches of the Church.

Basic information regarding how the Church views itself and the way that it is internally structured is also provided. For outsiders and many insiders this is quite valuable information. This includes the relevance of the historical context of Christ, and the original twelve apostles and how the current hierarchical arrangement of the Catholic Church is the preservation and perpetuation of the original work as described in the writings of the Bible.

## The Living Status of Jesus the Christ, Son of God

Jesus was a factual historical figure. The Church believes that he was resurrected into a new living state. Due to this fact, the Son of God is still alive, though not generally accessible to humanity in the concrete way that he was before the crucifixion. However, people still speak of his presence in the Church.



## Reference Guide

The Catechism of the Catholic Church was written predominantly as an updated reference manual for bishops of the Catholic Church. In no way shape or form was it mandated as a secret text, but this is the group of people it has been made especially to serve.

The purpose of the Catechism is to foster the unity and perpetuation of the knowledge and methods of the Catholic religion. Its compilation was a six year project to update the work back in the 1980s and 1990s. Through the efforts of many, the Catechism has been updated for clerics working in the religion for the first time in 400 years. Of course, the vast majority of the contents are identical in content to the previous version. Everything contained within the Catechism should be found universally throughout Catholicism.

It is likely that the majority of readers will find that much of the material presented is well known. In such cases, it can serve as a source of comfort and reassurance for those who have ever suffered from insecurity about their information. At the same time, due to the diversity of individuals, many readers may find that there is some portion of the material that is less clear. Beginning bishops may find that it is a handy guide until experience has filled in any gaps. In addition to this, it can be of great service as a resource for priests, deacons and others.

The Catechism can also be used to assist with the teaching of others within the religious community. There may be questions that come to which the answer is well known but the capacity to explain is limited by other factors. Since it is rather complete, the book will facilitate this by finding a rapid way to answer questions that might be otherwise take too much time.

For all of these purposes and more the Catechism makes a great reference book. Outsiders can learn a great deal about the religion from it. Insiders can find out more about parts of their own religion. The book can be used as part of coursework for clerics looking to advance their abilities.

The book can fill in gaps for clergy in office. The work can be used to assist the bishop by providing guidance in the free time of the person he wishes to assist. For these reasons as well as the classical reason of preserving the accuracy and unity of teachings throughout the Catholic Church, the Catechism is a great reference guide.





# Style

## Perspective

What makes this book so special is that it is written from the perspective of the Catholic Church. It is peculiar in that the Catholic Church is an organization not one individual and yet has a point of view as though it were an individual. This is not beyond human comprehension but does make it different than if one person had written from a purely subjective perspective.

The background of the book is its' predecessors. The most recent one, according to notes made to readers in this text, was done 400 years ago, also by the Church.

The perspective of the book is heavily influenced by its purpose. It is meant to be a complete and concise reference guide for Catholic bishops. However, it is also intended that it will meet the needs of other faithful Christians and in some cases elucidate the meaning and methods of Catholicism to others.

In no way, shape or form does the book make any false pretenses. That is, this book is written by the Church not by God. Readers will be able to tell the difference but it helps that the Church did not imitate the writing style used in The Holy Bible when writing this particular work.

## Tone

The tone of the book organizationally subjective, but otherwise objective. This means that the work is about Catholicism, not about those who wrote it. The book is about the Church and her beliefs and processes.

The tone is that of a reference guide. It is clear. In fact, it reads as though the authors have very conscientiously ensured that it can be understood by both insiders and outsiders. A great deal of explanation is provided although it is concise.

There are a number of terms and practices which are defined for readers. Those who have already learned all that is contained within will find it to consist of little more than a reminder. Better still, the tone is such that it may help to educate Church representatives in the best means for answering questions raised by people within the parish.

The book is presented without condescension nor presumption. In cases where the readers come across information he or she already knows, then it serves as affirmation or confirmation of correctness. In the event that there is a 'gap' or a trouble spot where the readers did not know or understand some aspect or detail of the Catholic religion, then a rather clear explanation is herein provided.

## Structure

The book is well organized. It contains a complex table of contents.

The first part is devoted to the main beliefs of the Church. This includes brief outlines of them. There are articles that provide a bit of further insight. The first part pertains directly to God's relationship to humanity. This is summarized in three straightforward chapters.

The second section is devoted to the Creeds. The Creeds are beliefs of the Church and of the faithful. However, they are further descriptions of how God and mankind relate interpersonally through the Church. The Church's main function is to facilitate this relationship between every individual and God through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Part Two of the book, which is labeled as such, moves into the rites of the Church. The rituals used to celebrate Christianity by the Church are called sacraments. There is more than one kind. Each of these has to do with a stage of relationship to God but also often has to do with a phase of life that one is in. Some are devised to heal, repair or to nurture certain attributes.

Part Three is called Life in Christ. The first portion of this describes freedom and morality at the individual level. What follows immediately after this is the community level of life. Morality is explicated to readers in these terms at this stage of the book. The first part is an overview of how society works, whereas the second is dedicated to the 10 Commandments.

The final part of the Catechism, Part Four, is devoted entirely to prayer. Christian methods of prayer are set out. Finally a simple examination of the Lord's Prayer shows just how important to the religion this one prayer provided in the New Testament really is to the effective practice of Catholicism.



## Quotes

"To catechize is 'to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him.' [14]" p. 119, cited as 14 CT 5.

"The Holy Spirit is like the sap on the Father's vine which bears fruit on its branches," [26 Cf. Jn 15: 1-17; Gal 5:22], p. 314.

"The unequivocal insistence on the indissolubility of the marriage bond," p. 450.

"Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man with his friend," p. 678.

"This is parrhesia, straightforward simplicity, filial trust, joyous assurance, humble boldness, the certainty of being loved," [29: Cf. 29 Eph. 3:12,] p. 731.

[Of the priests] "The promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination and the kiss of peace from him at the end of the ordination liturgy mean that the bishop considers them his co-workers, his sons, his brothers and his friends, and that they in turn owe him love and obedience," p. 437.

"Devotion to the Blessed Virgin", p. 275.

"Catholic doctrine, expressed in the liturgy, the Magisterium, and the constant practice of the Church, recognizes that there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ, the episcopacy and the presbyterate....[of these, the bishops are initiated to the third degree—they are the episcopate, the next order of priests are the presbyterate, whereas deacons have been ordained as well but only to the first degree]," p. 433.

"Let everyone revere the deacons as Jesus Christ, the bishop as an image of the Father, and the presbyters as the senate of God and the assembly of apostles. For without them one cannot speak of the Church," [33 St. Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Trall. 3, 1: SCh 10, 96.], p. 433.

"...the presence of Christ as the Head of the Church," p. 430.

"Teacher of Truth," [one title of Jesus the Christ], p. 431.

"...was proof of love for him," p. 432.

"There is no offense, however grievous, that the Church cannot forgive," p. 278.

"Christ's Resurrection fulfilled these predictions," p. 187.

"The truth of Jesus' divinity is confirmed by his resurrection," p. 187.

"She bears in herself and administers the totality of the means of salvation," p. 250.



## Topics for Discussion

Name your favorite sacrament of the Catholic Church as it is described in the Catechism. Provide some explanation or description of why you choose this one.

Show three ways in which Catholic practice stems directly from the truth that Jesus Christ is/was a Jew.

Are you a Catholic? Why or why not?

Name one belief of yours, if any, that has changed as a consequence of reading this book. Explain why, using at least two but no more than five sentences.

What is your opinion of the Jewish tradition of the sacrificial offering to absolve the people of sin that Christ delivered himself up as [to change the tradition]?

Do you believe that the Pope is a present day apostle of Christ? Why or why not?

Give an opinion in approximately 50 words of the fact that the Catechism, as a document, has been part of the Church for quite some time and now has been updated.

Do you feel better informed about Catholicism now than you did before? If so, describe at least three ways in which you do.

Discuss a part of the Lord's Prayer that particularly appeals to you.

Do you feel that all people who have married and divorced should be banned from taking communion [the Eucharist]? Defend your answer.

Why is the Catholic Church so strongly in favor of marriage that does not lead to divorce?

Explain the phrase, "openness to fertility."

Do you think it is still correct to refer to Jesus as alive? Why or why not?

Do you agree that the Church is the mother of all Christians? Please explain your answer.

The Church has been known to "resist change." The Church would most likely claim that this is for the sake of preserving teachings and methods handed down through tradition. One thing that Christ did was initiate changes to Hebrew Jewish tradition. What do you think of the relationship between change and preservation of knowledge and tradition?

If there is a Catholic belief or practice that bothers you, what is it? Please explain why.

What is a Catholic belief that particularly appeals to you? Explain why.