

# ***We Believe***

***The Catechism of the Evangelical Catholic Church***

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## **I. Human Nature**

- 1. What are we by nature?**  
We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God.
- 2. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?**  
It means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.
- 3. Why then do we live apart from God and out of harmony with creation?**  
From the beginning, human beings have misused their freedom and made wrong choices.
- 4. Why do we not use our freedom as we should?**  
Because we rebel against God, and we put ourselves in His place.
- 5. What help is there for us?**  
Our help is in God.
- 6. How did God first help us?**  
God first helped us by revealing Himself and His will through nature and history, through many seers and saints, and especially the prophets of Israel.

## **II. God the Father**

- 7. What do we learn about God as Creator from the revelation to Israel?**  
We learn that there is one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all that is visible and invisible.
- 8. What does this mean?**  
This means that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains, and directs it for all humanity.
- 9. What does this mean about our place in the universe?**  
It means that the world belongs to its Creator, and that we are called to enjoy and care for it in accordance with God's purposes.
- 10. What does this mean about human life?**  
It means that all people are worthy of respect and honor because all are created in the image of God, and all can respond to the love of God.

**11. How was this revelation handed down to us?**

This revelation was handed down to us through a people created to be in a covenant with God.

### **III. The Old Covenant**

**12. What is meant by a covenant with God?**

A covenant is a relationship initiated by God to which a body of people responds in faith.

**13. What is the Old Covenant?**

The Old Covenant is the one given by God to the Hebrew people.

**14. What did God promise them?**

God promised that they would be His people to bring all the nations of the world to Him.

**15. What response did God require from the chosen people?**

God required the chosen people to be faithful; to love justice, to do mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.

**16. Where is this Old Covenant to be found?**

The covenant with the Hebrew people is found in the books that we call the Old Testament.

**17. Where in the Old Testament is God's will for us shown most clearly?**

God's will for us is shown most clearly in the Ten Commandments.

### **IV. The Ten Commandments**

**18. What are the Ten Commandments?**

The Ten Commandments are the laws given by God to Moses and the people of Israel.

**19. What do we learn from these commandments?**

We learn two things; our duty to God and our duty to our neighbors.

**20. What is our duty to God?**

Our duty is to believe and trust in God:

1. to love and obey God and to bring others to know Him;
2. to put nothing in the place of God;
3. to show God respect in thought, word, and deed; and
4. to set aside regular times for worship, prayer, and the study of God's Word.

**21. What is our duty to our neighbors?**

Our duty to our neighbors is to love them as ourselves, and to do to other people as we wish them to do to us:

1. to love, honor, and help our parents and family; to respect those in authority, and to meet their just demands;
2. to show respect for the life God has given us, to work and pray for peace, to bear no malice, prejudice or hatred in our hearts, and to be kind to all God's creation;
3. to use our bodily desires as God intended;
4. to be honest and fair in our dealings, to seek justice, freedom, and the necessities of life for all people, and to use our talents and possessions as ones who must answer for them to God;
5. to speak the truth and not mislead others by our silence; and
6. to resist the temptations of envy, greed, and jealousy, to rejoice in other people's gifts and graces, and
7. do our duty for the love of God who has called us into fellowship with Him.

**22. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?**

The Ten Commandments were given to define our relationship with God and our neighbors.

**23. Since we do not fully obey them, are they useful at all?**

By not fully obeying them, we see more clearly our sin and our need for redemption.

## **V. Sin and Redemption**

**24. What is sin?**

Sin is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus separating us from Him, from other people, and from all of creation.

**25. How does sin have power over us?**

Sin has power over us because we lose our liberty when our relationship with God is distorted.

- 26. What is redemption?**  
Redemption is the act of God that frees us from the power of evil, sin, and death.
- 27. How did God prepare us for redemption?**  
God sent the prophets to call us back to Himself, to show us our need for redemption, and to announce the coming of the Messiah.
- 28. What is meant by the Messiah?**  
The Messiah is one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that with the help of God we may live in harmony with Him, within ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.
- 29. Who do we believe is the Messiah?**  
The Messiah (or Christ) is Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son of God.

## **VI. God the Son**

- 30. What do we mean when we say that Jesus is the only Son of God?**  
We mean that Jesus is the only perfect image of the Father, and shows us the nature of God.
- 31. What is the nature of God revealed in Jesus?**  
God is love.
- 32. What do we mean when we say that Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and became incarnate from the Virgin Mary?**  
We mean that by God's own act His Divine Son received our human nature from the Virgin Mary, His mother.
- 33. Why did He take our human nature?**  
The Divine Son became human, so that in Him human beings might be adopted as children of God and be made heirs of God's kingdom.
- 34. What is the great importance of Jesus' suffering and death?**  
By His obedience, even to suffering and death, Jesus made the offering that we could not make; in Him we are freed from the power of sin and are reconciled to God.

- 35. What is the significance of Jesus' resurrection?**  
By His resurrection, Jesus overcame death and opened for us the way to eternal life.
- 36. What do we mean when we say that He descended to the dead?**  
We mean that He went to those who had died and also offered them the benefits of redemption.
- 37. What do we mean when we say that He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father?**  
We mean that Jesus took our human nature into heaven where He now reigns with the Father and intercedes for us.
- 38. How can we share in His victory over sin, suffering, and death?**  
We share in His victory when we are baptized into the New Covenant and become living members of Christ.

## **VII. The New Covenant**

- 39. What is the New Covenant?**  
The New Covenant is the new relationship with God given by Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to the apostles; and, through them, to all who believe in Him.
- 40. What did the Messiah promise in the New Covenant?**  
Christ promised to bring us into the kingdom of God and give life in all its fullness.
- 41. What response did Christ require?**  
Christ commanded us to believe in Him and to keep His commandments.
- 42. What are the commandments taught by Christ?**  
Christ taught us the Summary of the Law and gave us the New Commandment.
- 43. What is the Summary of the Law?**  
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself.
- 44. What is the New Commandment?**  
The New Commandment is that we love one another as Christ loves us.

**45. Where may we find what Christians believe about Christ?**

What Christians believe about Christ is found in the Scriptures and summed up in the creeds.

### **VIII. The Creeds**

**46. What are the creeds?**

The creeds are statements of our basic beliefs about God.

**47. How many creeds does this Church use in its worship?**

This Church uses two creeds: The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

**48. What is the Apostles' Creed?**

The Apostles' Creed is the ancient creed of Baptism; it is used in the Church's worship to recall our Baptismal Covenant.

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,
2. and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
3. who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
4. suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell;
5. on the third day He rose again from the dead;
6. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
7. from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
9. the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
10. the forgiveness of sins,
11. the resurrection of the body,
12. and life everlasting. Amen.

**49. What is the Nicene Creed?**

The Nicene Creed is the creed of the universal Church,

1. I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.



2. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through Him all things were made.
3. For us men and for our salvation  
He came down from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.
4. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
He suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and His Kingdom will have no end.
5. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.
6. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **IX. God the Holy Spirit**

### **50. Who is the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, God at work in the world and in the Church even now.

**51. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the Old Covenant?**

The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Old Covenant as the giver of life, the One who spoke through the prophets.

**52. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the New Covenant?**

The Holy Spirit is revealed as the Lord who leads us into all truth and enables us to grow in the likeness of Christ.

**53. How do we recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?**

We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.

**54. How do we recognize the truths taught by the Holy Spirit?**

We recognize truths taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures.

## **X. God the Trinity**

**55. What is the Trinity?**

The Trinity is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed to us through Jesus Christ in the Sacred Scriptures.

*Jesus said, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)*

## **XI. Sacred Scripture**

**56. What are the Holy Scriptures?**

The Holy Scriptures, commonly called the Bible, are the books of the Old and New Testaments. Other books, called the Apocrypha, are often included in the Bible.

**57. What is the Old Testament?**

The Old Testament consists of books written by the people of the Old Covenant, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to show God at work in nature and history.

**58. What is the New Testament?**

The New Testament consists of books written by the people of the New Covenant, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to set forth the life and teachings of Jesus and to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom for all people.

**59. What is the Apocrypha?**

The Apocrypha is a collection of additional books written by people of the Old Covenant, still used by the Christian Church.

**60. Why do we call the Holy Scriptures the Word of God?**

We call them the Word of God because God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible.

**61. How do we understand the meaning of the Bible?**

We understand the meaning of the Bible by the help of the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church in the true interpretation of the Scriptures.

## **XII. The Church**

**62. What is the Church?**

The Church is the community of the New Covenant.

**63. How is the Church described in the Bible?**

The Church is described as the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head and of which all baptized persons are members. It is called the People of God, the New Israel, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, and the pillar and ground of truth.

**64. How is the Church described in the creeds?**

The Church is described as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

**65. Why is the Church described as one?**

The Church is one, because it is one Body, under one Head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**66. Why is the Church described as holy?**

The Church is holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, consecrates its members, and guides them to do God's work.

**67. Why is the Church described as catholic?**

The Church is catholic (universal), because it proclaims the whole faith to all people to the end of time.

- 68. Why is the Church described as apostolic?**  
The Church is apostolic, because it continues in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles and is sent to carry out Christ's mission to all people.
- 69. What is the mission of the Church?**  
The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.
- 70. How does the Church pursue its mission?**  
The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love.
- 71. Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?**  
The church carries out its mission through the ministry of ALL its members.

### **XIII. The Ministry of the Church**

- 72. Who are the ministers of the Church?**  
The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.
- 73. What is the ministry of the laity?**  
The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and His Church; to bear witness to Him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.
- 74. What is the ministry of a bishop?**  
The ministry of a bishop is to represent Christ and His Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the Word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.
- 75. What is the ministry of a priest or presbyter?**  
The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and His Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the serving of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to preach; to teach; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

**76. What is the ministry of a deacon?**

The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and His Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel, and the administration of the sacraments.

**77. What is the duty of all Christians?**

The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for worship (Mass); and to work, pray, and give thanks for the spread of the kingdom of God.

## **XIV. Prayer and Worship**

**78. What is prayer?**

Prayer is responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.

**79. What is Christian Prayer?**

Christian prayer is a response of God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**80. What are the main forms of prayer?**

There are two main forms of prayer: silent prayer and vocal prayer.

**81. What is silent prayer?**

Silent prayer is that prayer by which we unite our hearts with God while thinking of His holy truths.

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.  
(Philippians 4:8)*

**82. What is vocal prayer?**

Vocal prayer is that prayer which comes from the mind and heart and is spoken by the lips.

*With my own voice I will call out to the Lord, and he will answer me from his holy mountain. (Psalm 3:5)*

**83. What are the principle kinds of prayer?**

The principle kinds of prayer are adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.

**84. What is adoration?**

Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking for nothing but to enjoy God's presence.

*Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands toward God in heaven.  
(Lamentations 3:41)*

**85. Why do we praise God?**

We praise God as our creator, because praising, blessing and honoring God draws us closer to His being. When we open ourselves up to the beauty and wonder of God's creation, we cannot help but offer God our worship and adoration.

**86. For what do we offer thanksgiving?**

Thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.

**87. What is penitence?**

In penitence we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives, striving to be in union with God's commandments.

**88. What is prayer of oblation?**

Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.

**89. What are intercession and petition?**

Intercession brings before God the needs of others; in petition, we present our own needs that God's will may be done.

**90. For whom should we pray?**

We should pray especially for ourselves, our parents, relatives, friends, and enemies; for sinners, the souls in purgatory, the bishops, priests and religious of the Church; and for the officials of our country.

*But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.  
(Matthew 5:44-45)*

**91. How do we know that God always hears our prayers if we pray properly?**

We know that God always hears our prayers if we pray properly because Our Lord has promised: If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you. *(Matthew 18:19; Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 14:13; John 15:7; John 15:16; John 16:23-24; James 1:5-6; James 1:17; 1 John 3:22; 1 John 5:14-15)*

**92. Why do we not always obtain what we pray for?**

We do not always obtain what we pray for, either because we have not prayed properly or because God sees that what we are asking would not be for our good. *You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. (James 4:3)*

**93. Are distractions in our prayers always displeasing to God?**

Sometimes distractions in our prayers are ways for God to get our attention. Distractions in our prayers are not displeasing to God, unless they are intentional, distracting us away from Him.

**94. May we use our own words in praying to God?**

We may use our own words in praying to God, and it is well to do so often.

**95. Why do we pray?**

We pray:

1. to adore God, expressing to Him our love and loyalty;
2. to thank Him for His favors;
3. to obtain from Him the pardon of our sins and the remission of their punishment; and
4. to ask for graces and blessings for ourselves and others.

*Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. (Matthew 26:41)*

**96. How should we pray?**

We should pray:

1. with attention;
2. with a conviction of our own helplessness and our dependence upon God;
3. with a great desire for the graces we beg of Him;
4. with loving trust in His goodness; and
5. with perseverance.

*Whatever you ask for in prayer, you will receive. (Matthew 21:22)*

**97. How do we usually begin and end our prayers?**

We usually begin and end our prayers with the sign of the cross.

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)*

**98. Why do we make the sign of the cross?**

We make the sign of the cross to express two important mysteries of the Christian faith, the Blessed Trinity and the Redemption.

*And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

**99. How are these mysteries expressed by the sign of the cross?**

1. When we say "In the name", we express the truth that there is only one God;
2. when we say "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit", we express the truth that there are three distinct Persons in God; and
3. when we make the form of the cross on ourselves, we express the truth that the Son of God, made man, redeemed us by His death on the cross.

**100. What prayer did Christ teach us?**

Our Lord gave us His perfect prayer, known as The Lord's Prayer (Our Father).

*Our Father, who art in heaven,*

*hallowed be Thy name;*

*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread,*

*and forgive us our trespasses,*

*as we forgive those who trespass against us;*

*and lead us not into temptation,*

*but deliver us from evil. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)*

**101. Why is the Lord's Prayer the best of all prayers?**

The Our Father is the best of all prayers because it is the Lord's Prayer, taught to us by Jesus Christ Himself, and is a prayer of perfect and unselfish love.

**102. Why is the Lord's Prayer a prayer of perfect and unselfish love?**

The Our Father is a prayer of perfect and unselfish love because in saying it we offer ourselves entirely to God and ask from Him the best things, not only for ourselves but also for our neighbor.

**103. Why do we address God as "Our Father who art in heaven"?**

We address God as "Our Father, who art in heaven" because we belong to Him, our loving Father, who created us and watches over us, who adopts us through sanctifying grace as His children, and who destines us to live forever with Him in heaven, our true home.

*In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told that I am going to prepare a place for you? (John 14:2)*



- 104. For what do we pray when we say "hallowed be Thy name"?**  
When we say "hallowed be Thy name", we pray that God may be known and honored by all.  
*From the rising of the sun to its setting let the name of the Lord be praised.  
(Psalm 113:3)*
- 105. For what do we pray when we say "Thy kingdom come"?**  
When we say "Thy kingdom come", we pray that the kingdom of God's grace may be spread throughout the world, that all may come to know and to enter the Church and to live as worthy members of it, and that we all may be admitted to the kingdom of God's glory.  
*So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)*
- 106. For what do we pray when we say "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?**  
When we say "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven", we pray that all may obey God on earth as willingly as the saints and angels obey Him in heaven.  
*Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done. (Luke 22:42)*
- 107. For what do we pray when we say "Give us this day our daily bread"?**  
When we say "Give us this day our daily bread", we pray that God will give us each day all that is necessary to support the material life of our bodies and the spiritual life of our souls.  
*For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. (John 6:55)*
- 108. For what do we pray when we say "and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"?**  
When we say "and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us", we pray that God will pardon the sins by which we have offended Him, and we tell Him that we pardon those who have offended us.  
*If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6:14-15)*
- 109. For what do we pray when we say "and lead us not into temptation"?**  
When we say "and lead us not into temptation", we pray that God will always give us the grace to overcome the temptations to sin which come to us from the world, the flesh, and the devil.  
*Because you were acceptable to God, I was sent to put you to the test.  
(Tobit 12:13-14)*

- 110. For what do we pray when we say "but deliver us from evil"?**  
When we say "but deliver us from evil", we pray that God will always protect us from harm, and especially from harm to our souls.  
*I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. (John 17:15)*
- 111. What is corporate worship?**  
In corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's Word, to offer prayer, to sing God's praises, and to celebrate the sacraments.

## **XV. The Sacraments**

- 112. What is a sacrament?**  
A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.
- 113. How many sacraments are there?**  
There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.
- 114. From whom do the sacraments receive their power to give grace?**  
The sacraments receive their power to give grace from God through the merits of Jesus Christ.  
*Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1)*
- 115. Do the sacraments give sanctifying grace?**  
Yes. The sacraments give sanctifying grace.  
*Then they laid hands on them, and they received the holy Spirit. (Acts 8:17)*
- 116. Does each of the sacraments also give a special grace?**  
Each of the sacraments also gives a special grace, called sacramental grace, which helps one to carry out the particular purpose of that sacrament.
- 117. Do the sacraments always give grace?**  
The sacraments always give grace if we receive them with an open, loving and contrite heart.

- 118. Why are Baptism and Penance called sacraments of new life?**  
Baptism and Penance are called sacraments of new life and healing because their chief purpose is to give the supernatural life of sanctifying grace to souls spiritually wounded through sin.  
*Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit." (John 3:5)*
- 119. Why are Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony called sacraments of the living?**  
Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony are called sacraments of the living because their chief purpose is to give more grace to souls already spiritually alive through sanctifying grace.
- 120. What sin does one commit when knowingly receiving a sacrament of the living in mortal sin?**  
The one who knowingly receives a sacrament of the living in mortal sin commits a mortal sin of sacrilege because that person treats a sacred thing with grave irreverence.  
*Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. (I Corinthians 11:27)*
- 121. Which are the sacraments that can be received only once?**  
Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders are the sacraments that can be received one time.
- 122. Why can Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders be received only once?**  
They imprint on the soul a spiritual mark, called a character, which lasts forever.  
*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)*

## **XVI. Baptism**

- 123. What is Baptism?**  
Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven.  
*Jesus answered, Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. (John 3:5)*

**124. What sins does Baptism take away?**

Baptism takes away the sin we were born into; and also actual sin and all the punishment due to them, if the person baptized is deemed guilty of any actual sins and is truly sorry for them.

*Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name. (Acts 22:16)*

**125. What are the effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism?**

The effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism are that we become members of the Church of God, subject to His commandments, and capable of receiving other sacraments.

**126. Who can administer Baptism?**

The deacon, priest or bishop is the usual minister of Baptism, but if there is danger that someone will die without Baptism anyone else may, and should, baptize.

**127. How would you give Baptism?**

Baptism is given by pouring ordinary water on the forehead of the person to be baptized, saying while pouring it: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

**128. Why is Baptism necessary for the salvation of all?**

Baptism is necessary for the salvation of all because Christ has said: "Amen, amen I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit." (John 3:5)

*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. (Acts 2:41)*

**129. How can those be saved who through no fault of their own have not received the sacrament of Baptism?**

Those who through no fault of their own have not received the sacrament of Baptism can be saved through what is called baptism of blood, or baptism of desire.

**130. How does an unbaptized person receive the baptism of blood?**

An unbaptized person receives the baptism of blood when he or she suffers martyrdom for the faith of Christ.

*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:13)*

- 131. How does an unbaptized person receive the baptism of desire?**  
An unbaptized person receives the baptism of desire when they love God above all things and desires to do all that is necessary for salvation.  
*Jesus answered and said to him, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him."*  
(John 14:23)
- 132. When should children be baptized?**  
Children should be baptized as soon as possible after birth.
- 133. What do we promise through our godparents in Baptism?**  
Our Godparents promise on behalf of the one to be baptized to renounce Satan and His works, and to live according to the teachings of Christ and of His Church.
- 134. Why is the name of a saint given in Baptism?**  
The name of a saint is given in Baptism in order that the person baptized may imitate their virtues and have the saint for a protector.
- 135. What is the duty of a godparent after Baptism?**  
The duty of a godparent after Baptism is to see that the child is brought up in the practice of the faith in Jesus Christ, if this is unable to be accomplished by the parents.
- 136. Who should be chosen as godparents for Baptism?**  
Usually Christians who know their faith and live up to the duties of their religion should be chosen as godparents for Baptism.

## **XVII. Confirmation**

- 137. What is Confirmation?**  
Confirmation is the sacrament through which the Holy Spirit comes to us in a special way and enables us to profess our faith as strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.  
*But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go, for if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)*
- 138. Who is the usual minister of Confirmation?**  
The bishop is the usual minister of Confirmation.

**139. What does the bishop do when administering Confirmation?**

The bishop extends hands over those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Spirit and, while laying hands on the head of each person, anoints the forehead with holy chrism in the form of a cross.

*And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)*

**140. What does the bishop say in anointing the person being confirmed?**

In anointing the person being confirmed, the bishop says: "I sign you with the sign of the cross and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

**141. What is holy chrism?**

Holy chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balm, blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday.

**142. What does the anointing of the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross signify?**

The anointing of the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross signifies that the one who is confirmed must always be ready to profess their faith openly and to practice it fearlessly.

**143. What are the effects of Confirmation?**

Confirmation increases sanctifying grace, gives its special sacramental grace, and imprints a lasting character on the soul.

*And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)*

**144. What does the sacramental grace of Confirmation help us to do?**

The sacramental grace of Confirmation helps us to live our faith loyally and to profess it courageously.

**145. What is the character of Confirmation?**

The character of Confirmation is a spiritual and indelible sign which marks the Christian as a soldier in the army of Christ.

**146. What is necessary to receive Confirmation properly?**

To receive Confirmation properly it is necessary to be in the state of grace, and to know well the chief truths and duties of practicing the faith.

**147. After we have been confirmed, why should we continue to study and practice our faith even more earnestly than before?**

So that we may be able to explain, defend and grow in a greater love of our faith, thus cooperating with the grace of Confirmation.

**148. Why should all Christians be confirmed?**

All Christians should be confirmed in order to be strengthened against the dangers to salvation, and to be better prepared to witness and defend their Christian faith.

## **XVIII. The Eucharist**

**149. What is the Holy Eucharist?**

The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice. In the Holy Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine, the Lord Jesus Christ is contained, offered, and received.

*“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat”. (John 6:51-52)*

**150. When did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?**

Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the night before He died. *For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)*

**151. Who were present when Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist?**

His apostles were present when Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist. *When it was evening, he came with the Twelve. (Mark 14:17)*

**152. How did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?**

Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist in this way:

*Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.” (Luke 22:19-20).*

- 153. What happened when Our Lord said: "This is My body . . . this is My blood"?**  
When Our Lord said, "This is My body", the entire substance of the bread was changed into His body; and when He said, "This is My blood", the entire substance of the wine was changed into His blood.
- 154. Did anything of the bread and wine remain after their substance had been changed into Our Lord's body and blood?**  
Only the appearances of bread and wine remained after the substance of the bread and wine had been changed into Our Lord's body and blood.
- 155. What do we mean by the appearances of bread and wine?**  
By the appearances of bread and wine we mean their color, taste, weight, shape, and whatever else appears to the senses.
- 156. What is the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ called?**  
The change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is called Transubstantiation. We believe that at the deepest reality it is the body and blood of Christ, even though the physical characteristics appear the same.
- 157. Is Jesus Christ whole and entire both under the appearances of bread and under the appearances of wine?**  
Jesus Christ is whole and entire both under the appearances of bread and under the appearances of wine.
- 158. How was Our Lord able to change bread and wine into His body and blood?**  
Our Lord was able to change bread and wine into His body and blood by His Almighty power.  
*Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18)*
- 159. Does this change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ continue to be made in the Church?**  
The change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ continues to be made in the Church by Jesus Christ, through the ministry of His priests.
- 160. When did Christ give His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood?**  
Christ gave His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood at the Last Supper by saying to them "Do this in remembrance of Me."



**161. How do priests exercise their power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ?**

Priests exercise their power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ by repeating at the Consecration of the Mass the words of Christ: "This is My Body ... this is My Blood."

**162. Why does Christ give us His own body and blood in the Holy Eucharist?**

Christ gives us His own body and blood in the Holy Eucharist:

1. to be offered as a sacrifice commemorating and renewing for all time the sacrifice of the cross;
2. to be received by the faithful in Holy Communion; and
3. to remain ever on our altars as the proof of His love for us, and to be worshiped by us.

## **XIX. The Mass**

**163. What is the Mass?**

The Mass is the sacrifice of the New Covenant in which Christ, through the ministry of the priest, offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner under the appearances of bread and wine.

*From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among the nations; Incense offerings are made to my name everywhere, and a pure offering; For my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 1:11)*

**164. Who is the principal priest in every Mass?**

The principal priest in every Mass is Jesus Christ, who offers to His heavenly Father, through the ministry of His ordained priest, His body and blood which were sacrificed on the cross.

**165. Why is the Mass the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross?**

The Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross because in the Mass the victim is the same, and the principal priest is the same - Jesus Christ.

**166. Is there any difference between the sacrifice of the cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass?**

The manner in which the sacrifice is offered is different. On the cross Christ physically shed His blood and was physically slain, while in the Mass there is no physical shedding of blood nor physical death, because Christ can die no more. *We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. (Romans 6:9)*

**167. What are the purposes for which the Mass is offered?**

The purposes for which the Mass is offered are:

1. to adore God as our Creator and Lord;
2. to thank God for His many favors;
3. to ask God to bestow His blessings on all people; and
4. to satisfy the justice of God for the sins committed against Him.

**168. How should we assist at Mass?**

We should assist at Mass with reverence, attention, and devotion.

**169. What is the best method of assisting at Mass?**

The best method of assisting at Mass is to unite with the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice, and to receive Holy Communion.

**170. How can we best unite with the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice?**

We can best unite with the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice by joining in mind and heart with Christ, the principal Priest and Victim, by reciting, singing, or chanting the responses, actively participating in all the prayers and worship.

**171. Who said the first Mass?**

Our Divine Savior said the first Mass at the Last Supper, the night before He died.

## **XX. Holy Communion**

**172. What is Holy Communion?**

Holy Communion is the receiving of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

*Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. (John 6:57)*

**173. What is necessary to receive Holy Communion worthily?**

To receive Holy Communion worthily it is necessary to be free from mortal sin, to have a right intention, and have reverence for the body and blood of Our Divine Lord.

*Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. (I Corinthians 11:27)*

**174. What should we do to receive more abundantly the graces of Holy Communion?**

We should strive to be most fervent and to free ourselves from deliberate sin.

**175. How should we prepare ourselves for Holy Communion?**

We should prepare ourselves for Holy Communion by thinking of Our Divine Redeemer whom we are about to receive, and by making fervent acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

*... Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant will be healed. (Matthew 8:8)*

**176. What should we do after Holy Communion?**

After Holy Communion we should spend some time adoring Our Lord, thanking Him, renewing our promises of love and of obedience to Him, and asking Him for blessings for ourselves and others.

*Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)*

**177. What are the chief effects of a worthy Holy Communion?**

The chief effects of a worthy Holy Communion are:

1. a closer union with Our Lord and a more fervent love of God and of our neighbor;
2. an increase of sanctifying grace;
3. preservation from mortal sin and the forgiveness of venial sin; and
4. the lessening of our inclinations to sin, and the desire to practice good works.

*Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. (John 6:57)*

**178. When are we encouraged to receive Holy Communion?**

We are encouraged to receive Holy Communion during Easter time each year, when in danger of death, and as frequently as possible.

**179. Why is it well to receive Holy Communion often, even daily?**

It is well to receive Holy Communion often, even daily, because this intimate union with Jesus Christ, the Source of all holiness and the Giver of all graces, is the greatest aid to a holy life.

*They devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. (Acts 2:42)*

**180. How should we show our gratitude to Our Lord for remaining always on our altars in the Holy Eucharist?**

We should show our gratitude to Our Lord for remaining always on our altars in the Holy Eucharist by visiting Him often, by reverence in church, by assisting every day at Mass when this is possible, by attending parish devotions, and by being present at the Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

## **XXI. The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

**181. What is the sacrament of Reconciliation?**

Reconciliation is the sacrament by which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest.

**182. Who gave the priest the power to forgive sins?**

The priest received the power to forgive sins from Jesus Christ.

*And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins you retain are retained. (John 20:22-23)*

**183. With what words does the priest forgive sins?**

The priest forgives sins with the words:

"God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

**184. What are the effects of the sacrament of Reconciliation, worthily received?**

The effects of the sacrament of Reconciliation, worthily received, are:

1. the restoration or increase of sanctifying grace;
2. the forgiveness of sins;
3. the remission of the eternal punishment, if necessary, and at least part of the temporal punishment due to the consequences of our sins;
4. the help to avoid sin in future; and
5. receive healing and peace.

**185. What else does the sacrament of Reconciliation do for us?**

The sacrament of Reconciliation also gives us the opportunity to receive spiritual advice and instruction from our confessor.

**186. What must we do to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation worthily?**

To receive the sacrament of Reconciliation worthily, we must:

1. examine our conscience;
2. be sorry for our sins;
3. have the firm purpose of not sinning again;
4. confess our sins to the priest; and
5. be willing to perform the penance the priest gives us.

*But if the wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed, if he keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live.*

*(Ezekiel 18:21)*

**187. What is an examination of conscience?**

An examination of conscience is a sincere effort to call to mind all the sins we have committed since our last worthy confession.

**188. What should we do before our examination of conscience?**

Before our examination of conscience, we should ask God's help to know our sins and to confess them with sincere sorrow.

**189. How can we make a good examination of conscience?**

We can make a good examination of conscience by calling to mind the commandments of God and of the Church, and the particular duties of our state of life, and by asking ourselves how we may have sinned with regard to them.

## **XXII. Contrition**

**190. What is contrition?**

Contrition is sincere sorrow for having offended God, and hatred for the sins we have committed, with a firm purpose of sinning no more.

*Let the wicked man forsake their way, and sinners their thoughts; Let them turn to the Lord to find mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. (Isaiah 55:7)*

**191. Will God forgive us any sin unless we have true contrition for it?**

Unless we have true contrition, God will not forgive us any sin, whether mortal or venial.

*Yet even now—oracle of the Lord—return to me with your whole heart with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Rend your hearts not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God. For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting in punishment. (Joel 2:12-13)*

**192. When is sorrow for sin true contrition?**

Sorrow for sin is true contrition when it is interior, supernatural, supreme, and universal.

*A clean heart create for me, God; renew within me a steadfast spirit.  
(Psalm 51:12)*

**193. When is our sorrow interior?**

Our sorrow is interior when it comes from our heart, and not merely from our lips.

*My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit; a contrite humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn. (Psalm 51:19)*

**194. When is our sorrow supernatural?**

Our sorrow is supernatural when, with the help of God's grace, it arises from motives which spring from faith and not merely from natural motives.

**195. When is our sorrow supreme?**

Our sorrow is supreme when we hate sin above every other evil and are willing to endure any suffering rather than offend God in the future by sin.

**196. When is our sorrow universal?**

Our sorrow is universal when we are sorry for every mortal sin which we may have had the misfortune to commit.

*Turn away your face from my sins; blot out all my iniquities. (Psalm 51:11)*

**197. What is a mortal sin?**

A mortal sin is a sin of eternal death by an intentional rejection of God and/or God's commandments in our thoughts, words, or actions.

*Jesus knew what they were thinking, and said, "Why do you harbor evil thoughts?" (Matthew 9:4)*

**198. What is necessary for a sin to be a mortal sin?**

For a sin to be a mortal sin it must fulfill these three requirements:

1. must be a grave matter;
2. must have full knowledge it is sinful; and
3. must be freely chosen.

**199. Why should we have contrition for mortal sin?**

We should have contrition for mortal sin because it is the greatest of all evils, gravely offends God, keeps us out of heaven, and condemns us forever to hell. *Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire, and they will be burned. (John 15:6)*

**200. What is a venial sin?**

A venial sin is lacking in one of the three requirements for a mortal sin. It is when a believer, who seeks eternal life in their enjoyment of God through the fulfillment of God's commandments, sins by their failure to love God, neighbor, or self.

*Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)*

**201. Should we always try to have sorrow for all our venial sins when receiving the sacrament of Penance?**

We should try to have sorrow for all our venial sins when receiving the sacrament of Penance.

**202. Why should we have contrition for venial sin?**

We should have contrition for venial sin because it is displeasing to God, merits temporal punishment, and may lead to mortal sin.

**203. How many kinds of contrition are there?**

There are two kinds of contrition: perfect contrition and imperfect contrition.

**204. When is our contrition perfect?**

Our contrition is perfect when we are sorry for our sins because sin offends God, whom we love above all things for His own sake.

**205. When is our contrition imperfect?**

Our contrition is imperfect when we are sorry for our sins because they are hateful in themselves or because we fear God's punishment.

*But the Israelites said to the Lord, "We have sinned. Do to us whatever is good in your sight. Only deliver us this day!" (Judges 10:15)*

**206. To receive the sacrament of Penance worthily, what kind of contrition is sufficient?**

To receive the sacrament of Penance worthily, imperfect contrition is sufficient.

**207. Should we always try to have perfect contrition in the sacrament of Penance?**

We should always try to have perfect contrition in the sacrament of Penance because perfect contrition is more pleasing to God, and because with His help it can always be given to us.

**208. How can a person in mortal sin regain the state of grace before receiving the sacrament of Penance?**

A person in mortal sin can regain the state of grace before receiving the sacrament of Penance by making an act of perfect contrition, and with the sincere purpose of going to confession.

**209. What should we do if we have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin?**

If we have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin, we should ask God's pardon and grace at once, make an act of perfect contrition, and go to confession as soon as we can.

*Do I find pleasure in the death of the wicked—oracle of the Lord God? Do I not rejoice when they turn from their evil way and live? (Ezekiel 18:23)*

**210. What is the firm purpose of sinning no more?**

The firm purpose of sinning no more is the sincere resolve not only to avoid sin but to avoid as far as possible the near occasions of sin.

*Go, and from now on do not sin anymore. (John 8:11)*

**211. What purpose of amendment must a person have if they have only venial sins to confess?**

If a person has only venial sins to confess, he or she must still have the purpose of avoiding them.

### **XXIII. Making a Good Confession**

**212. What is confession?**

Confession is the telling of our sins to a priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

*He who conceals his sins prospers not, but he who confesses and forsakes them obtains mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)*



**213. Why must we confess our sins?**

We must confess our sins because Jesus Christ obliges us to do so in these words spoken to the apostles and to their successors in the priesthood:

*And when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (John 20:22-23)*

**214. How do these words of Christ oblige us to confess our sins?**

These words of Christ oblige us to confess our sins because the priest cannot know whether to forgive or retain our sins unless we tell them.

**215. Is it necessary to confess every sin?**

It is necessary to confess every mortal sin which has not yet been confessed and forgiven; it is not necessary to confess our venial sins, but it is helpful to grow in holiness to do so.

**216. What are the chief qualities of a good confession?**

The chief qualities of a good confession are three: it must be humble, sincere, and entire.

**217. When is our confession humble?**

Our confession is humble when we accuse ourselves of our sins with a conviction of guilt for having offended God.

*O God, be merciful to me a sinner! (Luke 18:13)*

**218. When is our confession sincere?**

Our confession is sincere when we tell our sins honestly and frankly.

**219. When is our confession entire?**

Our confession is entire when we confess at least all of our mortal sins, telling their kind, the regularity with which we have committed each sin, and any circumstances changing their nature.

*If a man or a woman commits any offense against another person, thus breaking faith with the LORD, and thereby becomes guilty, that person shall confess the wrong that has been done (Numbers 5:6-7)*

**220. What are we to do if without our fault we forget to confess a mortal sin?**

If without our fault we forget to confess a mortal sin, we must tell the sin in our next confession if it again comes to our mind.

**221. What happens if we knowingly conceal a mortal sin in confession?**

If we knowingly conceal a mortal sin in confession, the sins we confess are not forgiven; moreover, we commit a mortal sin of sacrilege.

**222. What must a person do that has knowingly concealed a mortal sin in confession?**

A person who has knowingly concealed a mortal sin in confession must confess that they have made a bad confession, tell the sins concealed and confess all the mortal sins committed since the last good confession.

**223. Why should a sense of shame and fear of telling our sins to the priest never lead us to conceal a mortal sin in confession?**

A sense of shame and fear of telling our sins to the priest should never lead us to conceal a mortal sin in confession because this is a grave sacrilege, and also because the priest, who represents Christ Himself, is bound by the seal of the sacrament of Penance never to reveal anything that has been confessed to him or her.

*Do not be ashamed to acknowledge your sins. (Sirach 4:26)*

**224. Why does the priest give us a penance after confession?**

The priest gives us a penance after confession so that we may make some atonement to God for our sins, receive help to avoid them in the future, and make some satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to them.

**225. What kinds of punishment are due to sin?**

Two kinds of punishment are due to sin: the eternal punishment of losing heaven due to unforgiven mortal sins; and temporal punishment due to the consequences of our sins.

*Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. (John 15:6)*

**226. Does the sacrament of Penance, worthily received, always take away all punishment?**

The sacrament of Penance, worthily received, always takes away all eternal punishment, but it does not always take away all temporal punishment, undoing the consequences our sins may have caused.

**227. Why does God require temporal punishment for sin?**

God requires temporal punishment for sin to satisfy His justice, to teach us the great evil of sin, and to warn us not to sin again.

**228. How do we pay the debt of our temporal punishment?**

We pay the debt of our temporal punishment either in this life as we suffer from the consequences of our sins, or in the purification necessary after death for us to share in the resurrection of the dead.

*The work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed by fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each one's work. If the work stands that someone built upon the foundation, that person will receive a wage. But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, but only as through fire. (I Corinthians 3:13-15)*

**229. What are the chief means of satisfying the debt of our temporal punishment, besides the penance imposed after confession?**

Besides the penance imposed after confession, the chief means of satisfying the debt of our temporal punishment are: prayer, attending Mass, fasting, almsgiving, works of mercy, the patient endurance of sufferings, and doing everything we can to make right for the consequences of our sins.

*Prayer with fasting is good. Almsgiving with righteousness is better than wealth with wickedness. It is better to give alms than to store up wealth. (Tobias 12:8)*

## **XXIV. The Act of a Proper Confession**

**230. Before going to confession, how should we prepare ourselves for a good confession?**

Before going to confession, we should prepare ourselves for a good confession by taking sufficient time not only to examine our conscience but, especially, to excite in our hearts sincere sorrow for our sins and a firm purpose not to commit them again.

**231. How should we begin our confession?**

We should begin our confession in this manner: Making the sign of the cross we say to the priest: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned", and then we tell how long it has been since our last confession.

**232. After telling the time of our last confession, what do we confess?**

After telling the time of our last confession, if we have committed any mortal sins since that time we must confess them, and also any that we have forgotten in previous confessions, telling the nature and number of each. We may also confess any venial sins we wish to mention.

**233. What should we do if we cannot remember the exact frequency of our mortal sins?**

If we cannot remember the frequency of our mortal sins, we should say approximately how often we do it.

**234. What should we do when we have committed no mortal sin since our last confession?**

When we have committed no mortal sin since our last confession, we should confess our venial sins, for which we are sorry, in order that the priest may give us absolution and we may receive the grace of the sacrament.

*Remember no more the sins of my youth, remember me only in the light of your love. (Psalm 25:7)*

**235. How should we end our confession?**

We should end our confession by saying: "I am sorry for all these sins and all the sins of my past."

**236. What should we do after confessing our sins?**

After confessing our sins, we should answer truthfully any question the priest asks, seek advice if we feel that we need any, listen carefully to the spiritual instruction and counsel of the priest, and accept the penance he or she gives us.

**237. What should we do when the priest is giving us absolution?**

Before the priest gives us absolution, we should say from our heart the Act of Contrition out loud in these or similar words:

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

**238. What should we do after leaving the confessional?**

After leaving the confessional we should give thanks to God for the grace of the sacrament we have received, beg Our Lord in prayer to help us avoid these sins again, and promptly and devoutly perform our penance.

## XXV. Sacrament of the Sick

### 239. What is the Sacrament of the Sick?

The sacrament of the sick is the sacrament in which, through an anointing by a priest with blessed oil, and through prayer, gives health and strength to the soul and sometimes to the body when we are in danger of death from sickness, accident, or old age.

*Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the priests of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:14)*

### 240. Who should receive the Sacrament of the Sick?

All Christians who have reached the age of reason and are in danger of death from sickness, accident, or old age should receive the Sacrament of the Sick.

### 241. What are the effects of the Sacrament of the Sick?

The effects of the Sacrament of the Sick are:

1. an increase of sanctifying grace;
2. comfort in sickness and strength against temptation;
3. preparation for entrance into heaven by the remission of our sins and the cleansing of our souls from the remains of sin; and
4. health of body when it is good for the soul.

*And the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. (James 5:15)*

### 242. How should we prepare ourselves to receive the Sacrament of the Sick worthily?

If possible we should prepare ourselves to receive the Sacrament of the Sick worthily by a good confession, acts of faith, hope, charity, and especially by bringing ourselves into the presence of God and His will for us.

*My son, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to God, for it is he who heals. (Sirach 38:9)*

### 243. Who can administer the Sacrament of the Sick?

Only a priest can administer the Sacrament of the Sick.

### 244. When is it advisable to call the priest to visit the sick?

It is advisable to call the priest to visit the sick in any serious illness, even though there be no apparent danger of death, as it is the duty of the priest to visit the sick and to administer to them the sacraments they need.

**245. In case of a sudden or unexpected death, should a priest be notified?**

In case of a sudden or unexpected death a priest should be notified, because prayers for those who have died, and especially for those who remain, are appropriate, having a beneficial effect.

## **XXVI. Holy Orders**

**246. What is Holy Orders?**

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which men and women receive the power and grace to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church.

*Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. (Hebrews 5:1)*

**247. What are some of the requirements that a candidate may receive Holy Orders worthily?**

That a candidate may receive Holy Orders worthily it is necessary:

1. that they be in the state of grace and be of excellent character;
2. that they have the prescribed age and learning;
3. that they have the intention of devoting their life to the sacred ministry; and
4. that they be called to Holy Orders by their bishop.

*This saying is trustworthy: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Therefore, a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not aggressive, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money. (1 Timothy 3:1-3)*

**248. What is meant essentially by a vocation to the priesthood?**

An invitation to receive Holy Orders given by the proper ecclesiastical superior to a person who, after a sufficient period of preparation and trial, gives signs that they have been called by God to the priesthood.

**249. What are the chief signs that God has called a person to the priesthood?**

The chief signs are: a sincere desire to become a priest, a virtuous life, sufficient bodily health and intellectual ability to enable them to make the required studies and to perform the duties of the priestly life.

**250. Do religious brothers and sisters receive the sacrament of Holy Orders?**

No. Religious brothers and sisters do not receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, but they have received a vocation from God to dedicate their lives to His service.

**251. What are the effects of ordination to the priesthood?**

The effects of ordination to the priesthood are:

1. an increase of sanctifying grace;
2. sacramental grace, through which the priest has God's constant help in their sacred ministry; and
3. character, lasting forever, which is a special sharing in the priesthood of Christ, and which gives the priest special supernatural powers.

*The Lord has sworn and will not waver: "You are a priest forever in manner of Melchizedek". (Psalm 110:4)*

**252. What are the main charisms of the priest?**

The main charisms of the priest are to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to forgive sins through the sacrament of Penance.

**253. Why should one show respect to the priest?**

We should show respect to the priest because they are the representatives of Christ Himself and the dispensers of His mysteries.

*Honor God and respect the priest; give him his portion as you have been commanded. (Sirach 7:31)*

**254. Who is the minister of the sacrament of Holy Orders?**

The bishop is the minister of the sacrament of Holy Orders.

## **XXVII. Matrimony**

**255. What is the sacrament of Matrimony?**

Matrimony is the sacrament by which two baptized persons bind themselves for life in a lawful marriage and receive the grace to discharge their duties.

**256. What are the chief duties of spouses within the married state?**

The chief duties of spouses within the married state are to be faithful to each other, and to provide in every way for the welfare of the children God may give them.

**257. Why does the bond of the sacrament of Matrimony last until the death of a spouse?**

The bond of the sacrament of Matrimony lasts until the death of one of the spouses because Christ has said:

*They are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate. (Matthew 19:6)*

- 258. What is meant by the unity of the sacrament of Matrimony?**  
By the unity of the sacrament of Matrimony is meant that neither spouse can leave the other for another person.
- 259. Why is every true marriage between two baptized persons a sacrament?**  
Every true marriage between two baptized persons is a sacrament because Christ Himself raised every marriage of this kind to the dignity of a sacrament.
- 260. Why has the Church the right to make laws regulating the marriages of baptized persons?**  
The Church has the right to make laws regulating the marriages of baptized persons because the Church has been given the responsibility over the sacraments and over sacred matters affecting baptized persons.
- 261. What authority has the State regarding the marriages of baptized persons?**  
The State has the authority to make laws regarding age and blood relationship. *He said to them, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." (Matthew 22:21)*
- 262. What is necessary to receive the sacrament of Matrimony worthily?**  
To receive the sacrament of Matrimony worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace, to know the duties of married life, and to obey the marriage laws of the Church. *She got up, and they started to pray and beg that they might be protected [in their marriage]. (Tobit 8:5)*
- 263. In whose presence does the Church require someone to be married?**  
The Church requires someone to be married in the presence of bishop, priest, or deacon, and before two witnesses.
- 264. What are the chief effects of the sacrament of Matrimony?**  
The chief effects of the sacrament of Matrimony are: an increase of sanctifying grace; the special help of God for spouses to love each other faithfully; to bear with each other's faults; and, to bring up their children properly.



**265. What should couples do to prepare for a holy and happy marriage?**

To prepare for a holy and happy marriage, couples should:

1. pray that God may direct their choice;
2. seek the advice of their parents and confessors;
3. practice the virtues, especially chastity; and
4. frequently receive the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.*

*(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

**266. How can couples best obtain God's blessing for their marriage?**

Couples can best obtain God's blessing for their marriage by being married at a Nuptial Mass and by receiving Holy Communion devoutly.

*Sara also said, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, and let us grow old both together in health." (Tobit 8:10 Douay-Rheims Bible)*

## **XXVIII. Sacramentals**

**267. What are Sacramentals?**

Sacramentals are any actions, objects or prayers that draws us closer to God and helps bring us God's grace and gifts.

*And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

*(John 3:14-15)*

**268. How do the sacramentals obtain favors from God?**

The sacramentals provide nourishment to the human spirit through material means, earthly signs and nature's gifts. They obtain favors from God for those who make use of them, and through the devotion they inspire.

**269. What are the benefits obtained by the use of the sacramentals?**

The benefits obtained by the use of the sacramentals are:

1. actual graces;
2. the forgiveness of venial sins;
3. the remission of temporal punishment;
4. health of body and material blessings;
5. protection from evil; and
6. bring us closer to God and one another.

**270. Which are the different kinds of sacramentals?**

The different kinds of sacramentals are:

1. blessings given by priests and bishops;
2. prayers and devotions against evil; and
3. blessing objects of worship and devotion.

**271. Which are the blessed objects of devotion most used?**

The blessed objects of devotion most used are: holy water, candles, incense, ashes, palms, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, scapulars, and images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints.

*Then the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. (Luke 1:10)*

**272. How should we make use of sacramentals?**

We should make use of the sacramentals with faith and devotion, and never make them objects of superstition.

## **XXIX. Christian Hope**

**273. What is the Christian hope?**

Christian hope is to live with confidence in the newness and fullness of life, to await the coming of Christ in glory, and the completion of God's purpose for the world.

**274. What do we mean by the coming of Christ in glory?**

By the coming of Christ in glory, we mean that Christ will come, not in weakness but in power, and will make all things new.

**275. What do we mean by heaven and hell?**

By heaven, we mean eternal life in our enjoyment of God; by hell, we mean eternal death in our rejection of God.

**276. Why do we pray for those who have died?**

We pray for those who have died because we still hold them in our love, and because we trust that in God's presence those who have chosen to serve Him will grow in His love, until they see Him as He is.

**277. What do we mean by the last judgment?**

We believe that Christ will come in glory to judge the living and the dead.

**278. What do we mean by the resurrection of the body?**

We mean that God will raise us from death in the fullness of our being that we may live with Christ in the communion of the saints.

**279. What is the communion of saints?**

The communion of saints is the whole family of God, the living and the dead, those whom we love and those whom we struggled to love, bound together in Christ by sacrament, prayer, and praise.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

**280. What do we mean by everlasting life?**

By everlasting life, we mean a new existence, in which we are united with all the people of God, in the joy of fully knowing and loving God and each other.

**281. What, then, is our assurance as Christians?**

Our assurance as Christians is that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)*

### **XXX. Mary, Mother of God**

**282. Who is Mary?**

Mary, the mother of God, is our mother too. Just as Mary gave us Jesus through God's grace, so Jesus in turn gave Mary to the Church when he said to His beloved disciple:

*"Behold, your mother". (John 19:27)*

**283. What is the Immaculate Conception?**

The Immaculate Conception refers to the condition that the Blessed Virgin Mary was free from Original Sin from the very moment of her conception in the womb of her mother, Saint Anne. Full of grace, there was never any room in Mary for sin.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. (Luke 1:28)*  
*Blessed art thou among women,*  
*and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. (Luke 1:42)*  
*Holy Mary, mother of God,*  
*pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

**284. What is the meaning of the Virgin Birth?**

The virgin birth made God, not Joseph, the Father of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

*In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35)*

**285. What is the Assumption of Mary?**

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary commemorates the death of Mary and her bodily assumption into heaven before her body could begin to decay - a foretaste of our own bodily resurrection at the end of time.

*For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about:*

*"Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*Where, O death, is your victory?*

*Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:53-55)*

*Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; Some to everlasting life, others to reproach and everlasting disgrace. But those with insight shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever. (Daniel 12:2-3)*